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16. Abstract

Recent studies have shown that—per person, per driver, and per household—we now have fewer light-duty vehicles, we drive each of them less, and we consume less fuel than in the past. These trends suggest that motorization in the U.S. might have reached a peak several years ago.

The present study examined recent trends in the proportion of households without a lightduty vehicle as another index of the motorization level. Two analyses were performed. The first analysis examined the changes in this proportion for the entire U.S. from 2005 through 2012. The second analysis studied the variations in this proportion among the 30 largest U.S. cities for 2007 (the year with the lowest overall proportion) and 2012 (the latest available year). The data came from the American Community Survey.

The main findings are as follows:

- (1) In 2012, 9.2% of U.S. households were without a vehicle, compared to 8.7% in 2007 (the year with the lowest recent proportion).
- (2) The proportion of households without a vehicle varies greatly among the 30 largest U.S. cities: In 2012, the maximum was 56.5% (in New York) and the minimum was 5.8% (in San Jose).
- (3) In six of the 30 cities, more than 30% of households do not have a vehicle.
- (4) From 2007 to 2012, there was an increase in the proportion of households without a vehicle in 21 of the 30 cities examined.
- (5) The 13 cities with the largest proportions all showed an increase from 2007 to 2012.

The recent increase in the proportion of households without a vehicle provides additional support for the hypothesis that motorization in the U.S. peaked during the previous decade.

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