

# **Importance & Impact of Cars for Family Economic Success**

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# **Importance & Impact of Cars for Family Economic Success**

1. Travel Patterns of Low-Income Families
2. The Auto Advantage
3. Automobiles and Economic Opportunity

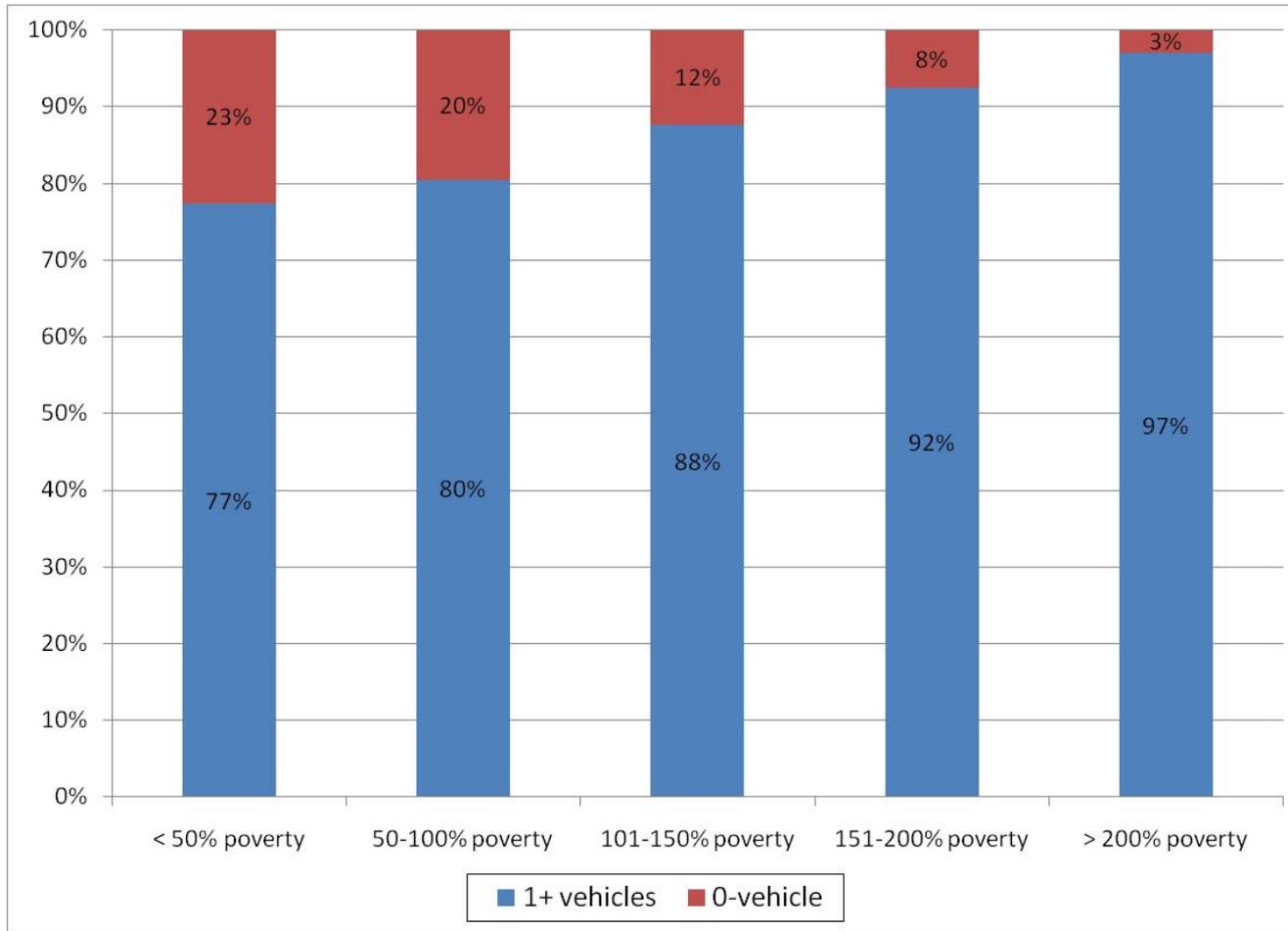
# Travel Patterns of Low-Income Families

- Auto Ownership
  - Travel Mode
  - Trip Purpose
- Commute Distance
  - Trip Chaining

# Automobile Ownership

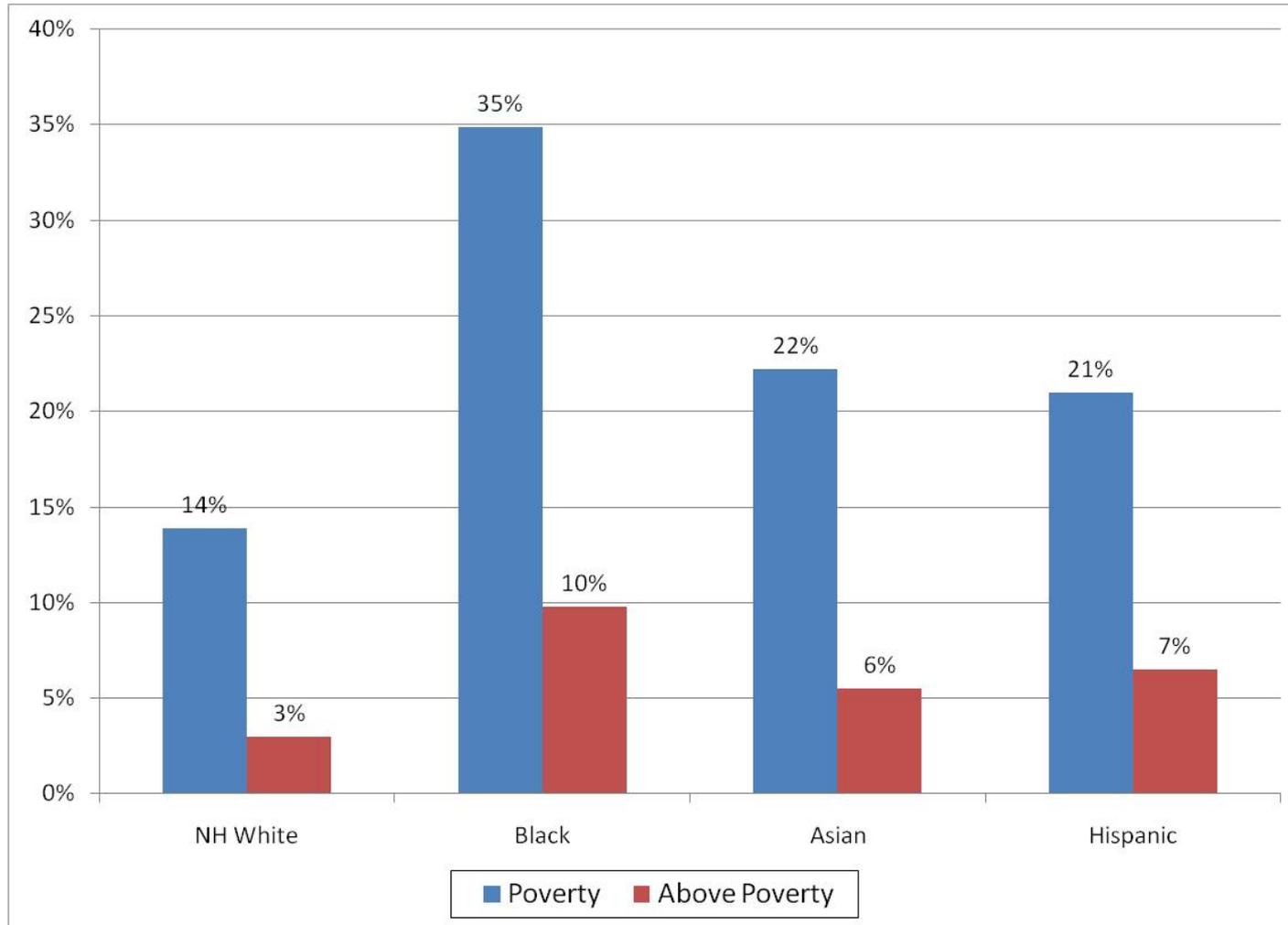
- Most low-income persons live in households with cars.
- Auto ownership varies substantially by race/ethnicity.
- Low-income households have less access to household vehicles than higher income households.

# Persons in 0-Vehicle Households by Poverty Level (2006-08)



Source: Ruggles, Steven, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthey B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek (2010). Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0, American Community Survey, 2006-08 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

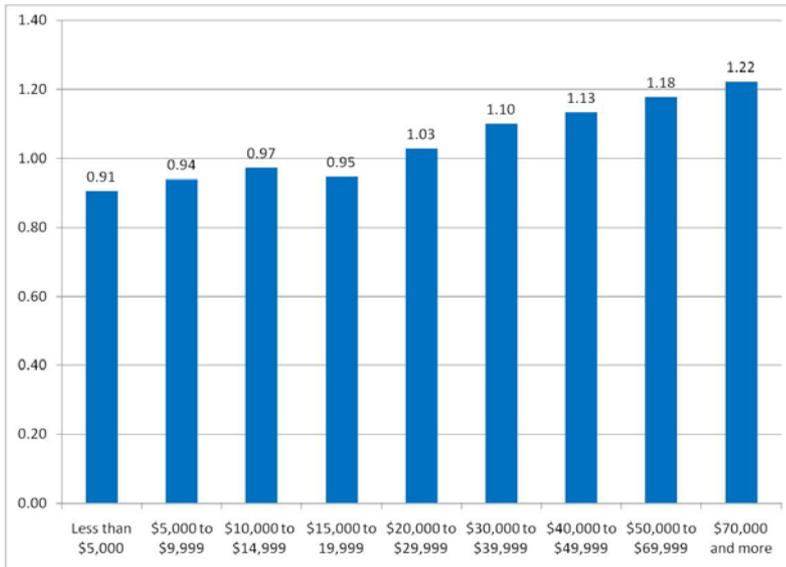
# Persons in 0-Vehicle Households by Poverty and Race/Ethnicity (2006-08)



Source: Ruggles, Steven, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthey B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek (2010). Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0, American Community Survey, 2006-08 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

# Reliable Access to Cars

## Reliable Use of Car Ratio: Cars to Drivers



Source: 2009 National Household Travel Survey.

## Reliable Car

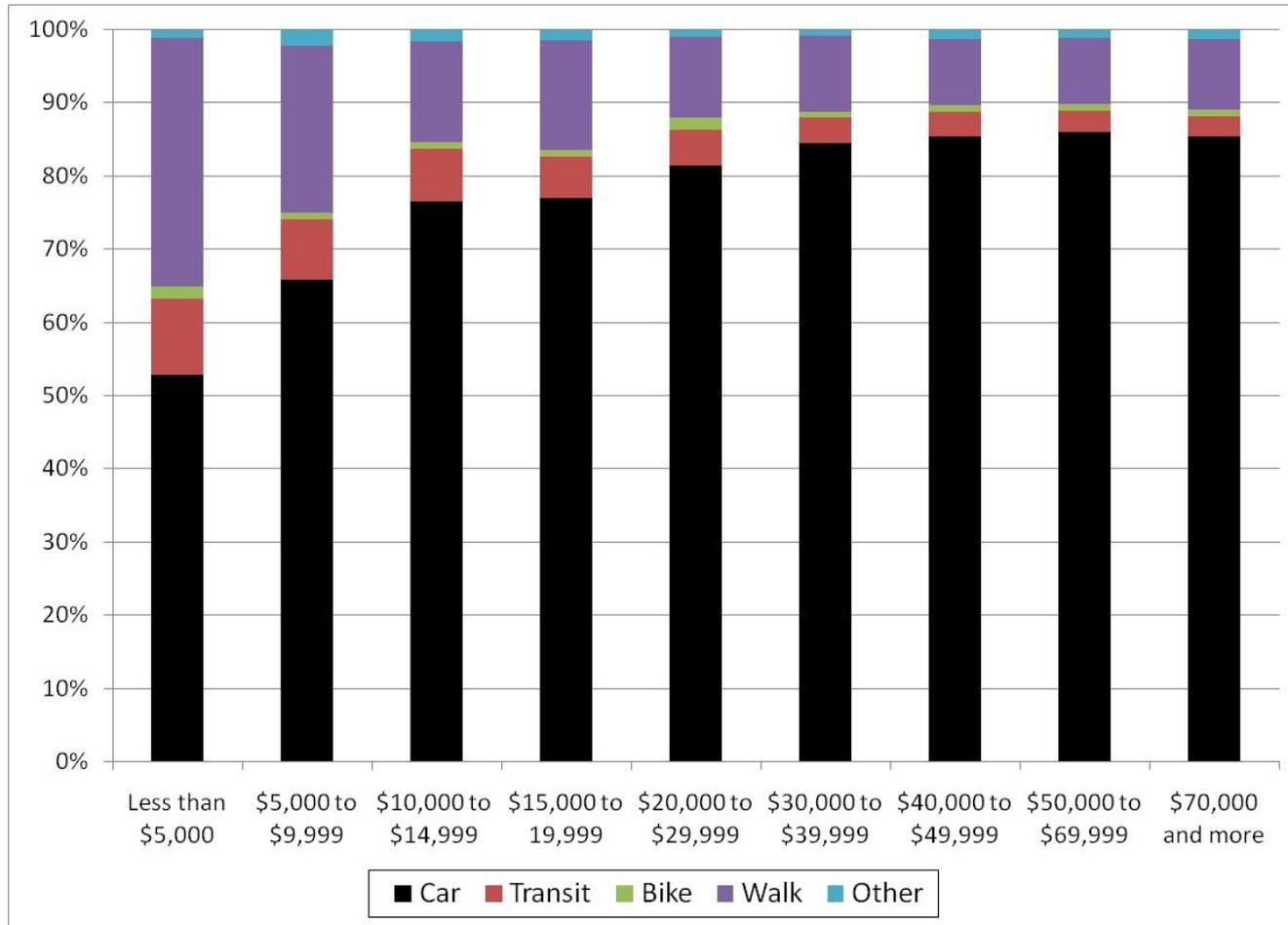


*The New Yorker*, August 29, 2005

# Travel Mode

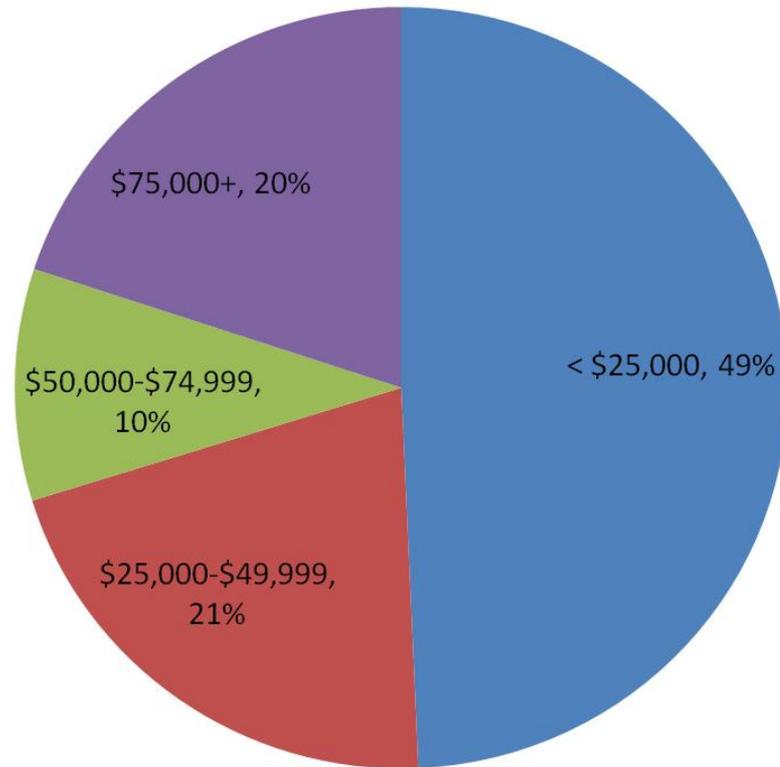
- Low-income households are less likely to travel by car than higher income households.
- They are more likely to walk and to use public transit.
- Transit riders are disproportionately poor.

# Travel Mode by Income



Source: 2009 National Household Travel Survey.

# Annual Person Transit Trips by Income

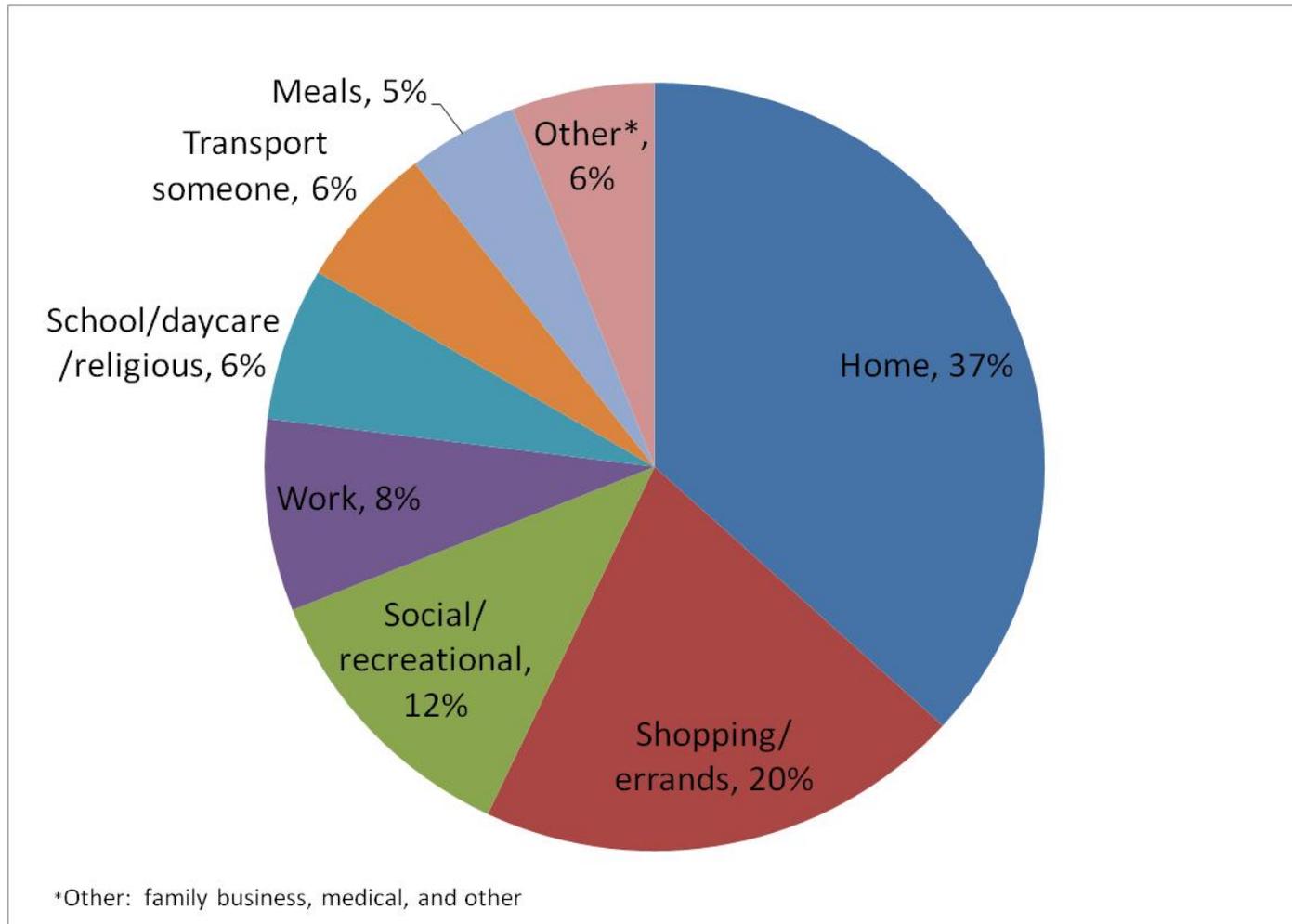


Source: 2009 National Household Travel Survey.

***Trip purpose:* most trips are for  
non-work purposes**

# Distribution of Trip Purposes

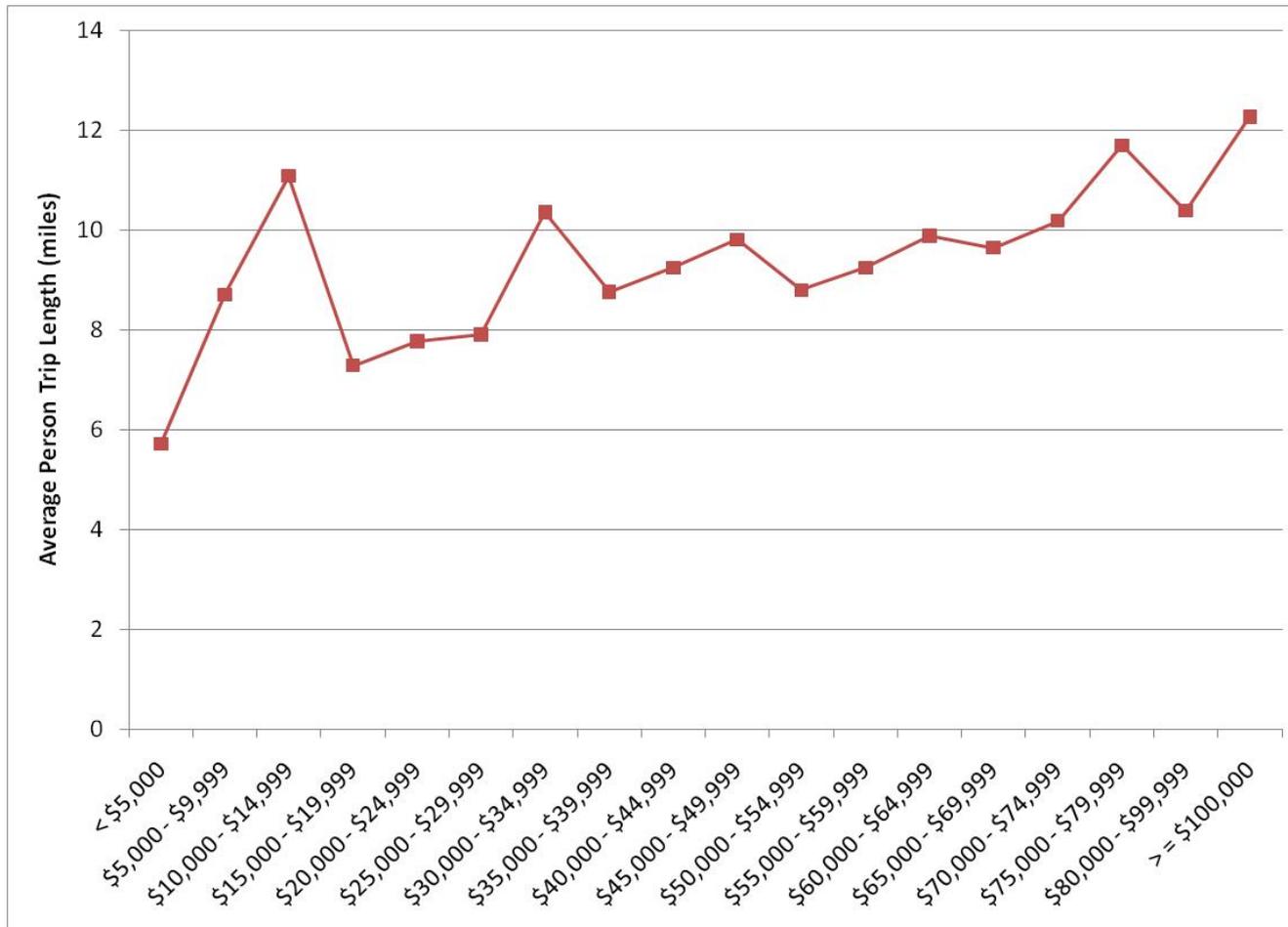
## Low-Income Households (Less than \$25,000)



Source: 2009 National Household Travel Survey.

***Commuter distance:* income and travel distance are positively related**

# Average Person Trip Length by Income

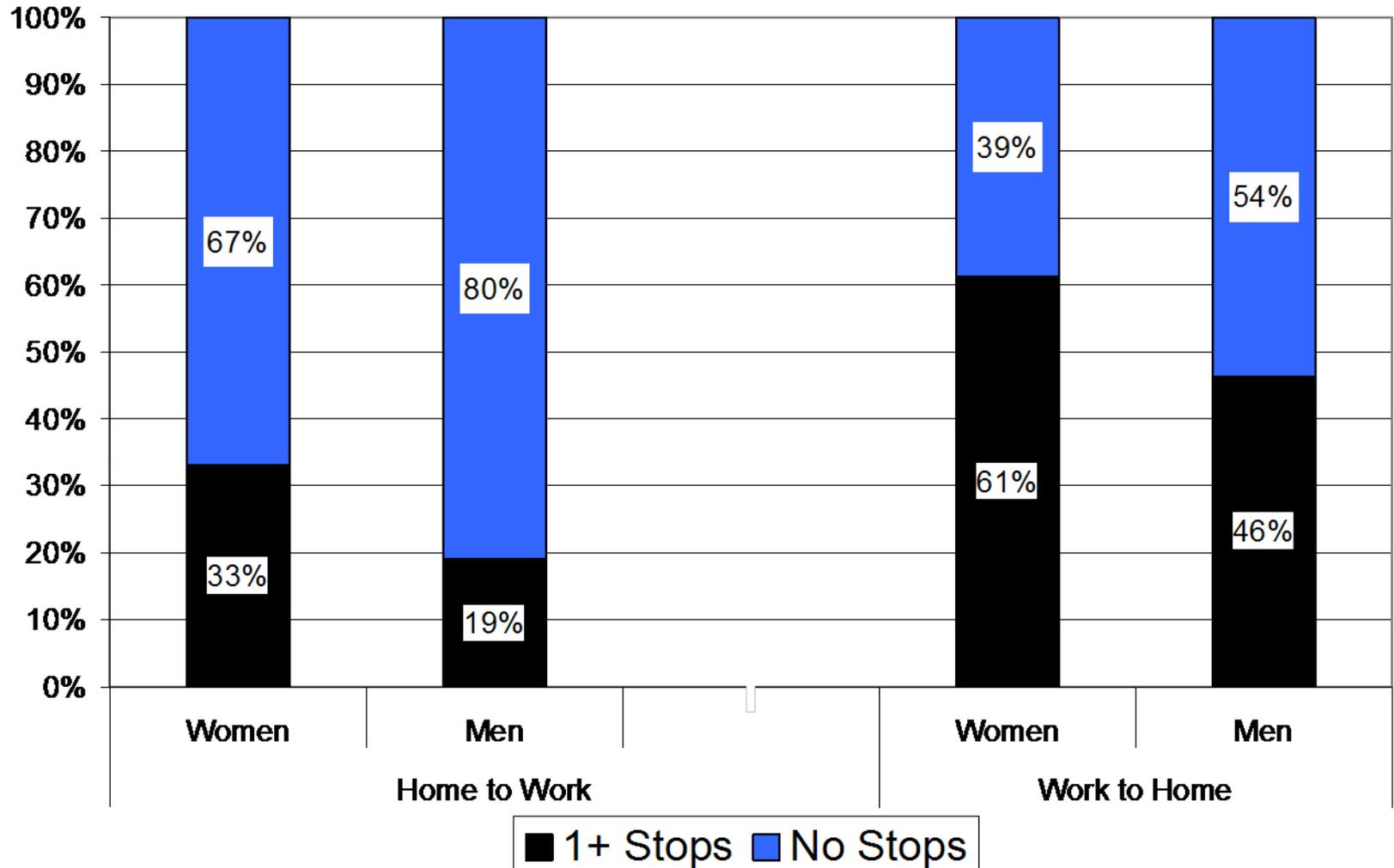


Source: 2009 National Household Travel Survey.

# Trip Chaining

- There is a substantial amount of trip chaining—stringing trips together in a single tour.
- Women are more likely to trip chain than men.

# Trip Chaining



Source: McGuckin N. and E. Murakami. *Examining Trip Chaining Behavior. A Comparison of Travel by Men and Women.*

# **The Auto Advantage**

# Auto Ownership

1. Geographic access to opportunities
2. Make multiple trips to varied destinations
3. Convenience
4. Safety

# Improved Geographic Access to Opportunities

- **Public transit service can be limited, particularly in suburban and rural areas.**
- Travel by public transit takes much longer than travel by automobile.
- Job opportunities have dispersed.

# Spatial Distribution of Poverty

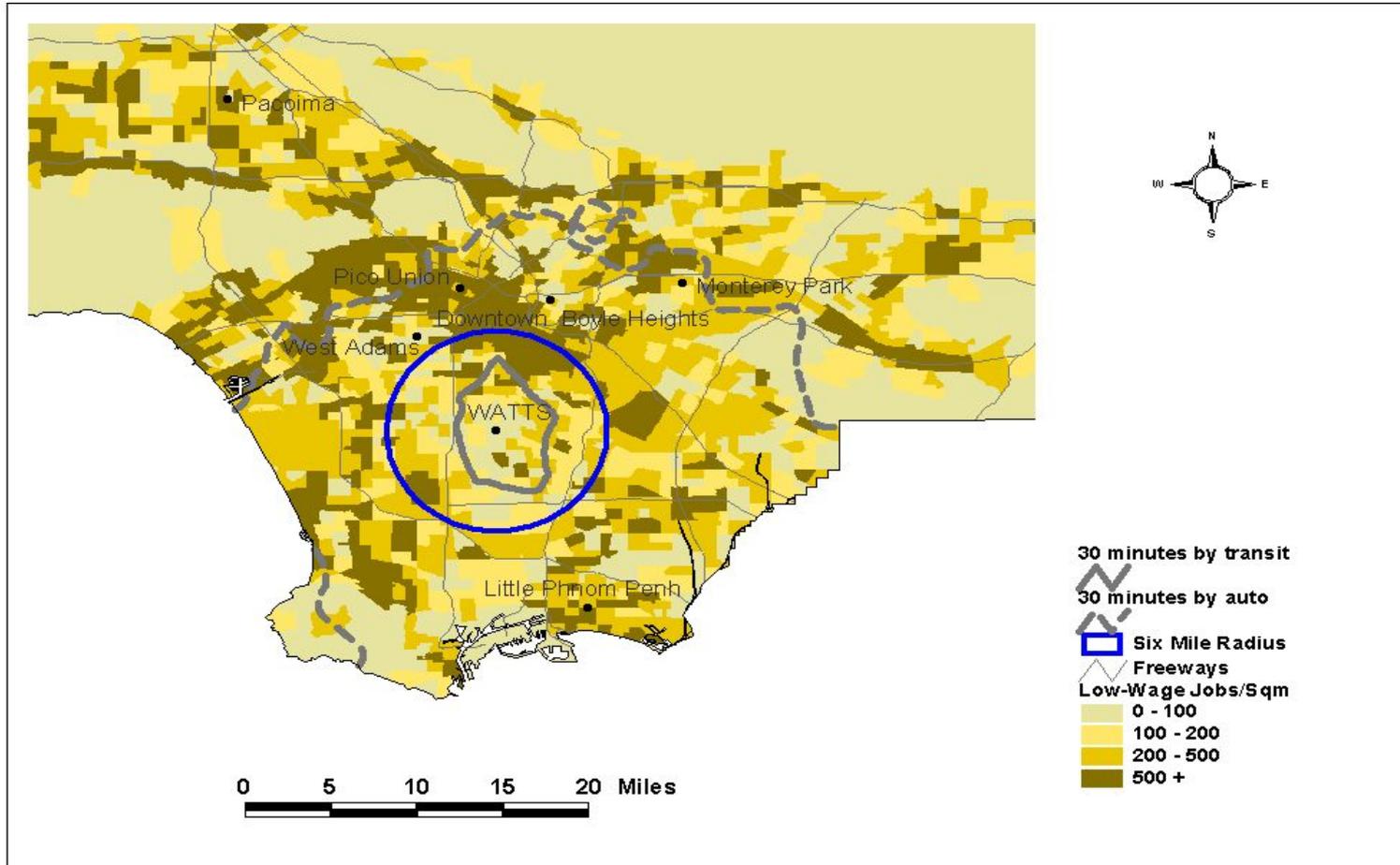


Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2009). Current Population Survey. Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement

# Improved Geographic Access to Opportunities

- Public transit service can be limited, particularly in suburban and rural areas.
- **Travel by public transit takes much longer than travel by automobile.**
- **Job opportunities have dispersed.**

# Job Access and Commute Mode -- Watts 30 Minutes by Transit and Auto



# Auto Ownership

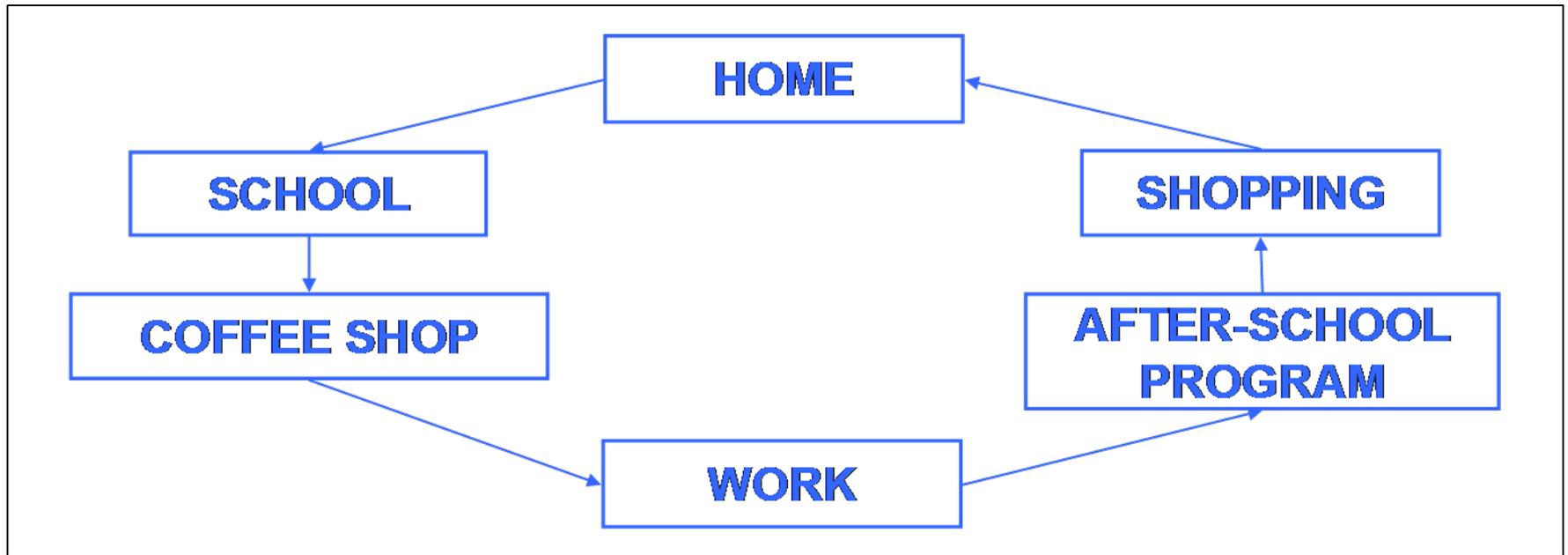
1. Geographic Access to Opportunities

**2. Make multiple trips to varied destinations – trip chaining, job search**

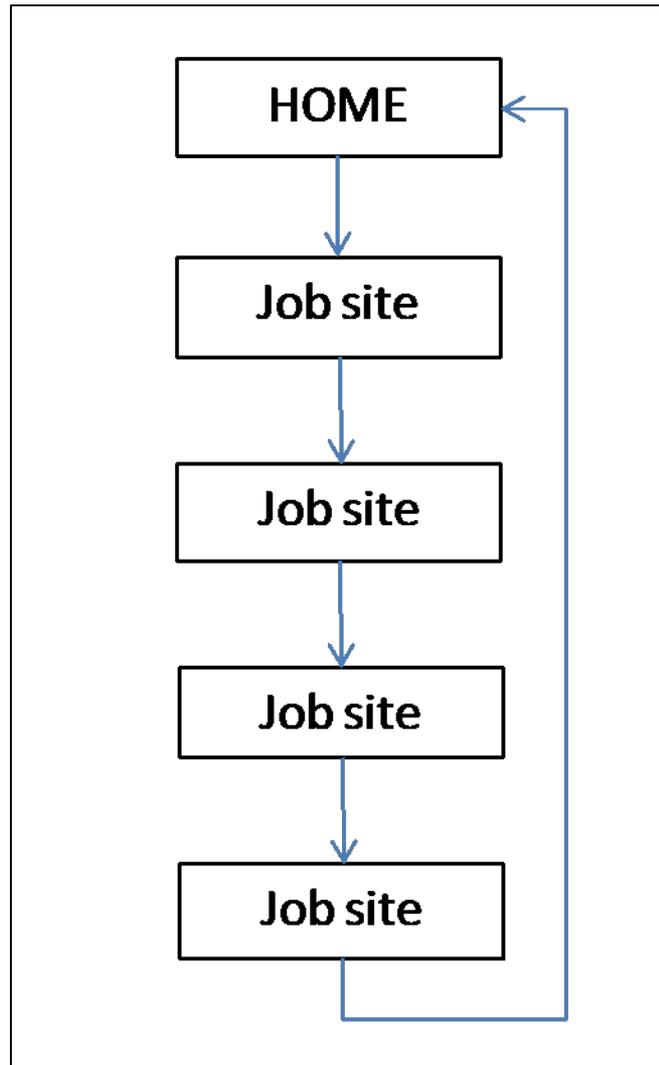
3. Convenience

4. Safety

# Household Supporting Trip Chaining



# Job Search Trip Chaining



# **Auto Ownership**

1. Geographic Access to Opportunities

2. Make multiple trips to different destinations

**3. Convenience**

4. Safety

# Convenience

- Leave when you want
- Door-to-door service
- Carry packages, travel with children
  - Protected from the weather

# Auto Ownership

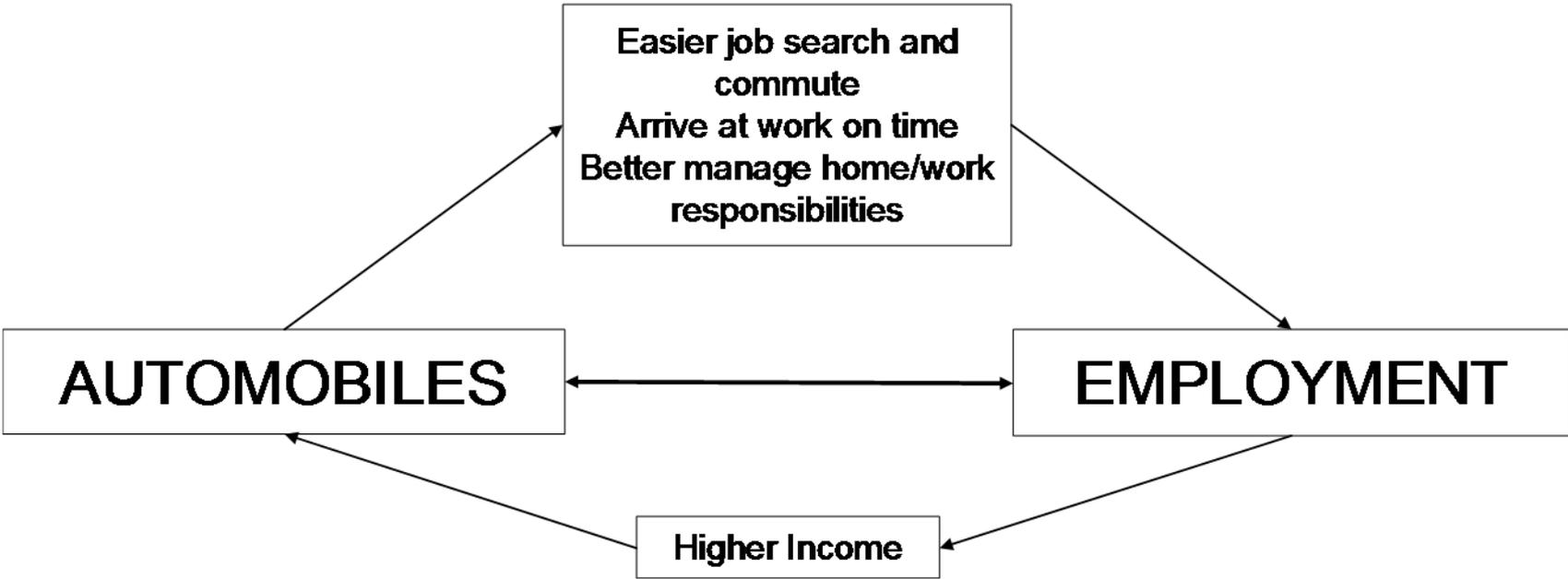
1. Geographic Access to Opportunities
2. Make multiple trips to different destinations
3. Convenience
- 4. Safety**

# **Automobiles and Economic Opportunity**

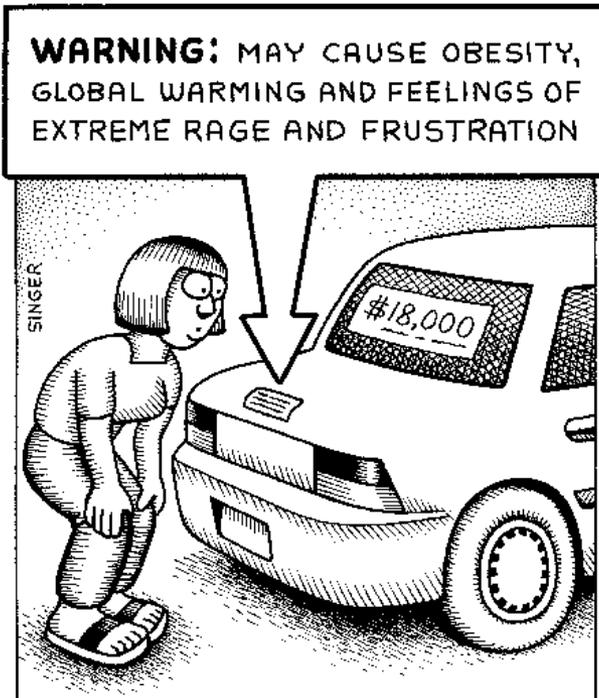
# Benefits of Auto Ownership

- **Employment** (Blumenberg, 2002; Brabo et al., 2003; Cervero et al., 2002; Danziger et al., 2000; Gurley and Bruce, 2005; Lucas and Nicholson, 2003; Pawasarat and Stetzer 1998; Ong, 1996; Ong, 2002; Ong and Miller, 2005; Raphael et al, 2001; Stoll, 2005)
- **Earnings** (Ong, 1996; Gurley and Bruce, 2005; Raphael and Rice, 2002; Van Ryzin, 2001)
- **Absenteeism** (Holzer and Wissoker, 2001)
- **Health** (Zogby and Malin, 2001; Ellaway, Der, Ford and Hunt, 1998)
- **Goods and services** (Clifton, 2004; Corcoran et al., 1999)
- **Social relationships** (Perrin et al., 2004)
- **More time for other activities**
- **Improved response to emergencies** (natural disasters, household crises)
- **Improved air quality** (removal of gross polluting cars)
- **Reduced public subsidies** (means-tested benefits) (Gurley and Bruce, 2005)

# Cars and Working Families



# Principal Concerns: Auto Ownership



- Environmental externalities: air quality, congestion
- Other externalities: community cohesion, poor health, quality of life
  - Sprawl
- Public subsidies to roads, highways
- Excessive transportation expenditure burden

# A few responses...

- Access does not necessarily mean ownership.
- Programs to increase automobile access potentially can remove gross-polluting vehicles and improve air quality.
- Automobile access is positively associated with income; while the expenditure burden might rise, so too will overall budgets.
- Automobile ownership can result in lower housing costs.

When we all can travel to where we need to go in a reasonable amount of time using modes other than the automobile, lower income families can do so too.

Until then, relegating them to an inferior mode of transportation will limit their opportunities for work, shopping, health care, etc.

**Thank You**

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