

Traffic Safety Facts

Traffic Tech – Technology Transfer Series

National Survey of Pedestrian and Bicyclist Attitudes and Behavior

Background and Methodology

The goals of this survey were to ascertain the scope and magnitude of bicycle and pedestrian activity and the public's behavior and attitudes regarding bicycling and walking. Telephone interviews were conducted between June 11 and August 20, 2002, with a nationally representative sample of 9,616 respondents 16 or older in the United States. These results were then weighted to reflect the national population of approximately 200 million non-institutionalized people 16 or older residing in the United States. Topics addressed by the survey were:

- Frequency of bicycling and walking;
- Trip information including origin, destination, time of day, distance, travel surface, purpose, facility use, and topography;
- Reasons for not biking and/or walking;
- Perceptions of safety;
- Safety practices;
- Facilities availability;
- Community design;
- Sociodemographics.

Survey respondents were asked to provide information about their overall bicycling and walking behaviors during the previous 30 days, which encompassed the period of May 11 through August 20, 2002. The survey focused on individual trips taken on the most recent day they bicycled or walked during that period. Specific trip data (including trip origin and destination, purpose, time, distance, etc.) were collected for up to six walking and six bicycling trips on the most recent day traveled.

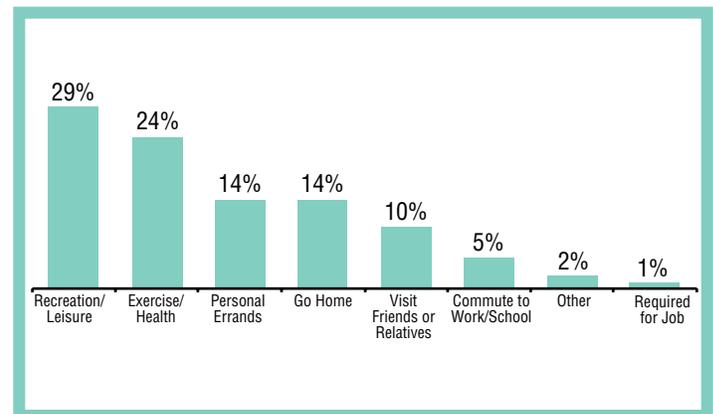
Findings: Bicycling

The survey findings showed that slightly less than half (46%) of those 16 and older had a bicycle available for their use on a regular basis, with access increasing as level of household income increased. About 43% rode a bicycle

at least once in the summer months, making an estimated 2.5 billion trips during the summer of 2002.

Bicycling declined with age, with those under 21 most likely to bicycle and doing so more frequently, while the majority 45 and older did not bicycle during the summer months.

Figure 1: Purpose of Bicycling Trips



Q9a 25a: What was the main purpose for this trip? [Base: Data for all trips;n=3,903]

The majority of bicycling trips were for recreational purposes (29%) or for exercise (24%), while just one in five trips were made either to conduct errands (14%) or for commuting to work or school (5%). About half of all trips (48%) were made on paved roads; an additional 13% were on shoulders of paved roads, and 5% on bike lanes on roads. Most other trips were made on sidewalks (14%) or bike trails/paths (13%). Only half (50%) of bicyclists said bike paths were available in the areas they rode, while 32% said bike lanes were available. The use of bicycle paths and bicycle lanes was very similar. Where those facilities were said to be available, 73% of bicyclists reported using bicycle paths at least some of the time they rode (39% most or all of the time), and 75% reported using bicycle lanes at least some of the time they rode (43% most or all of the time). Over half of those who did not use bike paths or lanes said they don't use them because they are not conve-

nient, available, or go where they need to go. More than 1 in 10 bicyclists (13%) felt threatened for their personal safety on the most recent day they rode their bicycles in a 30-day period in the Summer of 2002, with 88% of these feeling threatened by motorists. Among those who reported that they felt threatened by a motorist, the top two actions that were seen as threatening were driving too close to the bicyclist (40%) and driving too fast (32%).

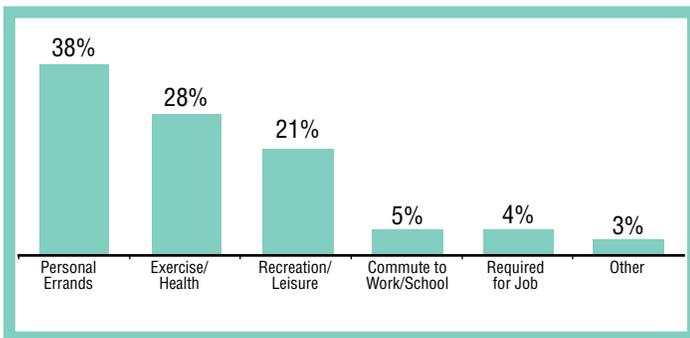
One in 5 bicyclists (20%) rode in the dark or near-dark for at least part of their trip, with 63% of these saying they took actions to make themselves more visible to motorists. About 4% of bicyclists reported being injured while riding in the past two years. Almost one-quarter of these were hit by motorists. About half of bicyclists wore helmets at least on occasion, with 35% using them for all or most trips. Nine in 10 supported helmet laws for children, while 62% supported such laws for adults.

Almost half (48%) of respondents 16 and older were very or somewhat satisfied with how their local communities was designed for making bicycle riding safe. Nearly half (47%) would like to see some changes made in their communities for bicyclists. The changes most desired were more bike lanes (38%) and more bike paths (30%).

Findings: Walking

About 86% of people 16 and older walked, jogged, or ran outdoors for 5 minutes or more during the summer months, with 78% doing so within the past 30 days. Walking at least 5 minutes one or more times during the past 30 days decreased to just 66% for those 65 and older. An estimated 13.3 billion walking trips were made in the summer months, with nearly three-quarters (74%) of the trips being made by heavy-frequency walkers.

Figure 2: Purpose of Walking Trips



Q9a 25a: What was the main purpose for this trip? [Base: Data for all trips; n=3,903]



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Personal errands (38%), exercise (28%), and recreation (21%) were the most common reasons for trips. Nearly half (45%) of the trips were made on sidewalks, with 25% made on paved roads. Just 6% were made on bike paths, walking paths, or trails. The most common ending point of a walking trip was a home (61%). An additional 10% ended at a leisure or recreation site, 9% ended at a shopping site and 7% ended at work.

About 6% of pedestrians felt their personal safety threatened on their most recent trip, with 62% of these saying they felt threatened by motorists. Among those who reported that they felt threatened by motorists (4% of pedestrians), the top two actions that were seen as threatening were driving too fast (41%) and driving too close to the pedestrian (35%).

Overall, 22% of pedestrians reported walking in the dark or near-dark for part of their most recent walk. Among these, nearly 4 in 10 (39%) made efforts to make themselves more visible to motorists. The methods used by pedestrians to make themselves more visible after dark included wearing light colored clothing (64%), wearing fluorescent or reflective clothing (28%), or bringing something visible with them on the walk (18%).

Just 2% of pedestrians 16 and older reported being injured in the past two years while walking. Heavy-frequency pedestrians were equally likely to experience injuries while walking (2%) as were medium- (2%) and light-frequency (2%) pedestrians. Four percent of pedestrians 16 through 20, and 4% of pedestrians with annual household income less than \$15,000 had been injured while walking in the past 2 years.

Three-quarters (73%) of people 16 and older were satisfied with how their local community was designed for making walking safe, though one-third (34%) would like to see changes. The most desired changes were more sidewalks (42%) and more lights (17%).

How to Order

For a copy of *National Survey of Bicyclist and Pedestrian Attitudes and Behavior* (Volume I Summary Report, 23 pages; Volume II Findings Report, 175 pages; and Volume III Methods Report, 118 pages) prepared by the Gallup Organization, write to the Office of Behavioral Safety Research, NHTSA, NTI-130, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590, or send a fax to 202-366-7394, or download from www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

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