

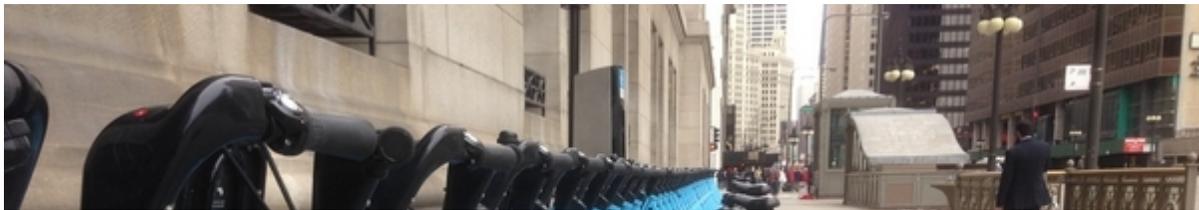


September 22, 2016

# Chicagoans' crush on cars is cooling



**GREG HINZ** ON POLITICS



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Photo by Danny Ecker

One finding in a new Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning report: Half of Divvy users are millennials.

## Is Chicago's love affair with the auto ending?

The total number of miles driven has been flat to down over the past decade and a half; fewer teenagers and young adults are acquiring driver's licenses, and there's an increasing number of ways to commute besides driving to work alone.

Those findings are in a report being issued today by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning as the federally mandated agency begins to develop a new plan that will guide development and transportation spending here through 2050.

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"After decades of persistent growth in commuting patterns, we seem to be at an inflection point," says CMAP's Elizabeth Irvin, the chief author of the report. Though it's not certain the trend is permanent, she added, the new data should set the stage for a vigorous debate as officials move to set priorities on how to spend valuable road and transit funds, and what type of job growth to push where.

Perhaps the most significant finding: Consistent with national trends, total vehicle miles driven in Illinois peaked early in the past decade and have steadily declined since.

Similarly, the share of those with a driver's license has dropped for all but the elderly, with the decline particularly notable among teenagers, from 55 percent in 1990 to 48 percent in 2014.

Those figures are drawn from census, Federal Reserve and state transportation data, and CMAP officials believe the trend within the seven-county CMAP region is the same.

### IMPACT ON COMMUTERS

The same pattern—auto use has peaked and in some cases declined a bit—has carried over into how people get to work.

Since 2000, the share of those who commute by driving with no passengers has been flat, at about 70 percent, after growing vigorously in the 1980s and '90s. The share of those who take a bus is off, too. But the proportion of work and use trains and particularly bicycles is up, though the latter still represents only 1 percent of

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Bob Dold, though prices recently show some signs of pushing total vehicle mileage back up again.

findings:

- Commuting into and out of Chicago proper is considerably more even than many believe. According to the study, 9.9 percent of the region's residents live in the city but commute out of town, mostly to the south suburbs; and 13.7 live in suburban Cook and the collar counties and commute to the city, again mostly from the south



CTA crawls toward longer Red Line

s. That arguably strengthens the case for **extending the Chicago Transit Authority's Red Line** from street south to the city limits.

- Use of public transit to get to work is highest among those who earn at least \$75,000, likely a sign of good transit options in suburbs for the many people there who work in downtown Chicago, Irvin said.
- Despite the above, African-Americans, who generally earn less than whites, use public transportation to commute twice as much as whites and have somewhat longer commutes (adding about five minutes each way). Irvin said that emphasizes the need for economic development in city neighborhoods where workers take the train or bus to work.
- Half of Divvy users are millennials ages 25 to 34.

CMAP will develop its new plan over the next two years and, given the agency's role as a gatekeeper for some kinds of federal grants, its guide ought to do more than catch dust.

An initial discussion on the report and related data—asking, "Have we truly passed peak driving or did recent economic conditions merely hit the pause button?"—is set for this afternoon at Northwestern University's McCormick Foundation Center in Evanston.

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Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning [More +](#)

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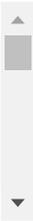
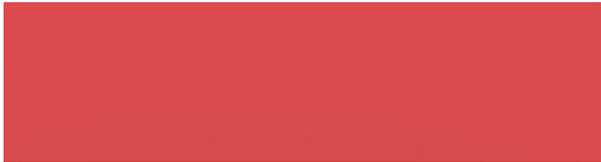
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Tone • 8 days ago

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What are Divvy use numbers? It seems to be extremely popular. I have a feeling it's affecting CTA



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Romney nips at the heels of Obama for BoJ... which has all the report's source data that are publicly shareable. (Data purchased from commercial sources generally can't be shared.) From the CMAP staff

2 ^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›



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brad → Tone • 8 days ago  
Maybe for shorter bus trips, but I don't know if many people are biking from even Lakeview to the Loop. The inconvenient thing about Divvy is you need to dock the bike every 30 minutes.

1 ^ | ▾ • Reply • Share ›



chris → brad • 7 days ago  
Not if you pay for a subscription.

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brad → chris • 7 days ago  
I did not realize this. I thought it was all trips regardless of a subscription or not.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**chris** → brad • 7 days ago

Well, you pay extra to keep it longer. It's not that you have to though.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Tone** → brad • 8 days ago

I don't know either. I am curious what the ridership is showing. CTA bus ridership is plummeting though.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**T.G. Crewe** → Tone • 7 days ago

They need to do the BRT on Ashland.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Pet P** → T.G. Crewe • 6 days ago

The ashland brt is sheer stupidity. It would make ashland unusable for anything. Politically I think it's a non-starter anyway.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**T.G. Crewe** → Pet P • 5 days ago

It would be an amazing addition to the CTA.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

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trips. A couple months ago on a Thursday night at 9 p.m. I wanted to take the 147 bus from Ohio & Michigan home to north Edgewater. I walked up to the bus stop to find out the next 147 wouldn't arrive for another 19 minutes. This is Chicago, I'm not waiting anywhere outside day or night for 19 minutes, so I got an Uber. It arrived in ONE MINUTE! The trip cost just under \$15. I haven't



CTA crawls toward longer ride times

bothered taking a bus since and I have used Uber so much I just got an e-mail reward of 50% off my next ten rides through October 10. Uber and Lyft are crushing not only buses, but also cabs.

[see more](#)

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**chris** → Spugi di Savoia • 7 days ago

Plenty of trips need to go east to west which is where a bus works well. We live in a grid layout traveling in straight lines is necessary.

What's the big deal about waiting outside? \$15 is 7.5x more expensive than \$2.00 bus fare.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**planetshwoop** → Spugi di Savoia • 8 days ago

They are subsidized by investors. They can't lose money forever, and are heavily dependent upon drivers agreeing to the fares you pay. Someday this will change.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**tgrossman** → planetshwoop • 7 days ago

Maybe the idea is to continue until automation takes over

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**Tone** → Spugi di Savoia • 8 days ago

Yeah, between uber, lyft and Divvy, it's clear why bus ridership is tanking.

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**Greg Hinz** → Tone • 8 days ago

bus is down everywhere. but L ridership highest in many years

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**chris** → Greg Hinz • 7 days ago

Riding the L is kind of like an express. Bus trips can be very slow on some streets due to traffic, lack of rightaway, and frequent stops. CTA needs to look into eliminating some bus stops and ability to move through traffic lights at major intersections by making them green upon approach. Loop Link is a start in the right direction.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Tone** → Greg Hinz • 8 days ago

When you say everywhere, do you mean the country or just around the City? I know in Chicago bus ridership is plummeting. Are you saying it's a national

know in Chicago bus ridership is plummeting. Are you saying it's a national trend?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**brad** → Tone • 8 days ago

Yes <http://www.slate.com/blogs/mon...>

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Tone** → brad • 8 days ago

Thanks, great article

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Greg Hinz** → Tone • 8 days ago

Everywhere. Note this quarterly report from APTA: <http://tinyurl.com/jdf9xoj>. I suspect uber/lyft are eating bus' lunch, but rail is more competitive and serves more congested areas.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



**Ryan Richter** → Greg Hinz • 8 days ago

Bus services have been cut due to the recession in many places - or like in Chicago, bus service has been cut to boost rail service. But loss of service is a large predictor of loss of ridership: <http://bit.ly/2cU6rmg>

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Avat Tone — I totally agree. Honestly, I would leave

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