



Regional Plan Association

... a research and planning agency supported by voluntary membership to promote the coordinated development of the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Region.

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To Anticipate Road Needs, Fuel Shortage Impact STUDY OF AUTO USE FINDS DENSITY HAS GREATEST EFFECT

The number, age and fuel economy of their cars help determine how many miles a household drives--per auto or per adult in the household, but the density of their neighborhood has a greater effect than any of these, Regional Plan Association reported today in releasing a survey of the miles driven by 4,650 New York State households over a three-month period in New York City, its suburbs and upstate rural and urban areas. The questionnaires were collected in the spring of 1979.

An analysis of travel change caused by the 1979 temporary gasoline shortage in the New York City area also was reported.

The purpose was to help policymakers anticipate auto use under different circumstances as they consider building and rebuilding roads and standby actions in case of another interruption in the supply of motor fuel.

The study was financed by the United States Departments of Energy and Transportation, Exxon, Texaco, Ford and General Motors, and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations.

The finding that the more compact a community, the less each auto is driven is in addition to fewer autos owned by households in

compact neighborhoods, frequently documented in the past. This further explains the principal finding of Regional Plan's 1974 study of total energy consumption in the New York Urban Region, i.e., the higher the density, the lower the per capita energy use.

In addition, the current publication reported that:

- Households that replaced cars nearly always chose a more fuel efficient model, but in rural areas, the increase in miles per gallon stimulated more driving, reducing the gas saving.
- Higher gasoline prices decreased driving--by one percent for every 10 percent rise, but few of those reduced auto miles appeared as public transportation trips except on commuter railroads into Manhattan.
- Adding a car to a household increased driving 5 to 10 times more than adding an adult.

Regional Plan Association is a nonprofit research organization working since the 1920s for more efficient, convenient and satisfying living conditions in the tri-state urban region surrounding the Port of New York.

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