

Here are a couple of articles, from "Centerlines," the newsletter of the National Center for Bicycling and Walking (www.bikewalk.org), that I thought would be helpful to the Transportation Futures Study:



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ADDING NEW ROAD CAPACITY DOESNT IMPROVE CONGESTION

-> Decades of traffic data across the United States shows that adding new road capacity doesn't actually improve congestion. The latest example of this is the widening of Los Angeles' I-405 freeway, which was completed last May after five years of construction and a cost of over \$1 billion. "The data shows that traffic is moving slightly slower now on 405 than before the widening (405 Commutes Now a Minute Worse Than Before Carpool Lane: <http://bit.ly/1AcBVLL>), says Matthew Turner, a Brown University economist.

The main reason, Turner has found, is simple adding road capacity spurs people to drive more miles, either by taking more trips by car or taking longer trips than they otherwise would have. He and University of Pennsylvania economist Gilles Duranton call this the "fundamental rule" of road congestion (The Fundamental Law of Road Congestion: Evidence from US cities: <http://bit.ly/1Hevghc>): adding road capacity just increases the total number of miles traveled by all vehicles.

In an influential 2011 paper, they looked at the total capacity of highways in each metropolitan area in the US and compared it with the total number of vehicle miles traveled. They found a one-to-one correlation: the more highway capacity a metro area had, the more miles its vehicles traveled on them. A 10 percent increase in capacity, for instance, meant a 10 percent increase in vehicle miles, on average. [<http://bit.ly/1S6NEBa>]

CENSUS UNDERCOUNTS WALKING AND BIKING

-> The U.S. Census is the most widely cited source of data about how Americans get around, but it only asks about commute trips, and commuting only accounts for about 16 percent of total household travel. What happens when you measure the other 84 percent? Researchers at the University of Minnesota set out to design a better way to track how people move around the Twin Cities region.

The UMN team found that driving decreased in the region between 2000 and 2010, while biking and walking grew. Cycling rose over that period from 1.4 to 2.2 percent of trips. That's about 190,000 daily trips, or a 58 percent increase. Meanwhile, walking grew from 4.5 to 6.6 percent of trips, a 44 percent increase, or almost three quarters of a million daily trips. Residents of the Twin Cities region typically make about 12 million total daily trips. What's especially interesting is that the share of biking and walking trips in the UMN survey is much bigger than what the Census indicates about two to three times larger. [<http://bit.ly/1rW2snN>]