

# Reducing the Need to Drive Is a Win for Both Climate Change and Quality of Life

Tim Evans

New Jersey Future

PA DEP Climate Change Advisory Committee Meeting

February 22, 2022





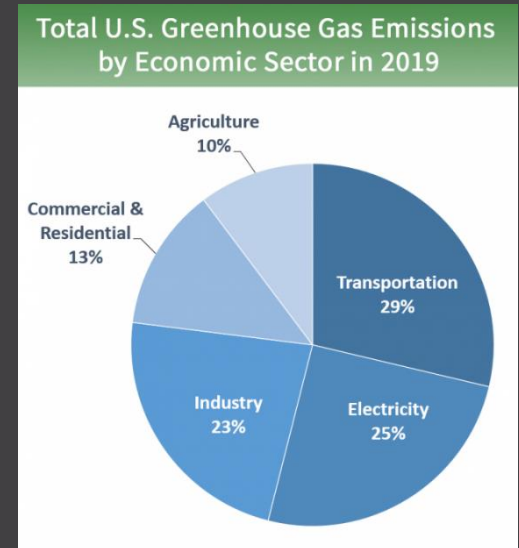
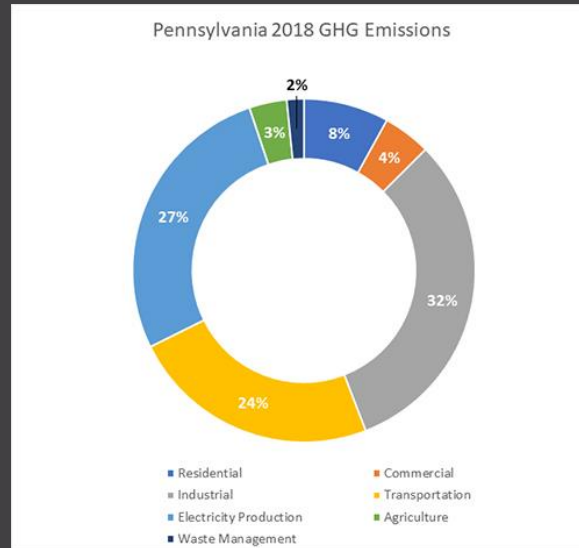
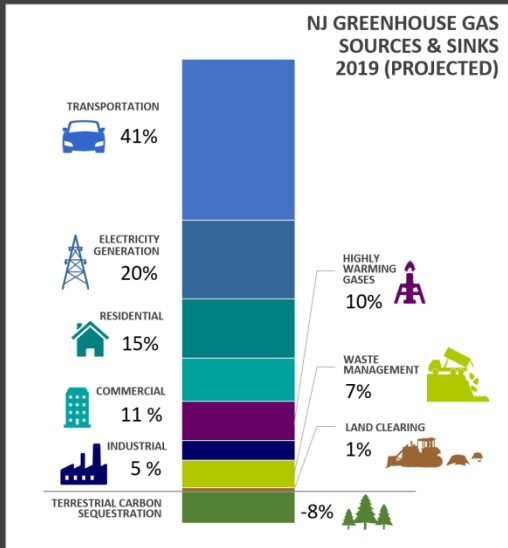
## Our mission:

Founded in 1987, New Jersey Future is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that promotes sensible and equitable growth, redevelopment, and infrastructure investments to foster healthy, strong, resilient communities; protect natural lands and waterways; increase transportation choices beyond cars; provide access to safe, affordable, and aging-friendly neighborhoods; and fuel a strong economy for everyone. New Jersey Future does this through original research, innovative policy development, coalition-building, advocacy, and hands-on strategic assistance. Embracing differences and advancing fairness is central to New Jersey Future's mission and operations. New Jersey Future is firmly committed to pursuing greater justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion through its programs, internal operations, and external communications.

[www.njfuture.org](http://www.njfuture.org)



# Transportation: Our GHG Achilles Heel



Transportation sector's contribution to total greenhouse gas emissions:

- **New Jersey:** 41% [source: NJDEP Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory]
- **Pennsylvania:** 24% [source: PA DEP Pennsylvania Greenhouse Gas Inventory]
- **US:** 29% [source: US EPA]

# Solution: Electrify everything!

## STREETSBLOG USA

Bicycling / Walking / Transit / Car Culture / Micromobility / Mobility Justice / COVID-19

### COP26 'Transport Day' Ignores Everything But EVs

By Kea Wilson | Nov 10, 2021



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson with Sir David Attenborough talk to school children at the Science Museum for Launch of the UK hosting of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26).  
Image: Number 10, CC



Alex Ingram  
@nuttyxander



Happy COP26 Transport day!



2:38 AM · Nov 10, 2021



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Bloomberg CityLab  
@CityLab



As #COP26 events focus on electric vehicles, experts and city leaders are emphasizing that public transit is a key tool for meeting climate targets.

[@josyanajoshua](#) reports:



bloomberg.com

Public Transit Use Must Double to Meet Climate Targets, City Leaders Warn  
As COP26 events focus on electric vehicles, a new report calls for \$208 billion in annual public transit investments to decarbonize transportation.

10:14 AM · Nov 10, 2021 · SocialFlow

# EVs alone won't get us to our GHG reduction goals

Even if every single car were electric by 2030, and all production was carbon neutral (which isn't possible), we would only reduce global emissions somewhere between 15–20 percent — far short of the estimated 55 percent we need to cut. While the reduction would be greater in the U.S. as transportation comprises a higher proportion of our emissions than at a global level, it still isn't enough. Carbon emissions care little for international borders.

## STREETSBLOG USA

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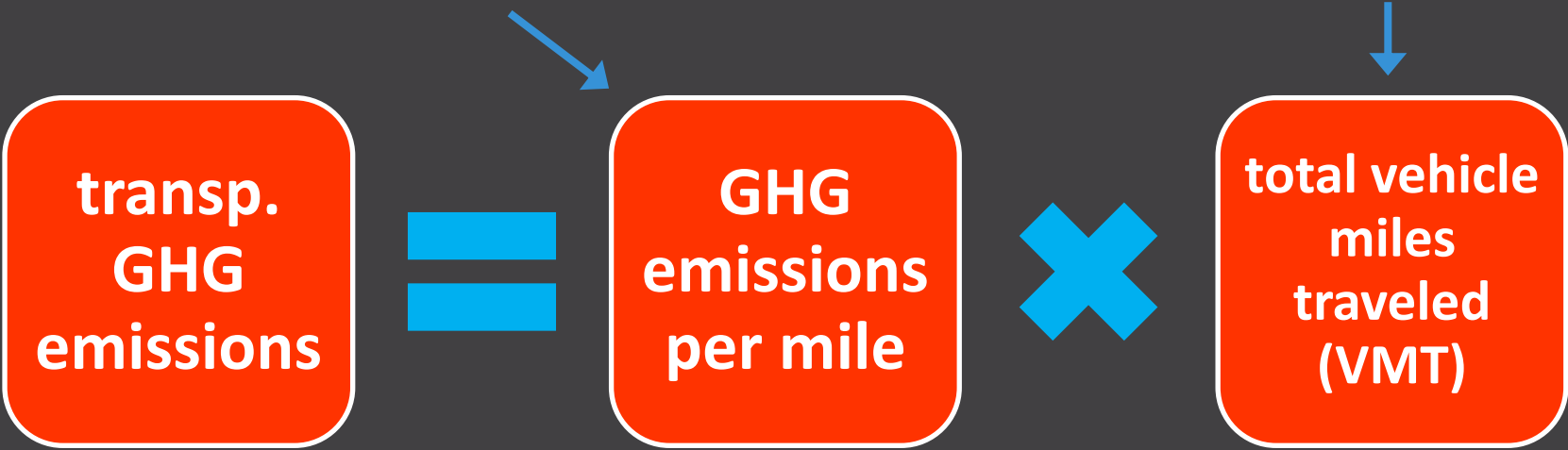
### Electric Vehicles Won't Save Us

By Coby Lefkowitz | Jun 18, 2021



Image: Karlis Dambrans via Creative Commons

# Decarbonizing Driving vs. Driving Less



# EVs alone won't get us to our GHG reduction goals

“During the early years of building the market for electric vehicle adoption in New Jersey, the state should rely on meeting emission goals through VMT reduction strategies. Policymakers should focus on [increasing public ridership of transit](#) through the expansion of transportation options in heavily trafficked corridors of the state. [Better coordination of transportation planning and land use, through transit-oriented development and complete streets](#) would also serve to reduce VMT. This, combined with [expanding participation in work-from-home and flexible work hour programs](#), would help reduce the number of single passenger vehicle trips.”

**NEW JERSEY'S  
GLOBAL WARMING  
RESPONSE ACT  
80x50 REPORT**

EVALUATING OUR PROGRESS  
AND IDENTIFYING PATHWAYS TO  
REDUCE EMISSIONS 80% BY 2050








Version 1.0

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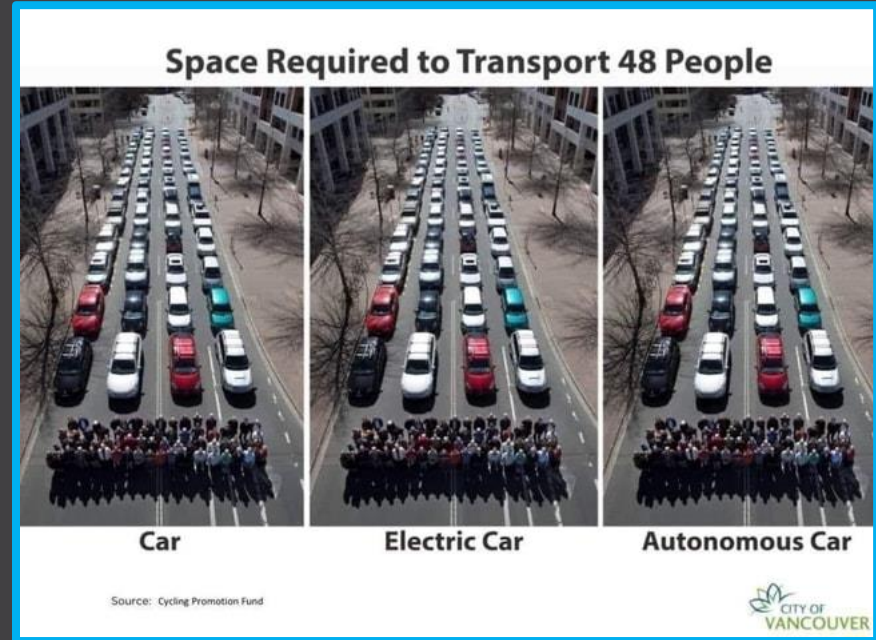
      

Version 1.0



# “Co-Benefits”\* of Driving Less

- Less congestion
- Fewer taxpayer \$\$ to expand road network
- Less wear and tear on roads
- More free time



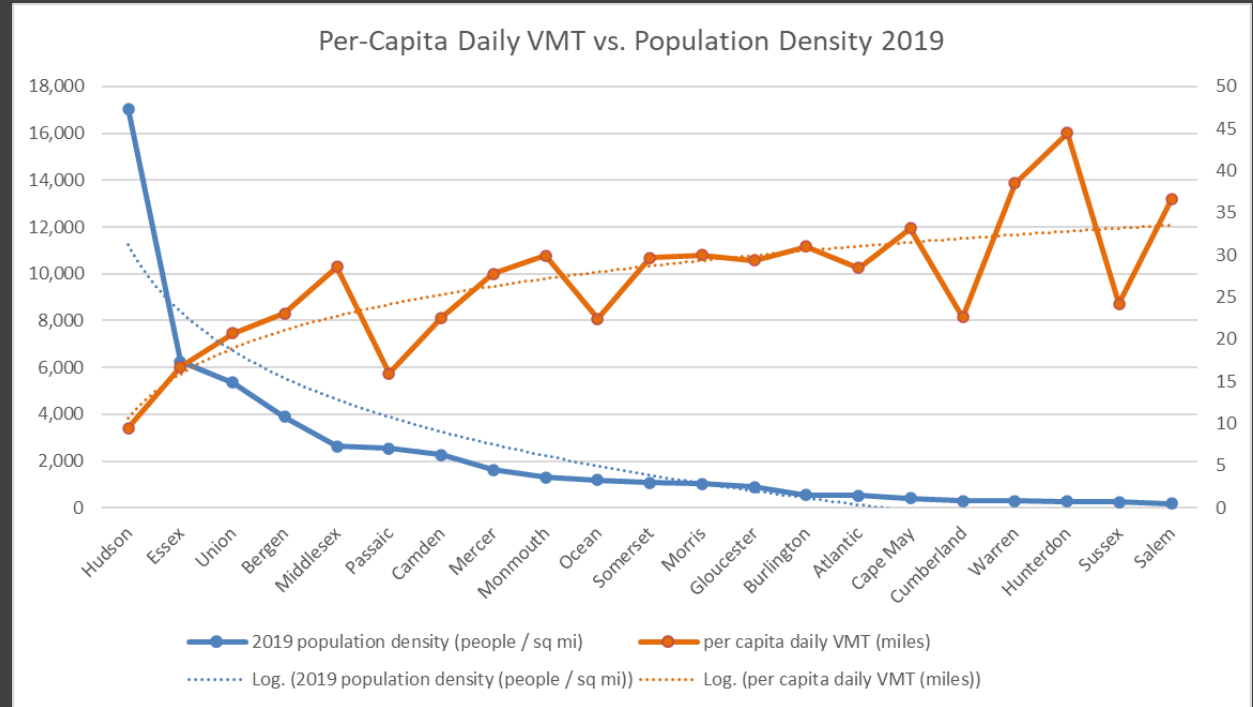
\* We used to just call these “benefits”

# How do we reduce the need to drive?

- Build stuff closer together:
  - Density – are destinations close together?
  - “Downtown” (mix of uses) – are different *kinds* of destinations close together?

When things are closer together, people tend to drive less:

- more walking and biking
- shorter car trips
- transit becomes more viable



NOTE: Cumberland and Sussex counties illustrate the limitations of how VMT is currently measured



# How do we reduce the need to drive?

- Build stuff closer together:
  - Density – are destinations close together?
  - “Downtown” (mix of uses) – are different *kinds* of destinations close together?
- Make walking (and biking, and skateboarding etc.) easier and safer
  - Street connectivity (grid rather than branching)
    - BONUS: Also makes car trips shorter
  - Complete streets – design for people rather than vehicles



Cedar Lane in Teaneck



White Horse Pike in Somerdale



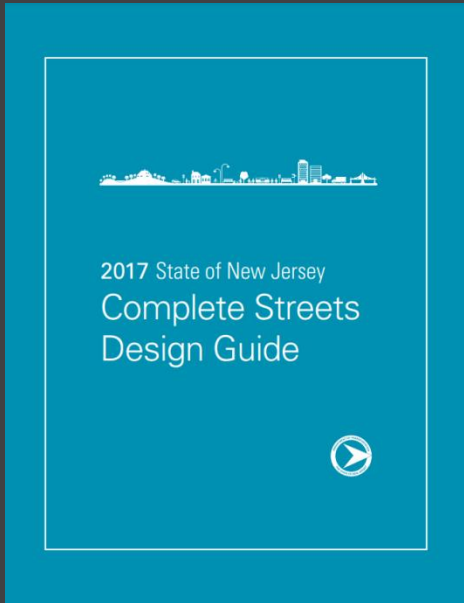
Westwood Ave in Westwood

These three places all score well (and similarly to each other) on metrics of street network connectivity!

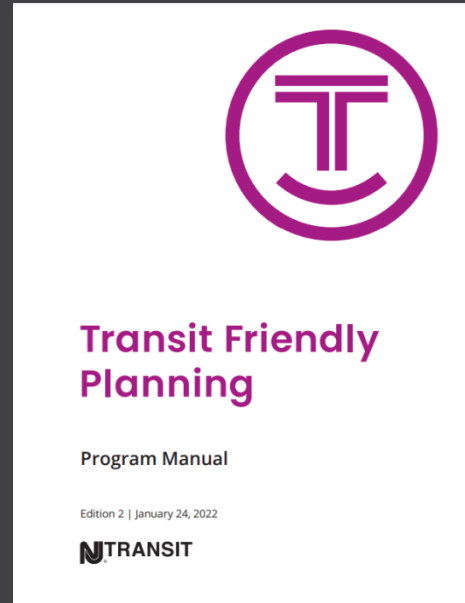
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  - Complete streets – design for people rather than vehicles
- Make transit an option for more people (and consider making it free)

# Make walking safer and more pleasant (with or without a transit station)



NJDOT, 2017



NJ Transit, hot off the presses!



# Additional co-benefits of compact, walkable places:

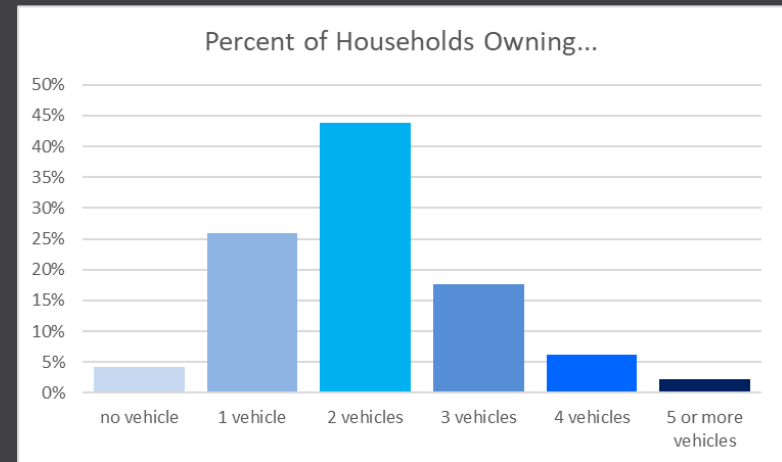
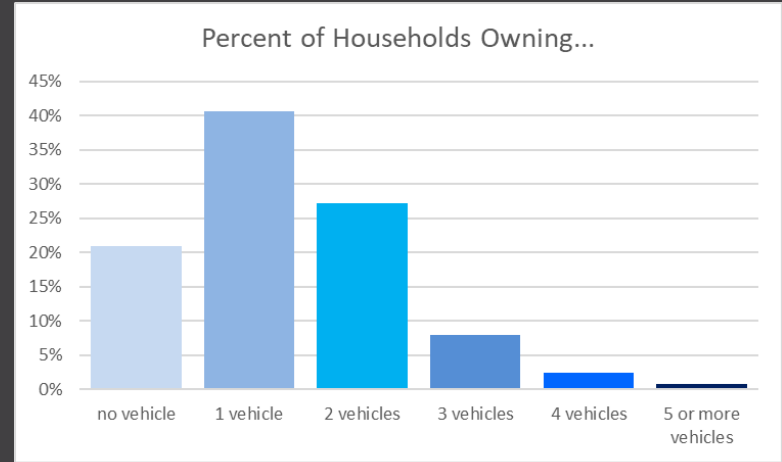
- **Social justice:** facilitates travel for people who can't afford cars



When the built environment is more compact and walkable, people don't need to own as many cars

119 municipalities scoring well on all 3 smart-growth metrics (density, mixed use, street network connectivity)

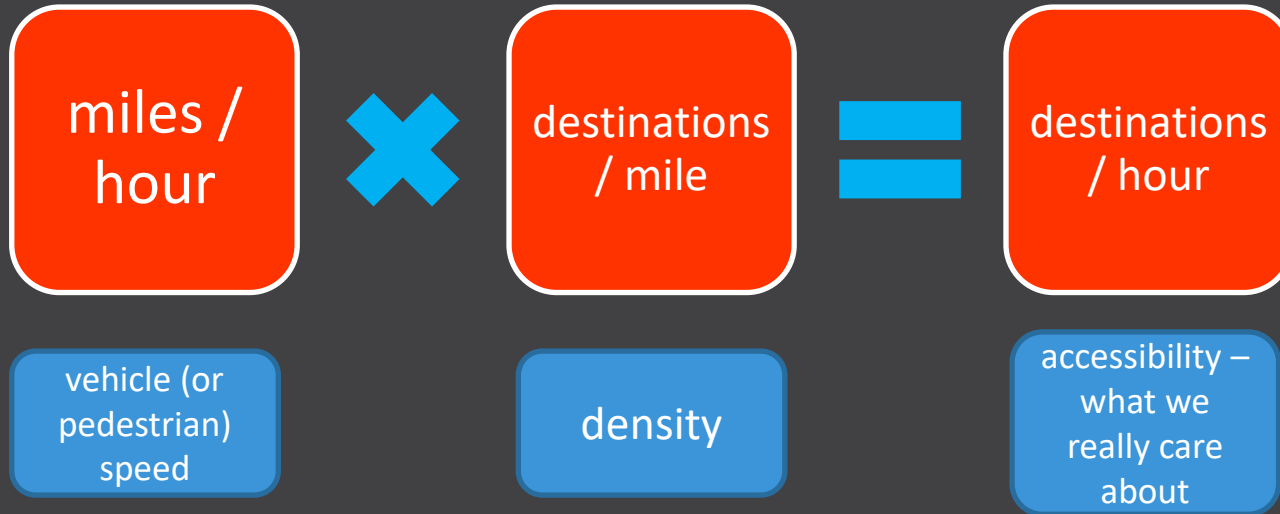
163 municipalities not scoring well on any of the 3 smart-growth metrics



# Additional co-benefits of building things closer together:

- **Social justice:** facilitates travel for people who can't afford cars
- **Safety:** shorter travel distances at slower speeds make pedestrians safer

# Car-centric vs. People-centric



Density is a substitute for speed. We can increase the number of places we can visit by putting destinations close together, just as easily as we can by traveling quickly among destinations that are far apart.

# Additional co-benefits of building things closer together:

- **Social justice:** facilitates travel for people who can't afford cars
- **Safety:** shorter travel distances at slower speeds make pedestrians safer
- **Healthier lifestyles:** more time walking, less time behind the wheel

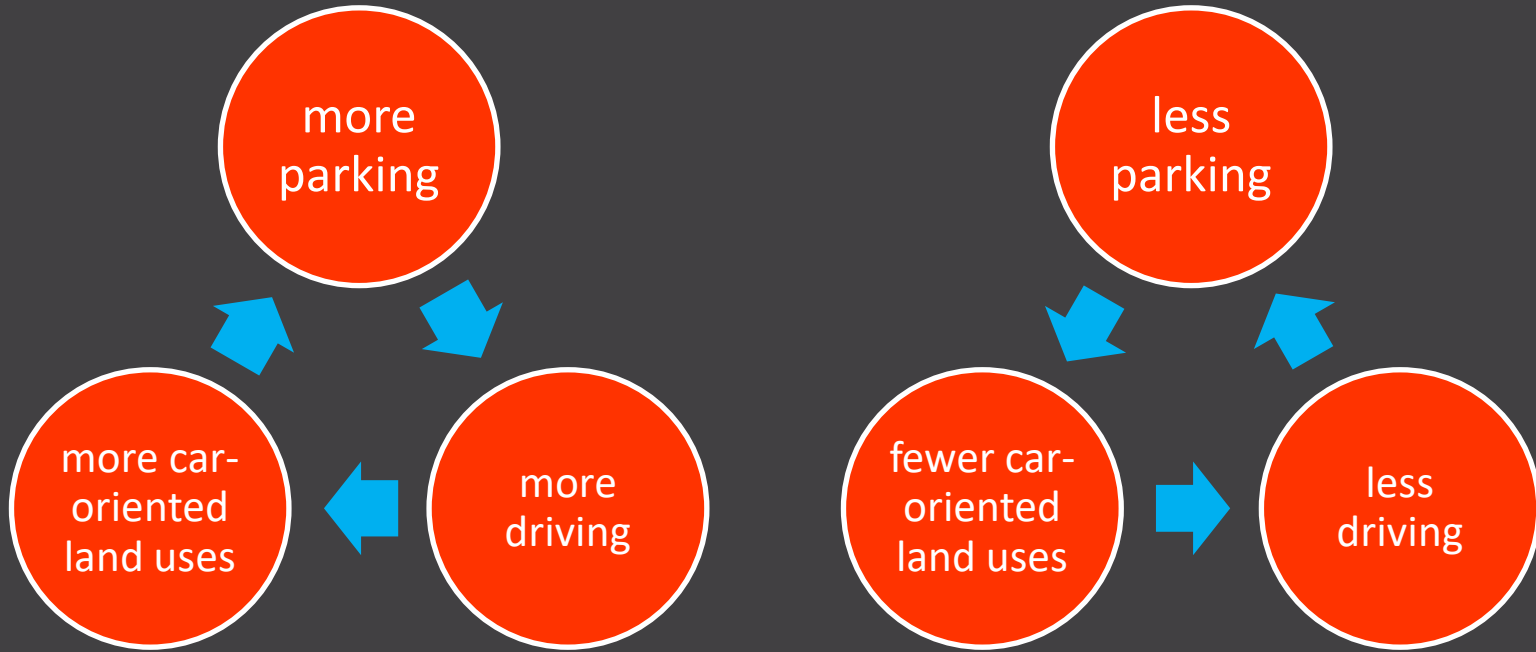
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- **Land savings:** less need to devote land to parking

# Driving and Parking: A Vicious Cycle



# Reclaiming Land from Vehicles

- Reduced incentive to drive everywhere
- More land for infill development
  - Increase housing supply → reduce housing prices
  - Increase housing diversity: rediscover the “missing middle”
  - Make walkable neighborhoods available to more people
- More land for urban open space
  - Reduce urban heat island effect
  - Improve mental health





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# Interacting With Nature in Cities Can Reduce Loneliness



View of Sheep Meadow in Central Park and the midtown Manhattan city skyline on October 12, 2019 in New York. iSTOCK.COM/STOCKINASIA

By [Andre Claudio](#)

JANUARY 12, 2022

Local officials should improve access to existing green spaces, among other things, to help lessen loneliness, one study shows.



# Social equity issues in VMT reduction:

- Development that de-emphasizes driving will naturally benefit car-less households, a disproportionate % of whom are lower-income and/or people of color
  - Contrast with simply hoping everyone will drive an electric vehicle (\$\$)
- Street design that improves pedestrian safety will disproportionately benefit people who are already not driving
- Improved (and maybe even free!) transit would most benefit transit-dependent populations

# Social equity issues in VMT reduction:

- Reclaiming car-oriented land for urban green space can disproportionately benefit lower-income neighborhoods that have been undersupplied with park space
  - Similarly for mitigation of urban heat islands
- Infill development offers opportunities to diversify housing stock
- Pent-up demand for in-town living can risk displacing long-time residents; inclusionary zoning might be needed even in places that have long been thought of as “distressed” (like Newark), to stay ahead of housing price increases stimulated by new development

# How do we make this happen?

- **Require new development to estimate VMT/GHG impacts:** e.g. California, Colorado
- **Zoning reform:** e.g. Oregon disallowing single-family-only zoning
  - May need to pair with inclusionary zoning requirements, to reduce risk of displacement of long-time residents with lower incomes
- **Reduce or eliminate parking requirements:** e.g. Buffalo, Berkeley CA, Fayetteville AR
- **Change in culture at state DOTs,** to re-learn the difference between a “road” and a “street” and to treat streets as places where people take priority over vehicles



Thank you!

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