Young Americans ditch the car

By Steve Hargreaves @CNNMoney September 17, 2012: 10:34 AM ET

PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- America's young people just aren't buying cars like they used to.
The share of new cars purchased by those aged 18-34 dropped 30% in the last five years, according to the car shopping web site Edmunds.com.

Some say the economy is mostly to blame -- that the young aren't buying because they've been particularly **hard hit by the recession**. But others say the trend could be part of larger social shifts.
One reason is demographic: The re-urbanization of America is giving more people access to public transportation. The advent of Zipcar (**ZIP**) and other car-on-demand businesses are eliminating the need

to own and insure an expensive vehicle that often isn't driven much. But mostly it's the explosion of social media. Car ownership just may not be as socially important as it used to be.

"What we used to do in cars, young people are now doing online," said one analyst at a recent oil conference.

The ability to meet and interact with people on the Internet is largely replacing the need to hop in a car and cruise down the strip.

Couple that with more recent restrictions on driving -- later ages for licenses, limits on how many people can be in the car, restrictions on cell phone use -- and the Internet may be surpassing the automobile in the category that gave cars so much appeal: freedom.

"When I got into a vehicle, it represented me going to meet my friends," said Craig Giffi, automotive practice leader at the consultancy Deloitte. "For them, it cuts them off from their friends."

This is particularly true for the youngest, most digitally-connected members of **Generation Y**. Forty-six percent of 18-24 year-olds would choose Internet access over owning a car, according to a recent Deloitte study.

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It's a trend the car companies are noticing as well.

"With this generation, what owning a car means is completely different from previous generations," said Annalisa Bluhm, a spokeswoman for General Motors. "It was a right of passage. Now the right of passage is a cell phone."

With the Baby Boomers, Bluhm said three-quarters had obtained early life's five big rites of passage by the time they were 30 -- buying a car, graduating from college, getting married, buying a house and having kids. Now less than 40% of the under-30 crowd has all these things.

What's more, 30% of Baby Boomers considered themselves "car enthusiasts," said Bluhm, buying showcase vehicles like the Camaro, Corvette or Jeep. Less than 15% of Gen-Yers say the same, and they're flocking to more practical models.

"They have a number of things that validate them," Bluhm said. "The car is not their first purchase."

The real question for carmakers is whether young people will return to the showroom when the economy recovers. Many say they will.

"This is purely a matter of economics," said Michelle Krebs, an analyst at Edmunds.com.

Krebs said the drop in sales share by young people is misleading, as

more of them are buying used cars or simply living at home longer and using their parents' vehicles. When the economy improves, they will be back en masse.
"We don't all live in urban areas and can get by without a car," she said.

Gen-Y'ers: Delaying adulthood

Analysts at Ford (**F**, **Fortune 500**) seem to think so too.
Young people may defer buying cars until the economy improves or they may live out their 20s in urban areas, but at some point they will have families, move to the suburbs and need vehicles, said Erich Merkle, Ford's U.S. sales analyst.
"They might be able to hold off for a period of time," said Merkle. "But Ford takes the long-term view -- They are going to be around for a long time and they are going to purchase many, many new cars."
But as Deloitte's Giffi said, the longer these young people go without cars, the easier time they have adjusting to life without one. ■

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The Affordable Housing Crisis – What's a City or County To Do? About two and a half years ago, a Public Policy Institute of California poll found that affordable housing was at the top of Californians' list of concerns, just below the problem of traffic congestion.

A follow up report by Housing California and PolicyLink estimated that the state backlog of affordable housing production was over 651,000 units and the state needed to build 52,000 units of affordable housing annually to keep up with the growth of California households earning less than $41,000 a year.

To make matters worse, lower-priced housing is often located far from job centers — leading to worse traffic congestion, more air pollution, and higher transportation costs for those who can least afford it.

With the current construction slowdown, now may be a good time to evaluate what local governments can do to address affordable housing before the construction boom begins again.

***Encourage SROs*:** SROs (Single Room Occupancy Units) offer a small, one-room affordable housing option for low-income residents. The City of San Diego has demonstrated that this type of affordable housing can be built by the private sector without city subsidies, simply by changing local zoning codes.

In the mid 1980s, San Diego officials realized their downtown was gentrifying and low-income people were being forced to leave. Seventy two percent of the city's SRO units had been lost to developers who were rapidly demolishing grungy old hotel buildings in order to erect tourist hotels, condos, and upscale shops. In response, the City adopted an SRO ordinance in 1985 that demanded that every SRO unit a developer converted or demolished must be replaced, one-for-one, elsewhere in San Diego. Developers were offered the option of contributing an in-lieu fee to the city's affordable housing fund or building SRO units.

To encourage developers to keep the money and build the units, the City Council in 1987 adopted a package of 27 changes to the zoning and building codes. The new zoning allowed SRO housing anywhere in the downtown, and by classifying it as commercial use like a hotel, SRO units were relieved from school fees.

Because most SRO residents don't have cars, parking requirements were removed. A garbage disposal and microwave oven replaced a full kitchen. Toilets could be installed without installing a full bathroom – showers or a complete bathroom could be provided down the hall and shared by others.

The response to these zoning changes was an SRO building boom of almost 3,000 new SRO units to the city, few of them publicly subsidized. The best of them became exemplars of walkable, mixed-use urban design.

In the late nineties, with Central San Diego becoming increasingly affluent, the redevelopment agency pushed for regulatory changes to discourage further SRO production.

Today in downtown San Diego, SRO buildings blend into San Diego's historic architecture and don't stand out as different. They sit across from multimillion-dollar condos and many have uses on the ground floor that cater to upscale customers. Reportedly, low and high-income residents coexist without any problems.

500 West — A renovated hotel in downtown San Diego. Units are mixed SROs and market rate.

San Diego's SROs are inhabited by working people, students, disabled people, seniors, and others and provide a valuable housing option for service employees and others who need or want to live downtown. Most rents generally run between $400 and $700 a month.

Get Help from the Developer: Developers John Anderson and Tom DiGiovanni have become very popular leaders in Northern California by demonstrating how to build more affordable housing without creating blocks and blocks of identically-priced, cookie-cutter units. Their neighborhoods feature a mixture of housing types, costs, colors and sizes.

The largest houses in Doe Mill (their initial development, built in Chico, CA) are 1,860 sq. ft., making them smaller and less expensive than the typical U.S. house. Lots are also smaller than usual, 3,500 to 4,000 sq. ft.

Anderson employs a technique he refers to as "mass customization" by creating "Chevy" or "Cadillac" options in the interior of the home. He builds with standard lumber dimensions and lays out floor plans in two-foot increments to standardize as much as possible. Interiors are carefully laid out with open layouts that can

be customized later. This technique makes affordable and expensive units indistinguishable from one another.

Accessory units are optional for buyers. They rent for $600 to $700 a month, creating a supply of inexpensive apartments. That income pays the cost of the extra unit and an additional $200 to $300, which can be applied to the mortgage on the main house.

In Doe Mill there are several clusters of courtyard housing tucked into the neighborhood. These units cost $50,000 less than the least expensive street fronting houses in the project. The courtyard bungalows are small, starting at 960 square feet, and have no garage, just a parking space or carport. This design achieves a density of 17 units/acre and the reduced land costs reduce the sales price of the home.

Implement an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance: Many cities and counties throughout the nation now require builders to make a specified percentage of the homes they build in a new development affordable to lower income families. In California last year there were an estimated 170 such programs in existence.

The California Coalition for Rural Housing (CCRH) recently launched a free, searchable database of more than 130 inclusionary housing programs. The database provides summaries of the characteristics for each policy. Users may search for these summaries by jurisdiction name or by more than 30 other variables. Each summary provides a link to the jurisdiction's full policy. To access the database, visit www.calruralhousing.org.

House the Workforce: One of the most desirable and costly places to live in the country, the City of Santa Barbara, has a particularly difficult challenge housing the many service workers in the area.

The Santa Barbara Housing Authority has been tackling the challenge of keeping workers off the road by providing affordable housing in town. One of their more recently built housing complexes is in downtown Santa Barbara where property values are extraordinarily high. Studio and one-bedroom units are available exclusively to people who work in the downtown area with an income below about $36,000 per year for one person and $62,000 per year for two. Priority is given to those who do not own a car. Below market fixed monthly rents range from $481 to $851.

With 56 units per acre, the project promotes high-density housing, but the design fits beautifully into the historic architecture of downtown Santa Barbara.

Reduce Other Living Expenses to Make Rents More Affordable: The traditional definition of housing affordability is probably too restrictive. Today the average U.S. household spends 19 percent of its budget on transportation. This high figure would indicate that the impact of transportation should be considered when cities look at affordable housing.

The City of Los Angeles connected transportation and affordability when they assisted the development of a ten-acre site adjacent to a new light-rail stop by expediting the permitting process, providing a zoning change, and relaxing parking regulations. The development offers lower cost housing and the possibility of discarding the family car. Residents have a seven-minute ride to jobs in downtown Los Angeles via transit.

When is such a Subsidy Worth the Cost to the Community?: The Brookings Institution has prepared a document that helps communities define affordability as related to transportation costs by considering walkable access to schools, shopping, recreation and public transportation. *The Affordability Index: A New Tool for Measuring the True Affordability of a Housing Choice* is available on the Brookings web page.

Reduced utility bills can contribute significantly to the affordability of a housing unit. John Shirey, Executive Director of the California Redevelopment Association, recently advised LGC members to add funds to housing in redevelopment areas to make them energy-efficient. Taking such action can save up to $50 a month on utility bills, he reports.

For some low-income residents, a community garden included in a housing complex offers a welcome option for reducing food costs by allowing residents to grow some of their own vegetables.

In Washington, the City of Seattle's Department of Neighborhood's Patch Programs, in cooperation with the nonprofit P-Patch Trust, provides organic community garden space for residents of 70 Seattle neighborhoods. These programs serve more than 6,000 urban gardeners on 23 acres of land with an emphasis on low-income and immigrant populations and youth.

Approach the State for Assistance: California's voters have passed bonds to assist with housing affordability, notably Proposition 46 and last November's Proposition 1C and there is still some money remaining. To explore this option, visit the Housing and Community Development Department's web page at www.hcd.ca.gov. Note that guidelines for the expenditure of a portion of the Prop. 1C money are still being pondered by the legislature.

Livable Places Update *is published monthly and is a project of the Local Government Commission's Center for Livable Communities. For subscription information call us at ☎ (916) 448-1198. If you have news from your area to include in future issues, please send it to: LPU, 1303 J Street, Suite 250, Sacramento, CA 95814.*

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February 23, 2012

Kurt Seemann, P.E.
Senior Engineer
City of Redmond Public Works Transportation
15670 NE 85th Street
Redmond, WA 98073

Subject: Vision 5 Redmond – Level 1 Traffic Study

Dear Mr. Seemann,

This traffic study is for Vision 5, a residential development located at NE 85th Street and 163rd Avenue NE in Redmond, Washington. This letter-report includes the following: a development description, PM peak hour trip generation and travel assignment forecast and our conclusions.

Development Description

A vicinity map and a site plan are attached for reference. Vision 5 is located on a vacant site to the north of NE 85th Street and west of 163rd Avenue NE. The site is proposed with 96 residential mini-suites. The average suite size is 200 square feet. Each suite includes its own bathroom and is supported by common kitchen and deck facilities.

Vision 5 is a similar concept to Tudor Manor. Both developments are managed by the applicant. Tudor Manor is located at 16552 NE 84th Court and is marketed as a sustainable residential living development. The site includes 61 mini-suites, with an average suite size of 200 square feet. Tudor Manor is currently at full occupancy.

The size and character of Tudor Manor's living spaces attracts a mix of tenants ranging from students, out-of-area business persons (both locally employed and with recurring business in the area), intermediate-term residents, and medical patient families. The mix of tenants of Vision 5 is expected to be similar.

The applicant indicates that the majority Tudor Manor tenants do not own a vehicle and most use public transit, bike and walk to/from their destinations. Tudor Manor's non-vehicle tenants are provided with a transit pass credit of $25 per month to support their transit needs. A similar amenity will be available to future Vision 5 tenants.

Trip Generation

Vision 5 is atypical of other general apartment uses. A PM peak hour trip generation study was conducted for Tudor Manor to develop a trip rate to forecast trip generation for Vision.

Trip Generation Study

Observations of inbound and outbound PM peak hour vehicular movements at Tudor Manor were conducted on Friday, February 17, Tuesday, February 21, and Wednesday, February 22, 2012. The observations are summarized in Table 1. For study purposes the Friday data was excluded from the average results, because Friday is not generally considered as a weekday for trip generation purposes.

Table 1: 2012 Tudor Manor Vehicle Trip Generation Observations

Start	Friday Feb-17			Tuesday Feb-21			Wednesday Feb-22			Weekday Average		
Time	In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total
4:00 PM	0	1	1	2	0	2	1	0	1	2	0	2
4:15 PM	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
4:30 PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
4:45 PM	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
5:00 PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
5:15 PM	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	3	2	1	2
5:30 PM	2	0	2	2	1	3	0	1	1	1	1	2
5:45 PM	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	1	2
Peak Hour	3	0	3	3	2	5	4	4	8	4	3	7

Table 1 shows Tudor Manor generating 7 PM peak hour vehicle trips, which is equivalent to a PM peak hour trip rate of 0.11 trips per mini-suite (7 PM trips / 61 mini-suites), split 57% in and 43% out. Using this information, Vision 5 is forecast to generate 11 PM peak hour trips (0.11 trip rate X 96 mini-suites).

Table 2 summarizes the pedestrian trip observations at Tudor Manor, also collected on February 17, 21, and 22. Friday data was excluded from the average results similar to Table 1.

Table 2: 2012 Tudor Manor Pedestrian Trip Generation Observations

Start Time	Fri. Feb-17	Tue. Feb-21	Wed. Feb-22	Wkday. Avg.
4:00 PM	0	8	6	7
4:15 PM	3	2	2	2
4:30 PM	0	4	0	2
4:45 PM	0	1	0	1
5:00 PM	0	1	3	2
5:15 PM	0	3	8	6
5:30 PM	0	3	0	2
5:45 PM	0	1	0	1
Peak Hour	3	15	11	12

Table 2 shows Tudor Manor generating 12 PM peak hour pedestrian trips, which is equivalent to a PM peak hour pedestrian trip rate of 0.20 pedestrian trips per mini-suite (12 PM trips / 61 mini-suites).

Using this information, Vision 5 is forecast to generate 19 PM peak hour pedestrian trips (0.20 pedestrian trip rate X 96 mini-suites).

The small amount of vehicle and pedestrian trips observed appears to be a result of tenant mix, varying tenant schedules and commuting modes and patterns. A similar tenant mix, tenant schedule and commute modes and patterns is expected at Vision 5.

ITE Trip Generation

The ITE land use that best describes Vision 5 is LU-220, "Apartment". For this description, the ITE 'dwelling unit' variable is replaced by 'mini-suites'. The ITE apartment trip rate is 0.62 trips/dwelling unit. Using this rate, Vision 5 would generate 60 PM peak hour trips (0.62 trip rate X 96 dwelling units).

In comparison, the observed Tudor Manor PM peak hour vehicle trip rate is 82% lower than the ITE PM peak hour trip rate for an apartment land use ({[ITE rate] –[observed rate]} / [ITE rate]). This marked difference is due to the noticeably smaller 200 square foot mini-suites compared to more typical 600-1,000 square foot apartment units. The associated reduced person occupancy per mini-suite and tenant mix does not reflect typical apartment building demographics. Since Vision 5 will operate similar to Tudor Manor, it is our opinion that the vehicle trip rate derived from the trip generation study is a reasonably accurate forecast of traffic generated by the proposed development.

A peak hour project-generated trip assignment is attached. The PM peak hour trips were assigned based on local traffic volume data found on the City's website. Within the study the stop-sign controlled intersection of NE 85th Streets/ 163rd Avenue NE is impacted by 11 vehicle trips and the signalized intersection of NE 85th Streets/ 164th Avenue NE is impacted by 9 vehicle trips.

Conclusion

Vision 5 is forecast to generate 11 vehicle trips and 19 pedestrian trips during the PM peak hour. Accordingly, Vision 5 is not anticipated to create a significant adverse traffic impact within Redmond.

We trust the information presented in this letter-report will satisfy the City of Redmond's Level 1 Traffic Study requirement. If you have any questions or comments please contact TSI at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,
Transportation Solutions, Inc.

Jeffrey P. K. Hee, P.E.
Project Engineer

166th Ave NE
Tudor Manor
165th Ave NE
NE 85th Street
164th Ave NE
163rd Ave NE
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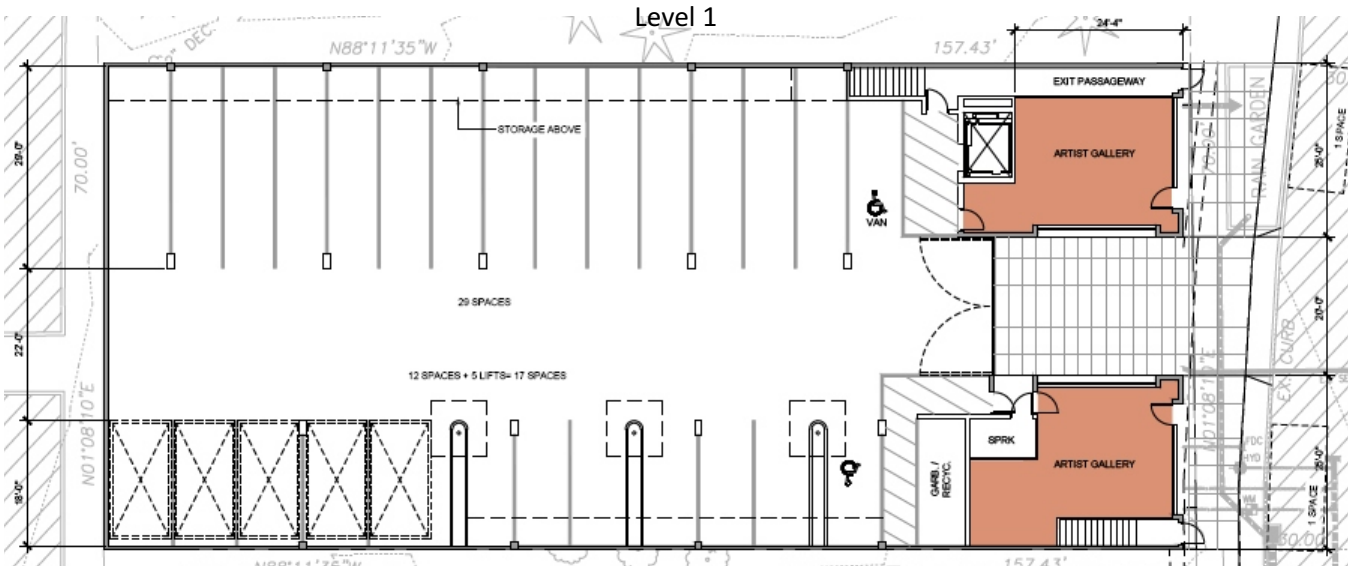
Level 1



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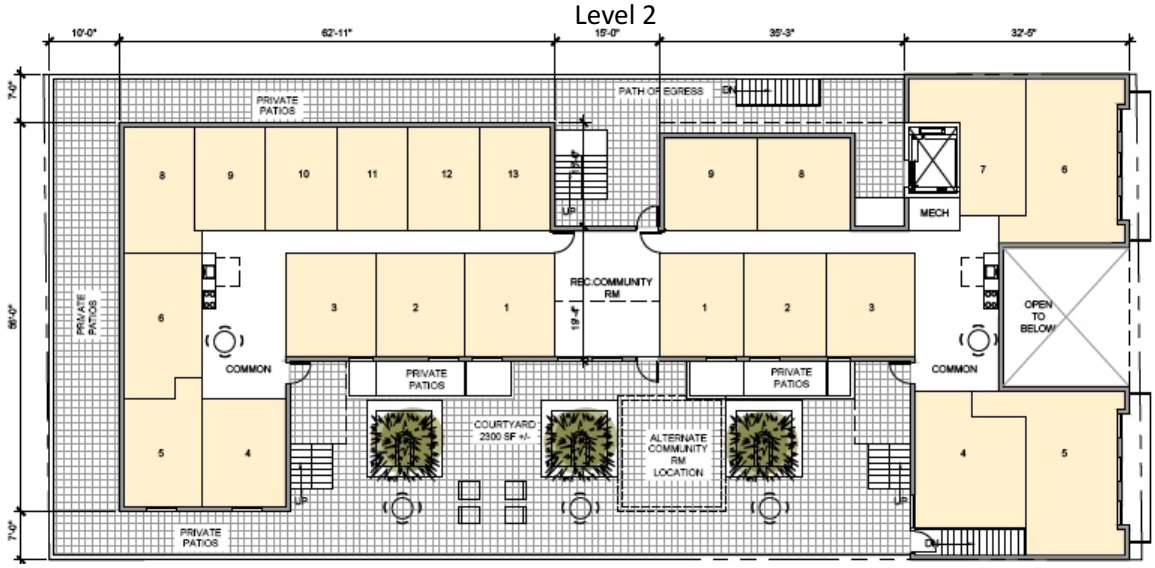

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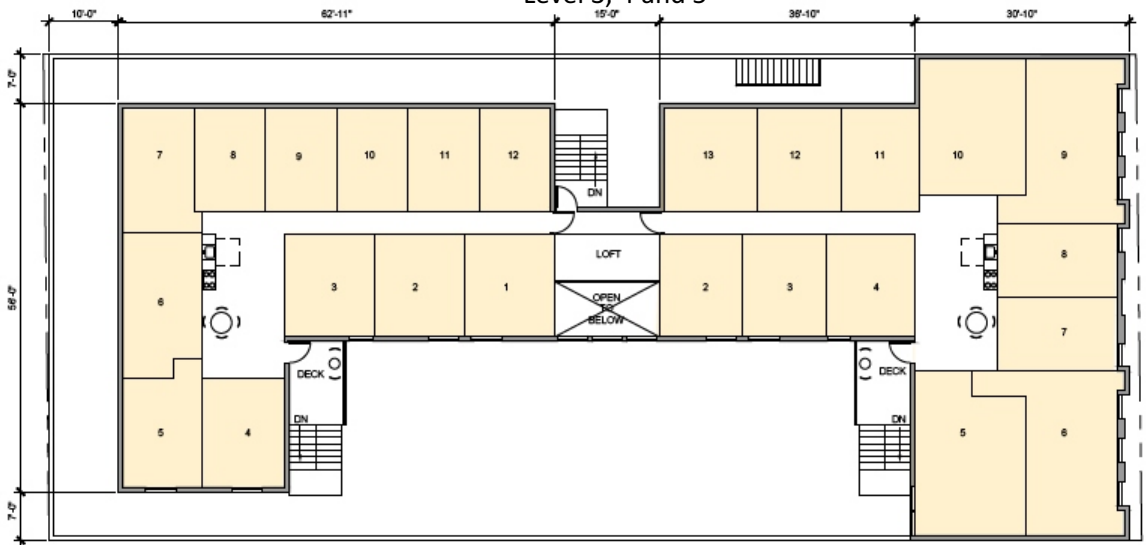

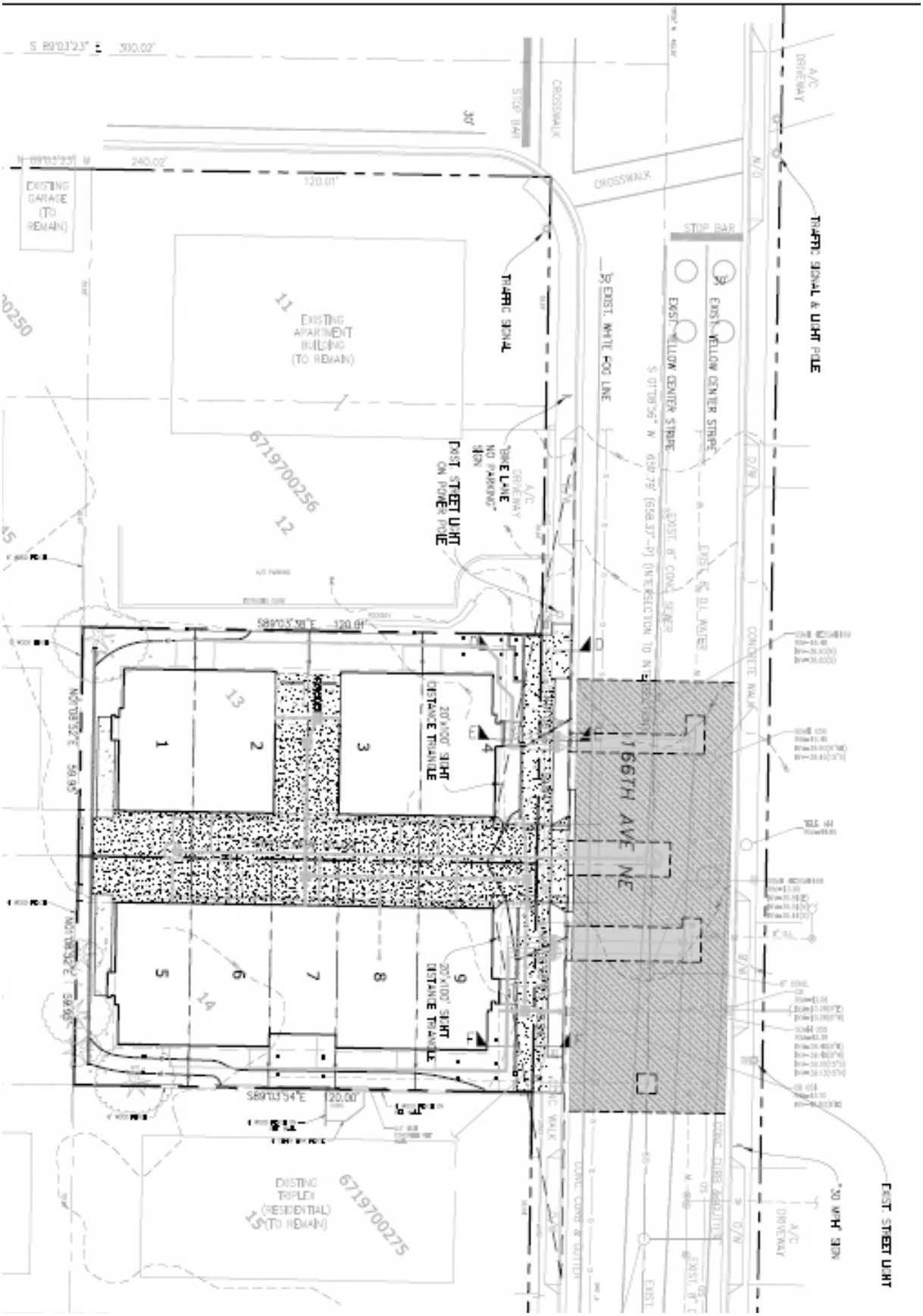
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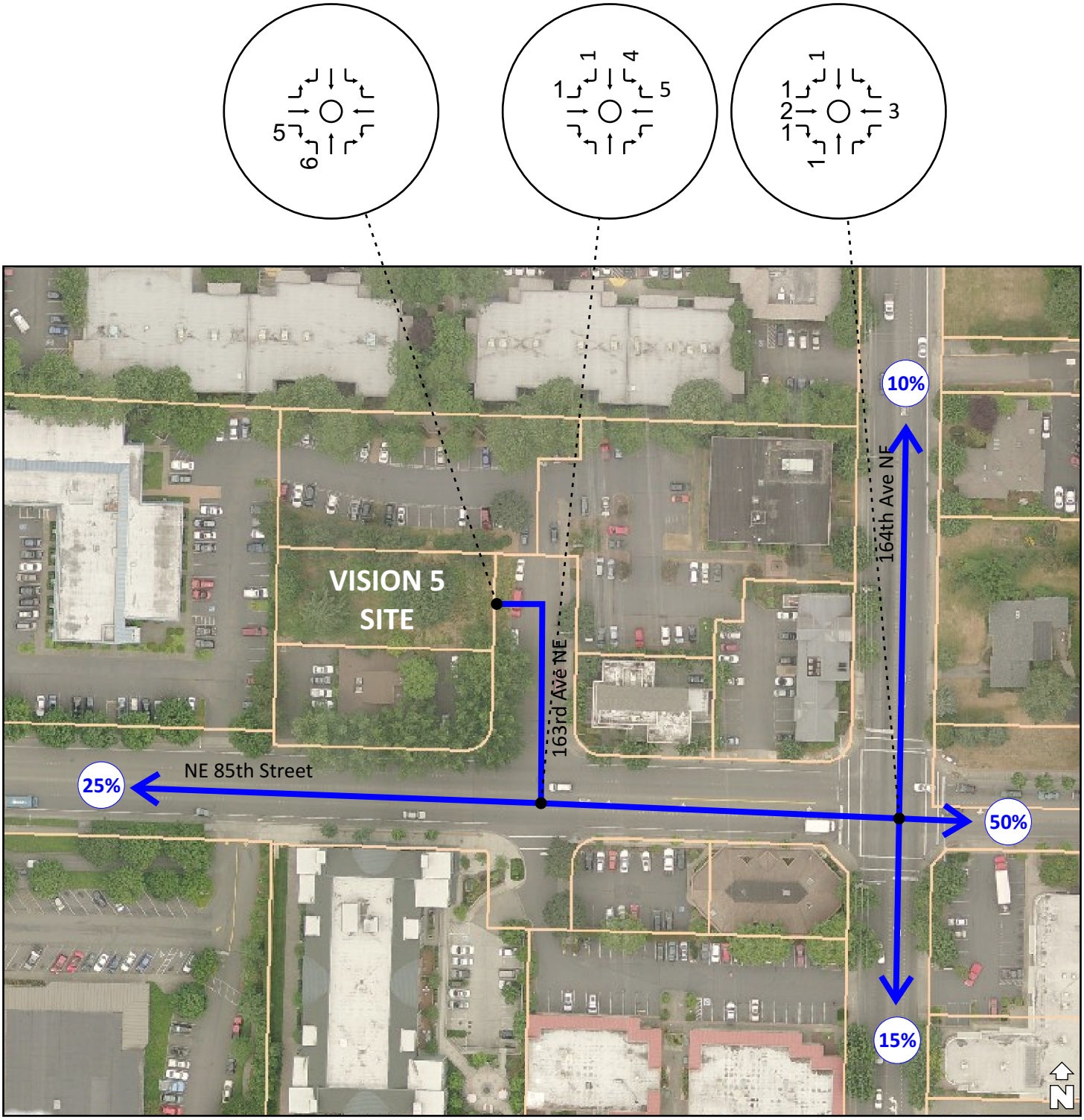
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August 31, 2012

Joan McBride, Mayor, and Kirkland City Council
Mike Miller, Chair, and Kirkland Planning Commission
City of Kirkland
123 5th Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033

Subject: Residential Suites (SRO) Kirkland Zoning Code Amendments
File No. ZON12-00002
SRO Parking Demand Census Statistical Comparison

Dear Mayor McBride, Kirkland City Council, Mr. Miller and Kirkland Planning Commission,

This letter has been prepared on behalf of Natural and Built Environments. Its purpose is to compare the characteristics of the proposed Kirkland Single Room Occupant (SRO) project to existing SRO (or mini-suite) developments in Redmond, Washington. Two existing SRO projects are located in Redmond, Tudor Manor located at 16552 NE 84th Court (61 units and 34 parking stalls), and Portula'ca located 8055 165th Lane NE (7 units and 3 parking stalls). All three projects are considered to provide affordable housing relative to adjacent traditional rental units. This letter also provides support for a proposed Zoning Code addition of 0.5 parking stalls per SRO. The following summarizes information collected as part of the US Census as it relates to household occupancy and vehicle ownership characteristics for Redmond and Kirkland, and vehicle availability trends associated with affordable housing.

While the 2010 Census provides the most up to date information available, only limited information has been released at this time. The 2000 Census, although older, provides much more detailed information housing, and transportation choices. Table 1 compares the available 2010 data with data from 2000 to show that the changes that have occurred during the past decade have been minimal, and that the more detailed 2000 Census data remains valid.

Table 1 – 2010 Citywide Occupancy Data; Renter Occupied Households

City	2000	2010
% Single Occupant Households		
Redmond	30.1%	29.6%
Kirkland	35.8%	36.0%
Average Household Size – Rental Units		
Redmond	2.08	2.18
Kirkland	1.84	1.94

As shown in Table 1, minimal changes have occurred in the proportion of single occupant households and average household size for rental units between 2000 and 2010. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the more detailed information available from the 2000 Census remains valid.

Table 2 compares the proportion of single occupant rental households verses total single occupant households (owner occupied and renter occupied), and average household size for rental occupied households in Redmond and Kirkland.

Table 2 – 2000 Citywide Occupancy Data; Renter Occupied Households

City	% Single Occupant HH	Average HH Size
Redmond	38.0%	2.08
Kirkland	44.0%	1.84

As shown in Table 2, Kirkland currently has a higher proportion of single occupant rental households and smaller average household site than Redmond. Table 3 shows how these characteristics change for the specific location of the proposed SRO project in downtown Kirkland relative to the Citywide data shown in Table 2. This is relevant since the proposed changes to the zoning code would only allow SRO projects to be located within walking distance of the Kirkland Transit Center and the Kingsgate Park and Ride.

Table 3 – 2000 Downtown Occupancy Data; Renter Occupied Households

City	% Single Occupant HH	Average HH Size
Redmond	35.3%	2.09
Kirkland	47.6%	1.63

As shown in Table 3, the proportion of single occupant households in downtown Kirkland is higher than the citywide proportion, while average household size is lower. Relative to downtown Redmond, Kirkland has a higher proportion of single occupant households and lower average household size. This information was then combined with information from the PSRC Journey to Work which is based on 2000 census data related to vehicle ownership, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 – 2010 Downtown Vehicle Ownership; Renter Occupied Households

City	Average HH Size	Average Vehicle Ownership/Unit
Redmond	2.09	1.5
Kirkland	1.63	1.5

Table 4 shows that vehicle ownership for traditional rental units is the same for downtown Kirkland as it is in downtown Redmond. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that vehicle ownership associated with the proposed SRO project in downtown Kirkland would be consistent with the existing SRO sites in Redmond, and that the proposed 0.5 parking stalls/suite ratio approved in the City of Redmond is appropriate for the City of Kirkland.

This is further confirmed by similar walk- and transit-scores for the proposed downtown Kirkland project site and the existing Redmond projects. Combined with similar Transportation Management Plan measures to promote transit and non-motorized travel modes, vehicle ownership characteristics of the projects are anticipated to be consistent between the proposed Kirkland and existing Redmond SRO projects.

Table 5 – Walk and Transit Scores

City	Walk Score	Transit-Score
Redmond	94	52
Kirkland	86	52

In addition to the local information presented above, the City of San Diego conducted an extensive survey of parking characteristics associated with affordable housing, including SRO projects. The analysis included 875 surveys from 21 sites. The surveys showed that vehicle availability for SRO projects is less than 0.4 vehicles per units. This supports the provision of 0.5 parking stalls per SRO unit in the Zoning Code. A copy of the survey results is included as an attachment to this letter.

We trust this analysis provides you with an understanding of the similarities between the proposed mini-suites project located in Kirkland with the existing Redmond projects, and the data to support the provision of on-site parking at a rate of 0.5 stalls per SRO.

Sincerely,
Transportation Solutions, Inc.

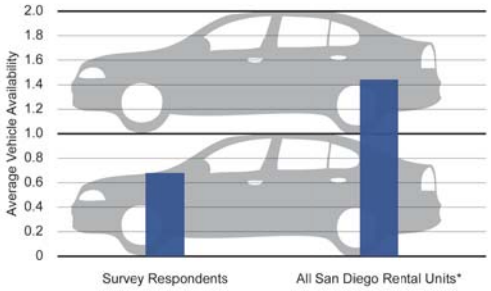
James Webb, PE, PTOE
Attachment

Results From Affordable Housing Resident Survey

Average Household Vehicle Availability

On average, residents of affordable housing do not require as much parking as is typically required for rental housing in San Diego, which may justify the use of different parking requirements.

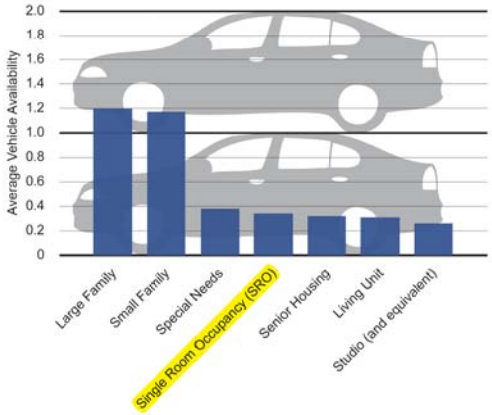
The results of the study show that the average level of household vehicle availability among survey respondents is almost half the average level for all rental housing units in San Diego.*



* Source: 2005-2009 U.S. Census American Community Survey

Average Vehicle Availability by Housing Type

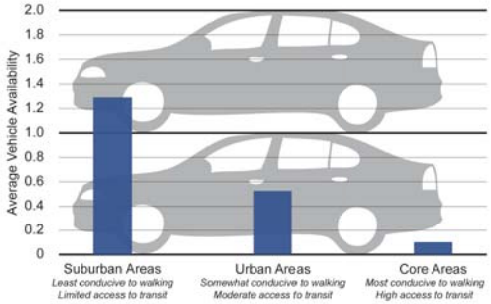
Large family and small family affordable housing have significantly higher average vehicle availability than all other housing types.



Average Vehicle Availability by Land Use and Transportation Context

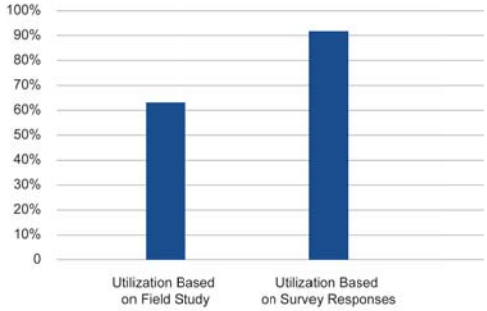
Neighborhood characteristics may influence vehicle ownership levels in affordable housing developments because people may not need cars if they can take transit or walk to destinations. The survey results showed that household vehicle availability is higher in areas that are less conducive to walking and have more limited access to transit.

As defined by a combined measure of the land use and transportation context, suburban areas have the highest mean vehicle availability and core areas have the lowest, with urban areas falling in the middle.



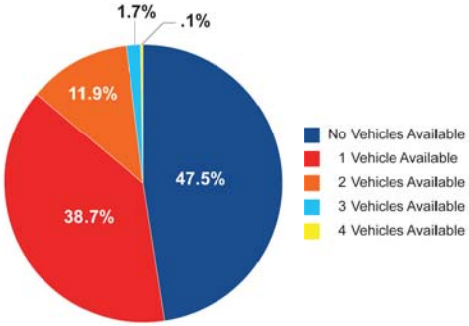
Parking Utilization

Overall, most of the affordable housing developments surveyed have unused parking. On-site parking utilization data indicated parking was less utilized than the household survey responses indicated. This is likely because data were collected at one point in time and the survey was based on the residents' aggregate experience. Overall, this indicates parking is oversupplied.



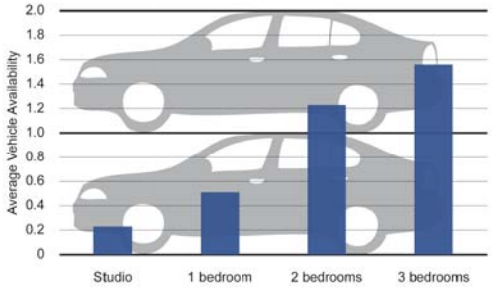
Distribution of Residents' Household Vehicle Availability

Almost half the households surveyed had no vehicle and 38.7% had only one vehicle. Only 13.7% of households had more than one vehicle.



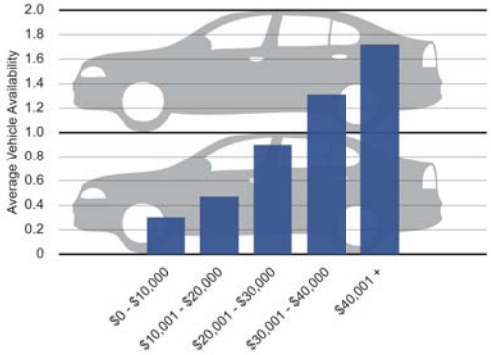
Average Vehicle Availability by Unit Size

Larger housing units, measured by number of bedrooms, are likely to have more residents, more drivers, and higher average vehicle availability.



Average Vehicle Availability by Household Income Range

Vehicle availability is higher in households with greater annual income.



Other Results

- Average vehicle availability decreases in affordable housing developments with a higher percentage of residents over the age of 65. However, this is not considered individually significant because a senior housing development is likely to have a lower number of bedrooms AND more residents over 65 years of age.

Policy Considerations

- The interrelationship of factors affecting parking demand at affordable housing is important when making decisions (e.g., housing type, unit size, location, and walkability).
- Priority should be given to distinct, measurable factors that are typically evaluated in the project development review process (e.g., unit size or location).