



NuStats

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Survey of Behavioral Responses to Increasing Gas Prices

As the cost of filling a gas tank creeps toward three figures, Texans' lifestyles are undergoing shifts but not away from the automobile. Austin-based NuStats, a survey firm specializing in transportation, conducted a survey of residents in Austin, Dallas/ Ft. Worth, and El Paso the week of July 21, 2008. The main survey findings were:

- As a direct result of increasing gas prices – vehicle miles traveled (VMT) has significantly decreased in the three cities.
- Reduction in VMT is not caused by single individuals making large decreases in the amount that they travel but by large numbers of people making slight reductions in the amount they travel.
- They are doing this by trip chaining (i.e., combining trips with different purposes into a single trip) and eliminating some trips altogether.
 - People with lower incomes are eliminating trips to a greater extent than people with higher incomes. But people of all income levels are trip chaining more.
 - People in Austin are shifting toward working from home as a strategy for driving less more so than people in Dallas/ Ft. Worth or El Paso.
- Where there are toll roads, people are using them to drive quicker and faster with less stop-and-go.
 - This is one in four persons in Dallas / Ft. Worth and one in five persons in Austin.
- Few people have replaced driving with alternative modes, such as public transit, walking, – still preferring auto travel to alternative modes.
 - People who have replaced driving trips with public transit or walking trips are lower income.
 - Higher income people are using other strategies like working from home or using toll roads.
- But if gas prices stay at current levels or increase further, we will see greater shifts to public transit in El Paso and in Dallas/ Ft. Worth but not necessarily in Austin.

- More people have downsized to a more fuel-efficient vehicle than have switched to a hybrid vehicle. But if gas prices stay at their current levels or increase, we will see increases in both auto ownership actions.

QUESTIONS	1. Done "a lot" in last 12 months	2. Definitely will do	Total
1. Which of the following actions have you done in the last 12 months as a direct result of increasing gas prices? IF YES: Would you say you've done that "a lot" or "a little"?			
2. If gas prices stay at current levels or increase further, which of the following actions would you be most likely to do in response? IF YES: Would you definitely do that or maybe do that?			
Combine multiple trip into single trip	66%	8%	74%
Eliminate trips	39%	6%	45%
Downsize to more fuel efficient vehicle	21%	19%	40%
Trade gasoline vehicle for hybrid	3%	19%	21%
Work from home	12%	7%	19%
Use toll roads	12%	6%	18%
Start carpooling	9%	9%	18%
Use public transit instead of drive	4%	13%	17%
Walk instead of drive	9%	6%	15%
Bike instead of drive	4%	7%	11%

- Other actions mentioned in rank order and smaller in percents than above are: Use car with better gas mileage, cancel vacation, maintain car, drive slower, look around for lowest price gas, got rid of one vehicle, change spending habits.

Data based on telephone survey (RDD) of 500 households in Austin, Dallas / Ft. Worth, and El Paso the week of July 21, 2008.