Benchmarking Insights on Older Adults

Based on research done by the League of American Bicyclists

Older adults have some of the highest rates of biking and walking for exercise

Older adults are an important and growing portion of the nation's pedestrians and cyclists.

According to the 2017 National Household Travel Survey, people age 65 and older accounted for 6 percent of all bike trips and nearly 14 percent of all walking trips.

Much of the existing data about bicycling and walking is tied to people commuting to work.

Although commuting data is not as useful for assessing the habits of older adults, it still points to increased walking and biking among people age 55 or older and for walking among those over 60.

Similar numbers of older and younger people walk to work.

Among older workers (age 45 or older), people 65-plus are walking to their jobs more often than people in the younger age-groups.

Bicycling and walking to work decreases as people age while trips for errands and recreation increase.

Among all age groups, people age 65 or older have the highest percentage of biking and walking trips for shopping and errands.

Nearly half (48 percent) of people age 50 and older who took any walking trips take three or more walking trips for exercise each week, compared to 38 percent of those age 49 or younger.

A concerning data point: People age 55 to 64 have the highest per capita rates of being killed while biking or walking.

Older adults, particularly in that age group, have made up an increasing share of traffic deaths in recent years.

Older adults have been disproportionately harmed as traffic violence has increased for people who bicycle or walk.

When comparing the years 2010 to 2014 with the years 2015 to 2019, the fatality rates have increased for pedestrians and cyclists ages 55 or older.

Why Older Cyclists and Pedestrians Feel Unsafe

Sharing busy roadways with motor vehicles is the top reason older adults are hesitant to ride a bike.

For older pedestrians, the main concern is the lack of adequate lighting for walking at night.

For more, visit: “Bicycling and Walking by Older Adults,” AARP Livable Communities (2021) based on “Benchmarking Insights on Older Adults,” League of American Bicyclists (2020)