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Public Involvement: Every Voice Matters

MILLENNIALS, WOW

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Millennials (born between 1980 and 2004) will make a difference in the 21st century: just ask them. Personal research and emerging multi-disciplinary research indicate they're not just bragging: Millennials are fundamentally different than previous generations. This difference has significant implications for the mobility and transportation profession. The Council of Economic Advisors released *15 Economic Facts about Millennials* in October 2014 revealing compelling comparisons between Millennials and previous generations: Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980); Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964); and the Silent Generation (born between 1928 and 1945). Interestingly, children born since 2005 are characterized as the Homeland Generation and this ephemeral label has implications for Millennials and other generations. Millennials are one-third of the U.S. total population and 42 percent self-represent with a race or ethnicity other than non-Hispanic white. Millennials represent more foreign born (15%) citizens at any time in the U.S since the end of the 19th century (20%). Further, about 61 percent of adult Millennials have attended collage compared to 46 percent of Baby Boomers at the same age. The Millennial generation began entering the adult work force during the Great Recession occurring at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. However, the Millennial's investment in higher education appears to be paying dividends. In 2013, workers age 25 to 34 with a bachelor's degree were making salaries of \$70,000 plus at 24 percent while high school diplomas where at 4 percent. Conversely, the same demographic with bachelor's degrees were 16 percent and high school diplomas 41 percent earning salaries under \$20,000. Among other generational differences, Millennials marry later, seek home ownership later, and college-educated Millennials tend to migrate to urban areas faster than previous generations. These fundamental economic tenants ensure Millennials will make a difference in the 21st century without even flexing their substantial

This research explores the transportation planning and stakeholders engagement practice implications of these generational differences. An initial scan implies significant underlying preference differences with for example travel modes. The nation's vehicle miles traveled (VMT) have been falling since well before the Great Recession. This is attributed in large measure to Millennial's preferences to defer or omit vehicle ownership and/or driving in their lifestyles. Further, Millennials obtain and process information through sources integrated into the continuing emergence of 21st century technology and communication for which they are intimately responsible for. Their social and community engagement are often more impassioned, less confrontational that previous generations. They are used to being heard and respected. These preferences appear to include a predilection for built spaces that support street-focused social life with space for genuine interpersonal interactions. Their childhood community's built form often is often not desirable to Millennials. Different preferences require engagement and planning approaches.

This presentation/paper explores the diverse range of perspectives about the implications of these shifting conditions. Conclusions and strategies will be provided.