



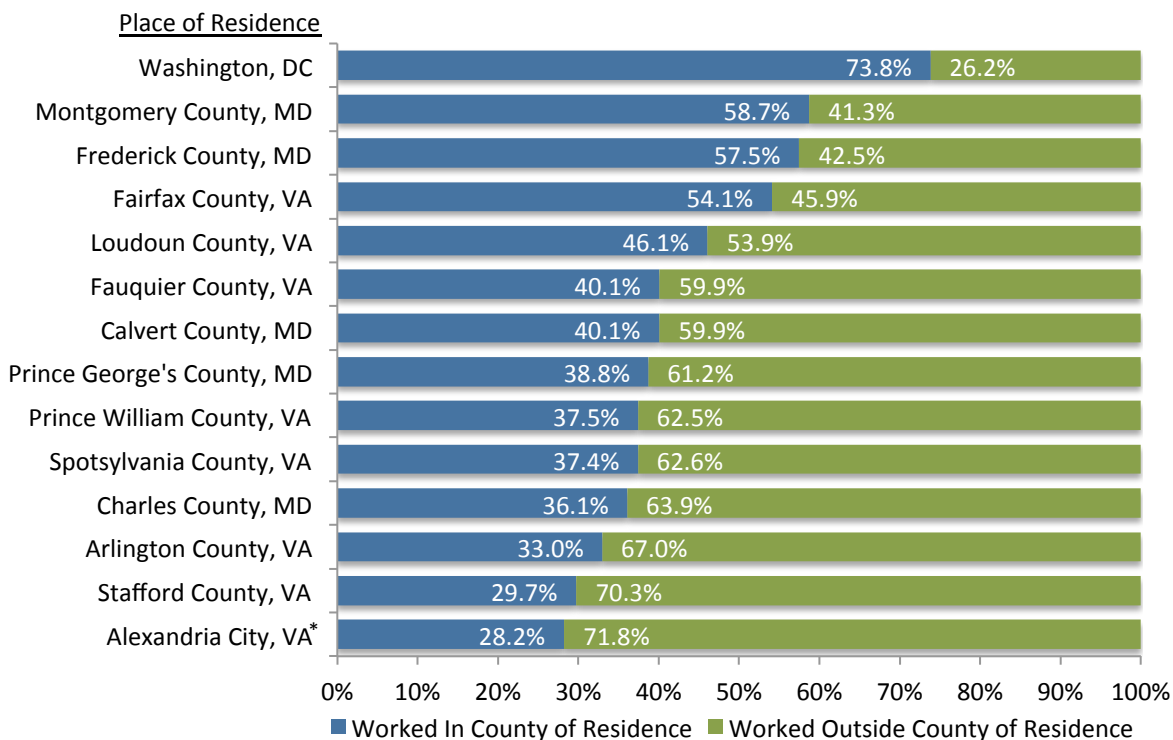
## Update from the American Community Survey

### Commuting Behaviors in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area

By Ryan Price, Research Associate, Center for Regional Analysis

According to the most recent study of urban congestion by the Texas Transportation Institute, Washington area residents have the worst commutes in the nation. From Beltway traffic jams to Metro-rail construction and repair, the journey to work can be a challenge. The proximity of workers' jobs to their homes is a critical piece of the congestion puzzle. According to the data from the 2010 American Community Survey, most people in the DC region live and work in different jurisdictions. This pattern is largely driven by the location of employment centers, the characteristics of the housing stock, as well as the size of the jurisdictions. Localities that contain the region's major job centers such as downtown Washington, the Dulles-Reston Technology Corridor, Tysons Corner, and the I-270 Biotech Corridor generally have more of their resident workforce commuting to jobs within the jurisdiction. For example, nearly ¾ of DC residents work in the city and over half of Fairfax County residents have jobs in the county. By contrast, less than 30 percent of Alexandria City residents work in the city.

**Figure 1:** Place of Residence by Location of Workplace, Washington MSA



Source: 2010 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

\* Alexandria City is treated as a county by the US Census Bureau

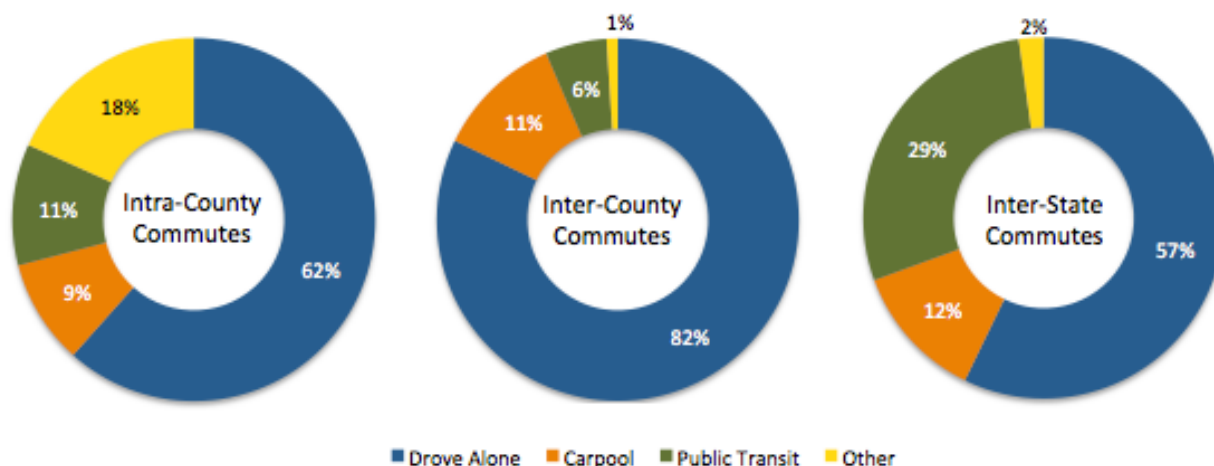
**Why are some counties from the metro area not listed?**

The American Community Survey releases 1-year estimates only for jurisdictions that have a population of 65,000 or more.

**What does "Other" include on figure 2?**

Other includes walking, bicycling, motorcycling, taking a taxicab, or any other means of travel not provided in the other categories.

**Figure 2: Commute Patterns by Mode, Washington MSA**



Source: 2010 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

Intra-County commuters travel to a workplace that is within their jurisdiction of residence. Inter-County commuters travel across county lines to work but within the same state (e.g. Loudoun County VA to Fairfax County VA). Inter-State commuters travel to another state for work (e.g. Prince George’s County MD to DC; or Alexandria VA to Rockville MD). Driving-alone is the most prevalent mode of commuting for all three types of commutes in the Washington MSA, and is highest for inter-county commuters. Inter-state commuters are more likely to use public transportation than both intra-county and inter-county commuters. This likely reflects workers traveling into the District of Columbia from both Virginia and Maryland, as the region’s primary public-transit routes follow a radial pattern from central Washington. The proportion of carpoolers is similar in all three categories. Other modes such as walking and bicycling are most common for intra-county commutes, however it is important to note that 10 of the 18 percent reflect people working from home, which the American Community Survey counts as working in the jurisdiction of residence.

#### GMU Center for Regional Analysis

The principal mission of the Center for Regional Analysis is to provide research and analytical services to local governments, businesses and other stakeholders in the Washington region focusing on economic, demographic, transportation, housing and fiscal trends and forecasts.

The Center for Regional Analysis has become the “go-to” organization for economic, demographic and housing data and analysis within the Washington and Baltimore regions and is cited locally and nationally as the source of information for the media, research scholars, and investors interested in understanding the Washington area’s economy. The Center posts research reports, presentations, data and other information its website ([policy-cra.gmu.edu](http://policy-cra.gmu.edu))

#### Updates from the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey

The Center for Regional Analysis will issue periodic reports on demographic and economic topics based on newly released data from the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey. The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides detailed data every year about states, metropolitan areas, counties and cities. More information about the 2010 Census and the ACS can be found at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

Understanding the commuting patterns of the region’s workforce has many policy implications ranging from transportation infrastructure improvements, like increasing concentric transit routes, to traffic congestion alleviation strategies, such as carpool incentives.