

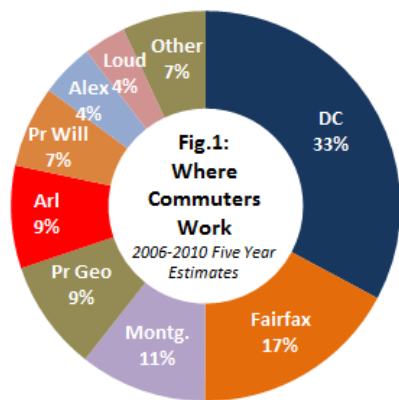


Update from the American Community Survey

Worker Flows in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1990-2010

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Each day more than three million people leave their homes to travel to work in the Washington metro area. About half of the region's commuters (1.64 million



people) travel to jobs that are located outside their counties of residence¹. Among those who work outside their home counties one-half travel to either the District of Columbia (33 percent) or Fairfax County (17 percent). Another 29 percent works in Montgomery, Prince George's, or Arlington counties. Between 1990 and 2010 the number of area commuters who traveled outside their home counties to go to work increased from 1.28 million to 1.64 million, a 29 percent growth rate (Table 1).

What is Worker Flow?

Worker flow data document the residence and workplace counties of U.S. workers. Due to the size of the database it takes the Census Bureau at least two years to process it for publication, so flow data from the 2010 ACS were only released in March 2013. The release was for 5-year estimates for 2006-2010.

Table 1: Change in Number of Commuters by County of Work, 1990-2010

Place of Work	1990	2010	Change	% Change
District of Columbia	493,629	539,543	45,914	9%
Fairfax, VA	175,201	283,510	108,309	62%
Montgomery, MD	140,209	173,586	33,377	24%
Prince George's, MD	127,714	151,264	23,550	18%
Arlington, VA	129,506	140,022	10,516	8%
Prince William, VA	66,314	111,155	44,841	68%
Alexandria, VA	64,171	72,654	8,483	13%
Loudoun, VA	18,477	57,880	39,403	213%
Frederick, MD	15,106	34,226	19,120	127%
All Others ²	45,360	79,958	34,598	76%
Total	1,275,687	1,643,798	368,111	29%

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 1990 Decennial Census

¹ For this purpose the District of Columbia and the City of Alexandria are treated as counties, Fairfax City and Falls Church are grouped with Fairfax County, and Manassas and Manassas Park are grouped with Prince William County.

² Includes: Calvert, MD; Charles, MD; Clarke, VA; Fauquier, VA; Jefferson, WV; Spotsylvania, VA; Stafford, VA; and Warren, VA

Most of the increase in county-to-county commuting between 1990 and 2010 was among those commuting to jobs in suburban areas, particularly Fairfax County. Fairfax added more than 108,000 additional commuters each day, a 62 percent increase. Other suburban counties with significant increases in the number of in-commuters included Loudoun (+213 percent), Frederick (+127 percent), Prince William (+68 percent), and Montgomery (+24 percent). The region's outlying counties also experienced strong increases in the number of in-commuters, led by Warren, VA (+156 percent), Stafford, VA (+130 percent), and Jefferson, WV (+107 percent). The District of Columbia added nearly 46,000 additional in-commuters, but its growth rate was less than 10 percent.

There are 16 county-to-county worker flows in the region of more than 20,000 people (Table 2). Collectively, these 16 flows account for more than 806,000 daily commuters. Among these "top 16" commuter flows 53 percent are into the District of Columbia, 21 percent are to Fairfax, 11 percent are to Montgomery, and 14 percent are to other counties.

Table 2: Largest County-to-County Worker Flows in the Washington Metro Area

Home County	Work County	1990	2010	Change	% Change
Prince George's	District of Columbia	141,590	136,219	(5,371)	-4%
Montgomery	District of Columbia	103,320	107,123	3,803	4%
Fairfax	District of Columbia	97,711	93,178	(4,533)	-5%
Prince William	Fairfax	41,902	68,651	26,749	64%
Loudoun	Fairfax	18,857	57,365	38,508	204%
Fairfax	Arlington	53,461	49,892	(3,569)	-7%
Arlington	District of Columbia	43,842	47,226	3,384	8%
Prince George's	Montgomery	40,560	43,859	3,299	8%
Fairfax	Alexandria	31,010	32,159	1,149	4%
Montgomery	Prince George's	26,879	28,895	2,016	8%
Frederick	Montgomery	18,887	26,131	7,244	38%
Alexandria	District of Columbia	23,557	25,992	2,435	10%
Arlington	Fairfax	17,236	23,996	6,760	39%
Montgomery	Fairfax	17,142	23,115	5,973	35%
District of Columbia	Montgomery	20,487	21,741	1,254	6%
Prince William	District of Columbia	14,431	20,596	6,165	43%
Total, Top Flows		710,872	806,138	95,266	13%

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 1990 Decennial Census

The share of the 16 largest flows relative to all county-to-county commuting in the Washington metro area declined from 56 percent in 1990 to 49 percent in 2010, indicating a more diffuse pattern of commuting across the region. Among the largest flows, the share traveling into the District of Columbia declined from 60 to 53 percent. The number of commuters from the six largest suburban jurisdictions³ into the District of Columbia only increased by 1.4 percent, and only Prince William (+6,165) added more than 4,000 additional commuters into DC from 1990-2010. The number of Prince George's and Fairfax residents commuting into DC actually declined between 1990 and 2010.

³ Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Prince William

Among suburb-to-suburb worker flows four of the region’s five largest increases were for commutes into Fairfax from: Loudoun (+38,508), Prince William (+26,749), Arlington (+6,760), and Montgomery (+5,973). The only other suburb-to-suburb commuter flow that increased by more than 4,000 people was Frederick to Montgomery (+7,244). Aside from the “top 16” two other key trends emerged:

- Many commuter flows into the District of Columbia from outlying counties increased significantly, led by: Loudoun (+5,318), Charles (+5,144), Stafford (+2,312), Spotsylvania (+2,213), and Calvert (+1,967).
- Spikes occurred in suburb-to-suburb commuting in the outlying counties of Northern Virginia, particularly: Prince William to Loudoun (+5,252), Stafford to Prince William (+5,145), and Spotsylvania to Stafford (+4,340).

In addition to commuters traveling to work within the metro area, more than 300,000 people work in the Washington metro area but live elsewhere, led by 150,000 Baltimore metro area residents who commute each day to the Washington region. Additionally, more than 90,000 residents of outlying areas in Maryland and Virginia commute into the region each day, along with about 30,000 residents of West Virginia and Pennsylvania. There are also about 36,000 people who work in the region but maintain permanent homes in other states or countries (Table 4).

Table 4: Commuters into the Washington Region by People Residing Outside the Region, 1990-2010

Place of Residence	1990	2010	Change	% Chg
Baltimore MSA	111,140	148,669	37,529	34%
Other MD/VA	50,737	91,572	40,835	81%
WV/PA	10,624	29,827	19,203	181%
Elsewhere	20,710	35,669	14,959	72%
Total from outside	193,211	305,737	112,526	58%

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 1990 Decennial Census

The counties outside the region with the largest number of in-commuters all directly border the region and include: Washington, MD (17,054 daily commuters), St. Mary’s, MD (12,887), Frederick, VA (12,085), Berkeley, WV (11,217), and Culpeper, VA (8,885)⁴. Less than seven percent of these commuters travel into the District of Columbia each day; most commute to neighboring suburban counties instead.

The number of out-of-region commuters increased by 112,000 from 1990 to 2010, a 58 percent growth rate. While there was an increase among Baltimore metro residents (+37,529), there were also strong increases in commuting from residents of other counties in Maryland and Virginia (+40,835). Though it is the smallest group, the number of West Virginia or Pennsylvania residents who work in the Washington region nearly doubled from 1990 to 2010 (+181 percent).

⁴ The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has added Culpeper County has been added to the Washington MSA as of 2013 due to Culpeper’s increasing dependence on the core of the region as measured by worker flow.

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