



## Update from the American Community Survey

### Commute Times in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area

In 2009, the average one-way commute time for workers in the Washington DC metropolitan area (excluding those who work at home) was about 33.4 minutes. The length of the region's commute increased from 32.8 minutes in 2000 and 29.5 minutes in 1990. Washington area commuters have the second longest commute among workers in the nation's 15 largest metropolitan areas; only New York area commuters spend more time getting to work. Nearly half of the region's workers commute more than 30 minutes each way to work. About 16 percent commute more than an hour and four percent—more than 100,000 commuters—travel 90 minutes or more each way to work.

Compared to other metropolitan areas, workers in the Washington DC metropolitan area who drive to work have relatively long commutes. The average commute time for commuters who drive alone was 30.7 minutes, longer than for drivers in any other metropolitan area. Carpoolers also face relatively long commutes. The average commute time among carpoolers was 36.5 minutes and was also longer than in any other metropolitan area.

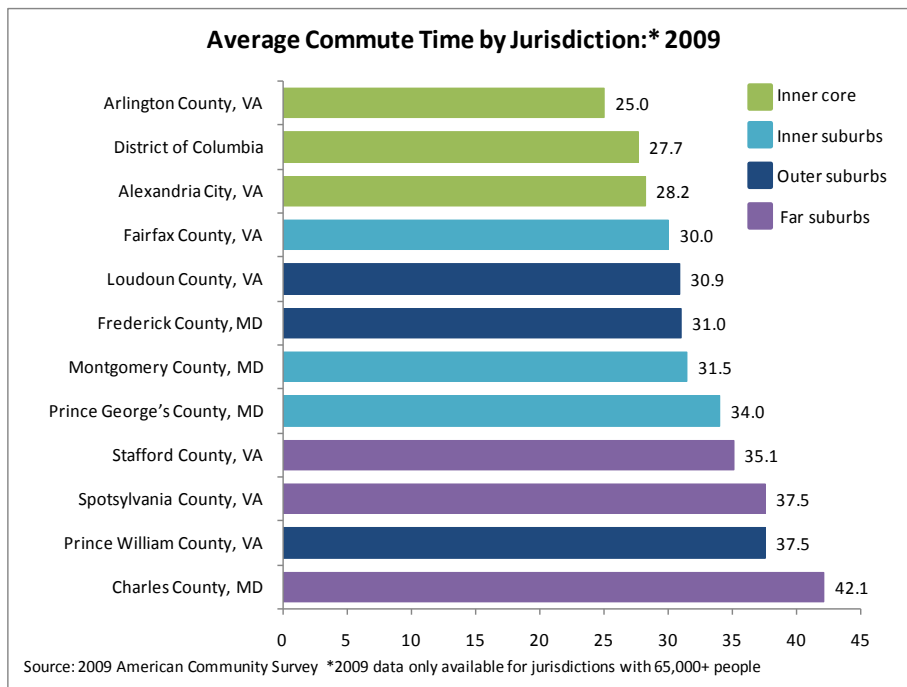
#### Average One-Way Commute Time (in Minutes) by Commute Mode: 2009

Metropolitan Area	All Modes	Drive Alone	Carpool	Public Transportation
Minneapolis	24.3	23.3	27.5	39.3
Phoenix	25.6	24.9	28.4	45.3
Detroit	26.0	25.6	27.5	51.2
Dallas	26.1	25.6	27.8	47.6
Miami	26.7	25.8	27.8	48.9
Seattle	27.4	25.5	31.1	43.1
Houston	27.6	26.9	30.3	45.6
Los Angeles	27.9	26.5	30.4	47.9
Philadelphia	28.0	26.4	27.8	47.1
Boston	28.4	27.0	28.3	43.4
San Francisco	28.6	25.9	29.7	43.3
Atlanta	30.1	28.8	33.5	51.8
Chicago	30.7	28.6	30.3	49.3
<b>Washington DC</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>47.9</b>
New York	35.6	28.0	32.4	50.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates  
Includes only workers who do not work from home

Washington area commuters who take public transportation have longer commute times than those who rely on autos; however, compared to other metropolitan areas, the commute times of transit users are favorable. The average commute time for those using public transportation was 47.9 minutes, which was shorter than six other major metropolitan areas, including Miami, Chicago and Atlanta.

Transit use in the Washington area is on the rise. Between 2008 and 2009, the Washington DC and Seattle metropolitan areas were the only two areas in the United States that experienced a significant increase in transit use.



In 2009, 14.1 percent of Washington area commuters use public transportation. Among the largest metropolitan areas, only New York and San Francisco area commuters are more likely to use public transportation.

Within the Washington DC region, the lengths of commutes vary considerably depending on proximity both to transit and to job centers. Commuters who live in Arlington County have the shortest commutes in the Washington DC region at 25.0 minutes, followed by commuters living in the District of Columbia and the City of Alexandria. Residents in these jurisdictions benefit from access to transit, as well as proximity to major job centers both downtown and inside the Beltway in Northern Virginia. Commuters in these inner core jurisdictions are more likely to use public transportation and to bike and walk to work compared to the rest of the region's residents.

Commute times are longer in the further out suburbs, but differences across jurisdictions depend strongly on the presence of employment centers. For example, the average commute time for residents of Fairfax County is 30.0 minutes, compared to 31.5 and 34.0 for Montgomery and Prince George's counties, respectively. Loudoun County residents have shorter commutes than residents of the inner suburbs in Suburban Maryland. These shorter commute times are driven by the concentrations of jobs in Tyson's Corner, the Dulles Corridor and other locations in Fairfax and Loudoun counties. Access to jobs likely also explains the relatively shorter average commute time for residents of Frederick County.

### 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).

