

## **Most of Us Still Drive to Work – Alone Public Transportation Commuters Concentrated in a Handful of Large Cities**

Despite rising fuel costs, commuters continued to drive their cars in 2005, according to a new U.S. Census Bureau analysis of data from the American Community Survey. The survey, gathered over the course of the year, found that driving to work was the favored means of commute of nearly nine out of 10 workers (87.7 percent), with most people (77 percent) driving alone. In contrast, 4.7 percent of commuters used public transportation to travel to work in 2005, an increase of about 0.1 percent over 2000 levels.

**About half of the nation's public transportation commuters can be found in 10 of the nation's 50 cities with the most workers age 16 or over: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C. These cities account for 2.9 million of the nation's 6.2 million users of public transportation. ([see Table 1.](#))**

Beyond the total number of public transportation users, these cities also had relatively high rates of public transportation use. However, Los Angeles and Houston, with rates of 10.3 percent and 5.1 percent, respectively, had lower rates than many other smaller cities, including Minneapolis (12.5 percent); Oakland, Calif. (16.5 percent); Portland, Ore. (13.3 percent) and Seattle (17 percent).

"This is a prime example of the value of an ongoing survey such as the American Community Survey," said Census Bureau Director Louis Kincannon. "With each succeeding year, we'll be able to see how people respond to changing circumstances, such as rising gas prices."

The public transportation data are among the many topics that can be localized from the American Community Survey. Some other commuter facts of interest include:

Approximately one in 10 of us (10.7 percent) car pool to work. About three-fourths of carpoolers (77.3 percent) ride with just one other person. Large cities with some of the highest rates of car pooling include Fresno, Calif. (15.1 percent); Honolulu (15.6 percent); Mesa, Ariz. (16.7 percent); Phoenix (16.2 percent); and Sacramento, Calif., (15.7 percent).

Portland, Ore., has the distinction among large cities as having the highest percentage of bicycle commuters. Approximately 3.5 percent of Portland's workers pedal to work, about eight times the national average of 0.4 percent.

The third most popular option was no commute at all. Approximately 3.6 percent of us worked from home in 2005. Large cities with high rates of home-based workers included Austin, Texas (5 percent); Colorado Springs, Colo. (4.9 percent); Portland, Ore. (5.3 percent); San Francisco (6.3 percent); and Seattle (5.1 percent).

Boston had the highest percentage among large cities of employees who walk to work (13 percent). Nationally, 2.5 percent of us walked to work, the fourth most popular mode of transportation behind driving and using public transportation. ([See Table 2. Baltimore ranked 10<sup>th</sup>](#))

As part of the Census Bureau's reengineered 2010 Census, the data collected by the ACS helps federal officials determine where to distribute more than \$300 million to state and local governments each year. Responses to the survey are strictly confidential and protected by law.

*The 2005 ACS estimates are based on an annual, nationwide household sample of about 250,000 addresses per month. Geographic areas for which data are available are based on total populations of 65,000 or more. The ACS estimates released are for the household population and do not include populations residing in group quarters.*