



Commuting Data for 2016

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September 27, 2017

Last week, the Census Bureau posted [2016 data](#) from the American Community Survey, including population, income, housing, employment, and commuting data among many other categories. The survey is based on data from more than 3.5 million households. Today, the Antiplanner will look at commuting data: how people got to work in 2016 compared with previous years.

To save you time, I've downloaded and posted [2016's table B08301](#), "Means of Transportation to Work," for the nation, states, counties, cities, and urbanized areas. I've also posted similar tables for [2006](#), [2010](#), and [2015](#).

In columns Z through AE, I've calculated the shares of commuters (excluding people who work at home) who traveled to work by driving alone, carpooling, transit, rail transit, bicycling, and walking. (These won't quite add up to 100 percent as are other categories such as taxi and motorcycle.) Only some cities, counties, and urban areas are included because others were too small for the sample size to be valid. Since the places that are included may vary from year to year, the rows of the various spreadsheets do not line up below the state level.

The data show that, nationwide, transit's share of travel grew from 5.03 percent in 2006 to 5.49 percent in 2015. This growth was at the expense of carpooling, as driving alone's share also grew. In 2016, however, transit's share fell to 5.36 percent while both driving alone and carpooling grew.

Among major urban areas, transit's share of commuting grew from 2015 to 2016 in Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, Seattle, and—amazingly—San Jose. But it declined in far more regions: Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, Orlando, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland, Sacramento, San Francisco-Oakland, and Washington DC. It was flat (changed by 0.05 percent or less) in Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Miami, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and New York.

Outside of Seattle, these numbers are not encouraging for those who think rail transit is good for transit riders. Although transit's share also grew in the Salt Lake urban area, it declined in Ogden and Provo-Orem, which are connected with Salt Lake City by an expensive commuter train that

is doing little to boost transit ridership. The growth in San Jose was in spite of the region's rail transit system: although the bus share grew, rail's share of commuting declined.

Transit's share grew in both Raleigh and Durham. If those cities want to keep transit healthy, they shouldn't disrupt whatever is working now by building an expensive light-rail line. I'll be presenting more 2016 data in future posts.

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