

Study ranks cities with the longest commutes

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Credit: Scott Meltzer/public domain

A New York minute may be an instant, but for workers in the Big Apple, their commute is anything but.

A new study by Michael Sivak, research professor at the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, found that New Yorkers

have the longest commutes—about 40 minutes—among workers in the 30 largest U.S. cities, whether it's by car, train, bus, ferry, bike or foot.

In addition to the longest travel time to work, New Yorkers also have the highest percentages of workers who use public transportation (57 percent) and who don't have a vehicle (46 percent), and the lowest percentages of driving to work alone (21 percent) and carpooling (5 percent).

Sivak's study provides a broad overview of commuting by workers in America's biggest cities: who, how, when and how time consuming. It uses 2013 data from the American Community Survey, an ongoing annual survey by the U.S. Census Bureau.

In addition to New York, other cities with long commute times include Chicago (34 minutes), Philadelphia (32 minutes), San Francisco (32 minutes), Baltimore (31 minutes), Los Angeles (30 minutes), Washington, D.C. (30 minutes) and Boston (30 minutes). The average commute in the U.S. is about 26 minutes.

Cities with the quickest commutes include Oklahoma City (21 minutes), Columbus, Ohio (21 minutes), Louisville, Ky. (22 minutes), Memphis, Tenn. (22 minutes) and El Paso, Texas (22 minutes).

While public transportation is far and away the most utilized in New York, large percentages of commuters in Washington, D.C. (39 percent), Boston (33 percent), San Francisco (33 percent), Chicago (28 percent), Philadelphia (27 percent), Seattle (21 percent) and Baltimore (19 percent) also use trains, buses and ferries to get to work.

On the other hand, less than 3 percent of commuters in Oklahoma City; Fort Worth, Texas; Jacksonville, Fla.; El Paso; Nashville, Tenn.; Memphis; Indianapolis and Louisville commute via public transit.

Not surprisingly, cities with the highest percentages of public transportation use also have the lowest percentages of commuters who drive to work alone (less than half): New York; Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; Boston; Chicago; and Philadelphia.

The national average for solo drivers commuting to work is about 76 percent. Cities such as Louisville, Oklahoma City, Jacksonville, Indianapolis, Nashville and Fort Worth all exceed 80 percent.

Carpooling is most popular in Memphis, Houston, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Detroit, Dallas and San Jose, Calif. (all at about 12 percent of commuters), and least so in New York, Boston and Washington, D.C. (about 5 percent).

Sivak's study also found that walking to work is most prevalent in Boston (15 percent), Washington, D.C. (14 percent), San Francisco (11 percent), New York (10 percent) and Seattle (9 percent) and least common in Fort Worth, Oklahoma City, Jacksonville, El Paso, San Antonio, San Jose, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Indianapolis and Dallas (all less than 2 percent).

About 6 percent of commuters in Portland, Ore., ride a bike to work, along with 5 percent in Washington, D.C., and 4 percent in San Francisco and Seattle—a rare activity in large cities in the South and Southwest.

The study also showed that the percentage of workers with no commute—because they work at home—is highest in Portland, Denver, San Francisco and Austin, Tex. (all at about 7 percent).

Provided by University of Michigan

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