



## U.S. shaves seconds off average commute

Shorter drive times may be sign jobs following workers to suburbs  
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WASHINGTON – It might be hard for some drivers to believe, but average commuting times are getting shorter for U.S. workers.

The average daily commute to work has shrunk from 25.5 minutes in 2000 to 25.1 minutes last year, according to data released this week by the Census Bureau.

"We all should hold a celebration," said Alan Pisarski, author of *Commuting in America*. "We're saving 0.4 minutes!"

That's 0.4 minutes each way, for a total of 48 seconds a day.

But not everyone's buying it.

"Even with these numbers, we swear up and down that we are spending more time in our cars," said John B. Townsend II, a spokesman for AAA Mid-Atlantic in Washington.

"We are spending at least an hour a day in our cars in the Washington area," Mr. Townsend said. "We spend more time stuck in traffic and commuting [each year] than we spend on vacation."

The numbers are surprising because many of the nation's fastest-growing communities are in the outer suburbs,

miles from central cities. The shorter commuting times could be a sign that jobs are following the workers, Mr. Pisarski said.

For example, the nation's longest commute, at 39.6 minutes, is in the Vineland, N.J., metropolitan area, about 40 miles south of Philadelphia.

Vineland, a community of 56,000 in southern New Jersey, was part of the Philadelphia metropolitan area in 2000. It became its own metropolitan area, along with the cities of Millville and Bridgeton, because fewer workers are commuting into Philadelphia.

The New York area had the second-longest commute, at 34.2 minutes, and the Washington area was third at 33.4 minutes. Commuters in both New York and Washington saw their commutes get slightly longer from 2000 to 2005.

The Los Angeles area, which is notorious for its traffic, came in 16th, at 28.4 minutes. That's shorter than the commute in Riverside, Calif., which has been siphoning residents from Los Angeles for years.

Cities in the North Texas region did not make the top 25.

"Overall, congestion isn't a problem for everyone," said Mantill Williams, a spokesman for AAA's national office.

Among the findings from the Census Bureau:

- The share of people driving alone to work increased from 75.7 percent in 2000 to 77 percent last year.

- The share of people carpooling to work dropped from 12.2 percent in 2000 to 10.7 percent last year.

- The share of people using mass transit stayed at 4.7 percent.

- The share of people working at home increased from 3.3 percent in 2000 to 3.6 percent last year.

#### COMMUTING TIMES

Here are the 10 metropolitan areas with the longest commutes to work. Commutes are in average minutes, one way.

<b>Metro area</b>	<b>Commute</b>
Vineland, N.J.	39.6
New York	34.2
Washington, D.C.	33.4
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.	32.2
Atlanta	31.1
Riverside, Calif.	31.1
Chicago	31.0
Winchester, Va.	29.7
Stockton, Calif.	29.4
Vallejo-Fairfield, Calif.	29.2
National average	25.1

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau