



Commuting in Chester County: 2006 – 2008





CHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Table of Contents

Summary	4
Introduction	5
Defining the Terms.....	5
Section 1: Overall Workflow Patterns	6
Section 2: Commuting Characteristics of Chester County Residents	8
Section 3: Commuting Patterns for Workers in Chester County	13

Summary

This report summarizes the journey-to-work travel patterns and characteristics of Chester County using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2008 American Community Survey. Key findings of this report include the following:

Chester County has a healthy balance of jobs and employed residents.

The total workflow between Chester County and surrounding counties is nearly equal in terms of the number of residents leaving and the number of workers entering the county. The majority of Chester County workers lives and works in the county.

The largest workflows to or from Chester County are with Montgomery and Delaware Counties.

There are nearly 57,000 workers commuting daily between Chester and Montgomery Counties. A slight majority of these commuters (55%) are going into Montgomery County than from Montgomery County. Approximately 38,000 workers commute daily between Chester and Delaware Counties. These workflows are nearly equal in both directions.

More commuters now travel between New Castle County, Delaware and Chester County than between Philadelphia and Chester County.

More Chester County residents work in New Castle County than in Philadelphia and more Chester County workers live in New Castle than in Philadelphia. The total number of commuters traveling between New Castle and Chester Counties increased by 25 percent from 2000 while the number commuting between Philadelphia and Chester County decreased by 10 percent.

Driving alone is the predominant mode of travel to work.

Over 80% of work trips made by Chester County residents are single-occupant trips by automobile. The percentage has not changed since 2000. Only 8% of all work trips involve carpooling. The only commuters using public transportation in significant numbers go to Philadelphia (35% of work trips from Chester County to Philadelphia).

Commute times remain about the same as 2000.

Average travel time to commute to work has increased only 0.4 minutes since 2000, from 27.5 minutes to 27.9 minutes.

Introduction

This report presents data and findings from the 2006–2008 American Community Survey that describes a worker’s journey to work. In addition, the report compares the 2006–2008 data to 2000 census data in order to highlight major trends and changes that occurred during this time period.

The data are derived from a series of questions that ask the respondent to describe their journey to work, means of commuting, and other characteristics. Respondents are asked to answer questions based on their “usual means” of travel during the work week. It is important to note a difference between the 2000 Census and the 2006–2008 American Community Survey in the way the data are collected. The 2000 Census is a snapshot at a single point in time—April 1, 2000. The American Community Survey is a continuous survey that provides updated socioeconomic data collected over a period of time. The data represent the average characteristics over the entire time period, in this report 2006 through 2008. The data from both sources are based on a sample of households.

The 2006–2008 period precedes the recession beginning in late 2008 and may not show travel patterns that currently exist in 2013. The report relies on special tabulations of the census data from the Census Transportation Planning Products (CTPP), which does not have post-recession data available at this time. The 2006–2008 CTPP is the first to use the ACS multi-year data. Future CTPP tabulations will continue to be based on the ACS. Updating travel patterns from 2000 to 2006–2008 establishes a consistent base that the Planning Commission can use to compare to future data releases.

It is helpful to understand these trends in the context of Landscapes2, the county’s comprehensive policy plan for managing growth and preservation. Journey to work patterns and characteristics are influenced by the growth pattern and transportation system. The data and findings in this report provide an indication of the progress of Landscapes2.

Defining the Terms

Journey to work information can be interpreted from two perspectives: The first perspective evaluates where residents of Chester County are working, which is referred to as “place of work.” This group is referred to as “county residents.” Reference to this group should not be confused with the total number of county residents because it includes only residents who work. The majority of this report evaluates the travel characteristics of this group.

The second perspective evaluates where workers employed within Chester County live, which is referred to as “place of residence.” This group is referred to as “county workers.”




Section I: Overall Workflow Patterns

This section looks at work flows—the trips that people make going from home to work. There are three categories of work trips: internal work trips, export work trips, and import work trips. These trips are defined graphically in Figure I.

There was an average of 244,698 working residents within Chester County in the 2006 through 2008 survey period; 152,905 worked in the county (internal trips) and 91,793 worked outside the county (export trips). This represents a total increase of 26,545 working residents (12%) from 2000.

Conversely, 237,675 individuals were employed within Chester County in the 2006 through 2008 period; 152,905 lived in the county (internal trips) and 84,770 lived outside the county (import trips). This represents a total increase of 22,210 workers (9%) since 2000.

Figure I: Daily Work Trips Related to Chester County

		2000	2006–2008	Change: 2000 to 2006–2008 3-year estimate	
		Number	Number	Number	Percent
County residents	Export Work Trips—county residents that work outside the county				
		80,475	91,793	11,318	12%
County workers	Internal Work Trips—county residents that work within the county				
		137,678	152,905	15,227	11%
	Import Work Trips—non-county residents that work in the county				
		77,787	84,770	6,983	5%

Sources: U. S. Census Bureau, Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP), 2000 and 2006–2008

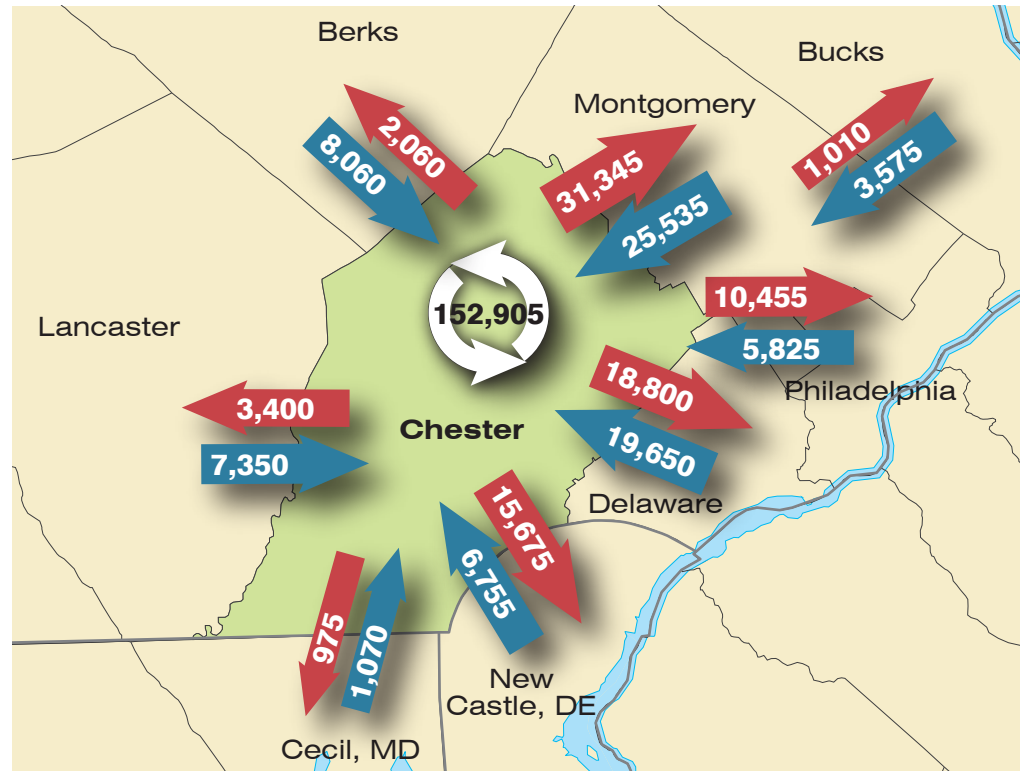
Notable Observations

- The greatest changes in daily one way work trips are seen in the changes in internal work trips and export work trips; each increased by more than 10% (over 10,000 work trips).
- Import work trips also increased, but less than internal or export work trips.

Workflow Patterns by County

Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the overall work flow patterns, showing the origins and destinations of the work trips by county. The map is limited to commute trips between Chester County and surrounding counties. Although there are commute trips between Chester County and other counties, the surrounding counties account for the vast majority of all commute trips.

Figure 2:
Commuter Flows between Chester County and Adjacent Counties, 2006–2008



Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP), 2006–2008

Notable Observations

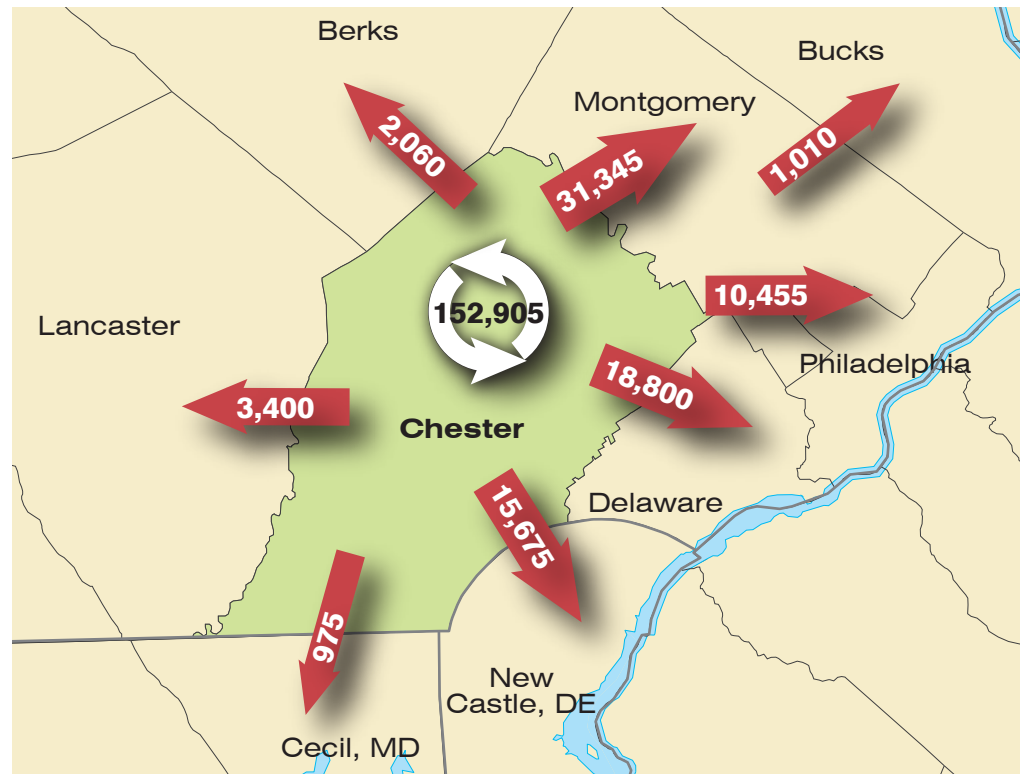
- The greatest flow of workers between counties occurred between Montgomery and Chester Counties, with almost 57,000 workers commuting between these counties.
- The second greatest flow of workers occurred between Delaware County and Chester County, with more than 38,000 workers commuting between them.
- Chester County has a stronger commute flow relationship with New Castle County (22,000 trips) than Philadelphia (16,000 trips).
- Chester County has the greatest net outflow of resident workers to New Castle County, with 8,900 more workers leaving Chester County to work in New Castle County than come from New Castle County to work in Chester County.
- There is also a net outflow of residents from Chester County to work in Montgomery County (5,800 workers) and Philadelphia (4,600).
- The work flow between Chester County and Delaware County is nearly equal in each direction.
- Commute flows between Chester County and Berks or Lancaster counties are noteworthy, each numbering over 10,000 total daily work trips. There is a large net inflow of workers into Chester County from these two counties (6,000 from Berks and nearly 4,000 from Lancaster).

Section 2: Commuting Characteristics of Chester County Residents

This section examines the journey to work for Chester County residents who work. It includes internal work trips and export work trips.

Place of Work for Residents of Chester County

Figure 3: Work Trips by County Residents, 2006–2008

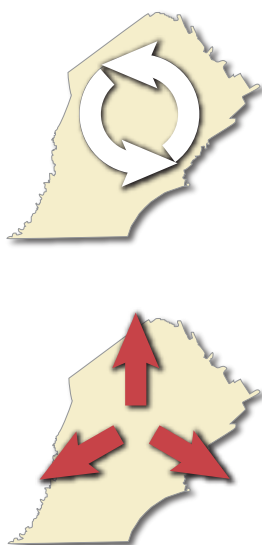


Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP), 2006–2008

Notable Observations

- The number of Chester County working residents increased by 12%.
- The majority of Chester County residents work within Chester County (63%), the same as in 2000.
- The largest number of Chester County residents who commute outside the county go to Montgomery County; this number increased over 20% since 2000.
- Delaware County and New Castle County are major counties of work for Chester County residents; the increase in commuters to New Castle County was much greater than to Delaware County since 2000.
- Over 5,000 more Chester County residents work in New Castle County than Philadelphia. County residents working in New Castle County increased 21% since 2000; whereas county residents working in Philadelphia remained the same.

Figure 4:
Place of Work for Residents of Chester County



Place of Work	2000		2006–2008		Change	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	218,153	100%	244,698	100%	26,545	12%
Chester County	137,678	63%	152,905	63%	15,227	11%
Montgomery County	25,673	12%	31,345	13%	5,672	22%
Delaware County	17,870	8%	18,800	8%	930	5%
New Castle County, DE	12,976	6%	15,675	6%	2,699	21%
Philadelphia County	10,568	5%	10,455	4%	-113	-1%
Lancaster County	2,828	1%	3,400	1%	572	20%
Berks County	1,916	1%	2,060	1%	144	8%
Bucks County	1,133	1%	1,010	<0.5%	-123	-11%
Cecil County, MD	557	<0.5%	975	<0.5%	418	75%
Other	6,954	3%	8,073	3%	1,119	16%

Sources: U. S. Census Bureau, Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP), 2000 and 2006–2008

Vehicle Availability by Households in Chester County

Figure 5: Vehicle Availability by Household

	2000		2006–2008		Change	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Households	157,905	100%	175,047	100%	17,142	11%
No vehicle available	8,200	5%	7,763	4%	-437	-5%
1 vehicle available	44,753	28%	45,712	26%	959	2%
2 vehicles available	74,484	47%	81,123	46%	6,639	9%
3 vehicles available	23,134	15%	29,683	17%	6,549	28%
4 or more vehicles available	7,334	5%	10,766	6%	3,432	47%

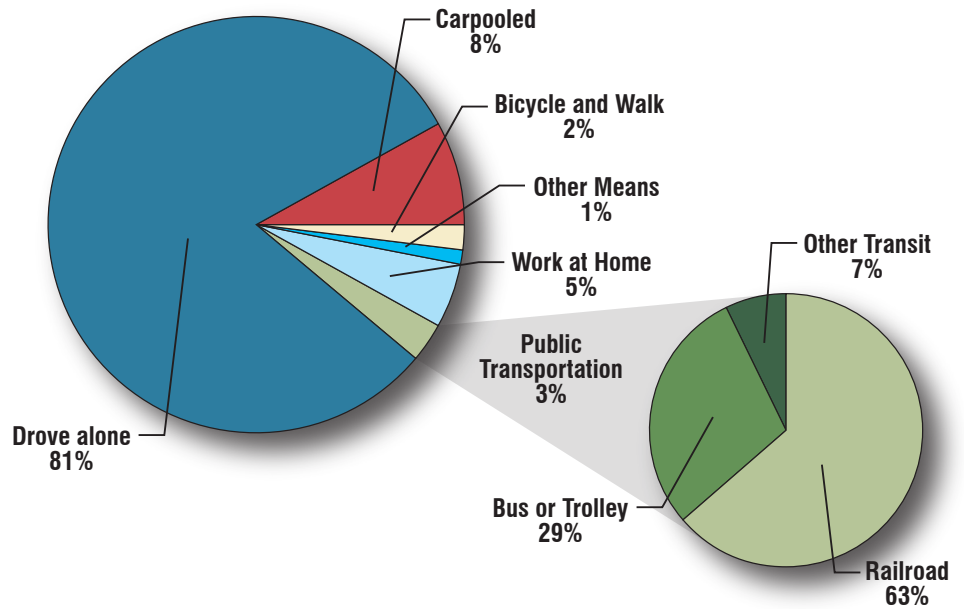
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census; 2006–2008 American Community Survey

Notable Observations

- Nearly half of the households in Chester County have two vehicles (46%).
- Approximately one-quarter of households have one vehicle (26%).
- The numbers of households with 3 vehicles and households with 4 or more vehicles available have increased 28% and 47% respectively from their 2000 numbers.
- The number of households with no vehicle available decreased by 5% from 2000, and is the category with the lowest number of households.

Mode of Transportation to Work for Chester County Residents

Figure 6: Mode of Transportation to Work for County Residents



	2000		2006–2008		Change	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	218,153	100%	246,288	100%	28,135	13%
Drove Alone	176,075	81%	199,219	81%	23,144	13%
Carpooled	18,726	8%	19,631	8%	905	5%
Bicycle and Walked	5,695	3%	6,129	2%	434	8%
Other Means	1,226	1%	2,139	1%	913	75%
Public Transportation	5,725	3%	6,281	3%	556	10%
<i>Railroad</i>	4,299	*75%	3,971	*63%	-328	-8%
<i>Bus or trolley</i>	1,009	*18%	1,824	*29%	815	81%
<i>Other Transit</i>	417	*7%	486	*8%	69	17%
Worked at home	10,706	5%	12,889	5%	2,183	20%

*Percent of public transportation

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census; 2006–2008 American Community Survey

Notable Observations

- The overwhelming majority (89%) of county resident workers rely on driving for their work commute with 81% driving alone and a small percentage (8%) carpooling.
- 5% of county resident workers work at home; this sector is growing (a 20% increase compared to 2000).
- Public transportation accounted for only 3% of county resident work trips, with railroads dominating public transit usage (63%).

Mode of Travel for Residents of Chester County by Commute Flow

Figure 7:
Mode of Travel to Work for Chester County Residents by Commute Flow, 2006–2008

County of Work	Drove Alone	Carpooled	Public Transportation	Other	Worked at Home
Chester County	78%	9%	2%	4%	8%
Montgomery County	92%	7%	2%	0%	n/a
Delaware County	92%	7%	2%	0%	n/a
New Castle County, DE	91%	7%	1%	1%	n/a
Philadelphia County	60%	5%	35%	0%	n/a
Lancaster County	83%	11%	6%	3%	n/a
Berks County	96%	4%	0%	0%	n/a
Bucks County	90%	10%	0%	0%	n/a
Cecil County, MD	96%	4%	0%	0%	n/a
Other	74%	10%	9%	8%	n/a

n/a: not applicable

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2008 American Community Survey

Notable Observations

- Driving alone is the dominant mode of travel for commuting Chester County residents, regardless of the county in which they work.
- Carpooling is slightly more common for residents commuting to Lancaster and Bucks counties than to the other surrounding counties.
- The only Chester County commuters with significant use of public transportation travel to Philadelphia.

Time Leaving Home for County Residents

Figure 8: Time Leaving Home

	2000		2006–2008		Change	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total: Did not work at home	207,447	100%	233,399	100%	25,952	13%
12:00 am to 6:29 am	33,252	16%	43,727	19%	10,475	32%
6:30 am to 8:59 am	136,118	66%	143,322	61%	7,204	5%
9:00 am to 11:59 am	16,520	8%	22,956	10%	6,436	39%
12:00 pm to 3:59 pm	11,002	5%	12,230	5%	1,228	11%
4:00 pm to 11:59 pm	10,554	5%	11,164	5%	610	6%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census; 2006–2008 American Community Survey

Notable Observations

- Nearly two-thirds of county residents (61%) left home for work during the “morning peak” between 6:30 am and 8:59 am; this proportion decreased slightly from 2000 (from 66%).
- The number of residents leaving for work between 12 am and 6:29 am and those leaving between 9 am and 11:59 am has each increased by the largest percentages since 2000 (over 30% each).

Travel Time to Work for County Residents

Figure 9: Travel Time to Work

	2000		2006–2008		Change	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total: Did not work at home	207,447	100%	233,399	100%	25,952	13%
Less than 15 minutes	53,435	26%	57,300	25%	3,865	7%
15 to 29 minutes	69,913	34%	79,236	34%	9,323	13%
30 to 44 minutes	44,320	21%	50,554	22%	6,234	14%
45 to 59 minutes	21,253	10%	23,489	10%	2,236	11%
60 or more minutes	18,526	9%	22,820	10%	4,294	23%
Average travel time	27.5 minutes		27.9 minutes		0.4 minutes	

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census; 2006–2008 American Community Survey

Notable Observations

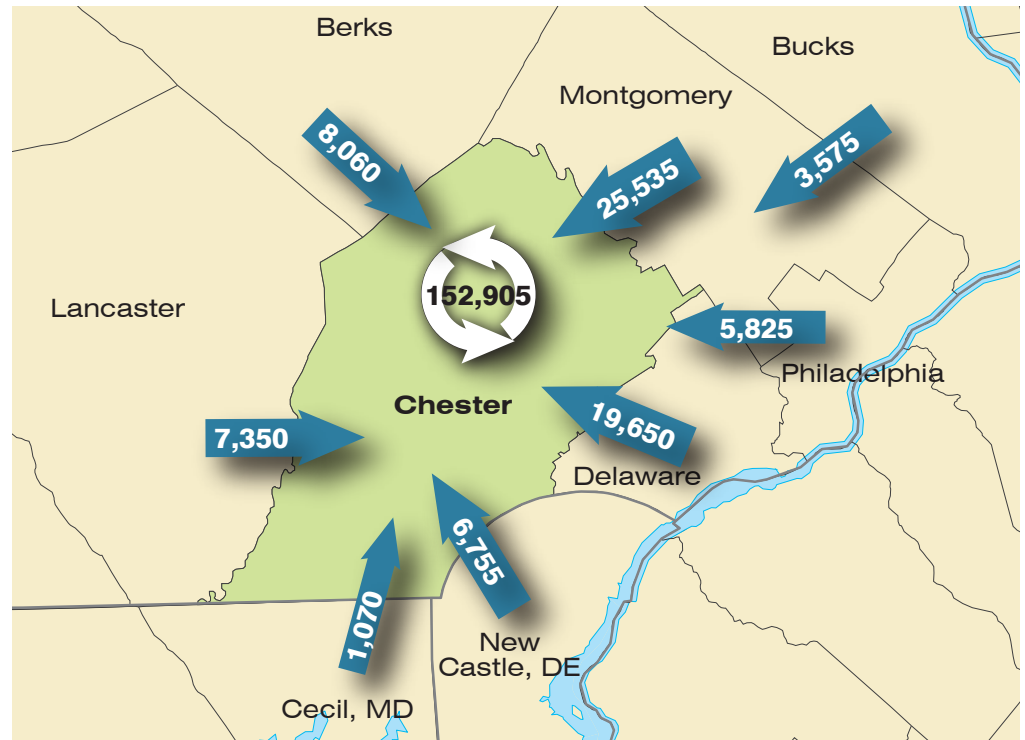
- The average travel time to work for residents in Chester County for all modes of transportation combined is nearly identical to its 2000 value, increasing slightly from 27.5 minutes to 27.9 minutes
- Most commonly, one-third of residents reported a commute between 15 and 29 minutes, the same as in 2000.
- 10% of all commuting residents experienced a commute of an hour or more; this category had the largest percentage increase (23%) since 2000.

Section 3: Commuting Patterns for Workers in Chester County

This section examines the journey to work for people who work in Chester County. It includes internal work trips and import work trips.

Place of Residence for Workers in Chester County

Figure 10: Work Trips by County Workers, 2006–2008

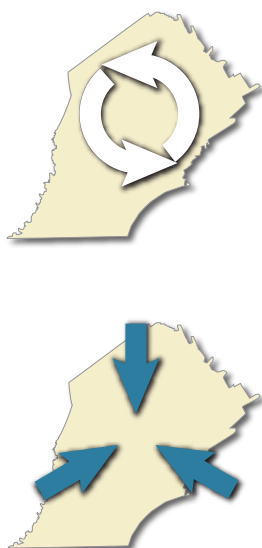


Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP), 2006–2008

Notable Observations

- The number of workers in Chester County as a whole has increased by 10%.
- The majority of Chester County workers live in Chester County (64%), the same percentage as 2000.
- Other major places of residence include Montgomery and Delaware Counties, with about 20% of workers in Chester County living in these two counties.
- Philadelphia County residents working in Chester County decreased by 25%.
- The numbers of Berks and New Castle counties residents working in Chester County increased sharply, each by over 40%.

Figure 11: Place of Residence for Chester County Workers



Place of Residence	2000		2006–2008		Change: 2000 to 2006–2008 3-year estimate	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	215,465	100%	237,675	100%	22,210	10%
Chester County	137,678	64%	152,905	64%	15,227	11%
Montgomery County	25,006	12%	25,535	11%	529	2%
Delaware County	18,504	9%	19,650	8%	1,146	6%
Berks County	5,596	3%	8,060	3%	2,464	44%
Lancaster County	6,134	3%	7,350	3%	1,216	19%
New Castle County, DE	4,738	2%	6,755	3%	2,017	43%
Philadelphia County	7,810	4%	5,825	3%	-1,985	-25%
Bucks County	3,036	1%	3,575	2%	539	18%
Cecil County, MD	941	<0.5%	1,070	1%	129	14%
Other	6,022	3%	6,950	2%	928	15%

Sources: U. S. Census Bureau, Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP), 2000 and 2006–2008

Mode of Travel for Workers in Chester County by Commute Flow

Figure 12:
Mode of Travel for Workers in Chester County by Commute Flow, 2006–2008

County of Residence	Drove Alone	Carpooled	Public Transportation	Other	Worked at Home
Chester County	78%	9%	1%	4%	8%
Montgomery County	91%	7%	1%	1%	n/a
Delaware County	91%	7%	1%	1%	n/a
Berks County	88%	11%	0%	1%	n/a
Lancaster County	89%	9%	0%	2%	n/a
New Castle County, DE	91%	8%	0%	0%	n/a
Philadelphia County	72%	7%	19%	2%	n/a
Bucks County	85%	13%	0%	1%	n/a
Cecil County, MD	92%	7%	0%	0%	n/a
Other	85%	10%	1%	4%	n/a

n/a: not applicable

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006–2008 American Community Survey

Notable Observations

- Driving alone is the predominant means of commuting for those who work in Chester County regardless of their origin county.
- Carpooling is slightly more common for workers commuting from Bucks and Berks counties than from the other surrounding counties.
- Philadelphia County residents are the only commuters with significant use of public transportation to get to work in Chester County.

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