

REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

June 2011

Travel Patterns in the Atlanta Region

Travel is regional in nature, as some 38 percent of all travel occurs beyond the borders of one's county of residence. This *Regional Snapshot* explores travel patterns throughout the region and provides "daytime population" estimates for each of the region's 20 counties. Daytime population is a good gauge of how much an area's population grows during the day, as it accounts for the net number of workers coming into the area to work.

The snapshot also analyzes trips for any purpose (including work and non-work trips) and shows that several areas have significant differences between the trips that begin there and the trips that end there.

FULTON'S POPULATION GROWS 32 PERCENT DURING THE DAY

Daytime population refers to the number of people who are present in an area during normal business hours, including workers. This is in contrast to the "resident" population who are there during the evening, or "after-work" hours. The difference between daytime and nighttime populations indicate what extra level of services a community may need to provide. The measure illustrates that regardless of where people live, they travel, consume services and spend money all over the region.

Table 1 shows the estimated daytime population for the region's 20 counties. Fulton County has an estimated daytime population of almost 1.2 million, which is 32 percent larger than its resident population and the largest positive difference in the region. Next is Clayton County, where the population grows by 13 percent during the day, followed by Cobb (+2.3 percent) and DeKalb (+0.2 percent).

Table 1 – Estimated Daytime Population

	Total Population (1)	Number of Workers coming into Area (2)	Number of Workers Leaving Area (3)	Estimated Daytime Population (1)+(2)-(3)	Percent above/below Total Population
Barrow	69,367	9,045	21,447	56,965	-17.9%
Bartow	100,157	17,372	25,907	91,622	-8.5%
Carroll	110,527	18,401	26,666	102,262	-7.5%
Cherokee	214,346	22,742	67,317	169,771	-20.8%
Clayton	259,424	104,409	71,197	292,636	12.8%
Cobb	688,078	186,420	170,452	704,046	2.3%
Coweta	127,317	14,413	34,376	107,354	-15.7%
DeKalb	691,893	189,775	188,269	693,399	0.2%
Douglas	132,403	25,252	38,413	119,242	-9.9%
Fayette	106,567	24,109	34,170	96,506	-9.4%
Forsyth	175,511	36,029	45,408	166,132	-5.3%
Fulton	920,581	459,483	163,808	1,216,256	32.1%
Gwinnett	805,321	167,449	175,861	796,909	-1.0%
Hall	179,684	32,437	34,786	177,335	-1.3%
Henry	203,922	27,300	59,293	171,929	-15.7%
Newton	99,958	11,707	26,938	84,727	-15.2%
Paulding	142,324	10,026	45,665	106,685	-25.0%
Rockdale	85,215	19,779	26,376	78,618	-7.7%
Spalding	64,073	13,137	17,617	59,593	-7.0%
Walton	83,768	9,897	24,314	69,351	-17.2%
20-County Total	5,260,436	1,399,182	1,298,280	5,361,338	1.9%

Sources: Population - 2010 Census
Worker Flows - OnTheMap, Version 5, 2009



Table 2 – Trips (for any purpose) by County

Area	Total Trips	Trips Going Outside the County		Trips Staying Within the County	
		Trips	Percent	Trips	Percent
Cherokee	492,266	182,155	37.0%	310,112	63.0%
Clayton	757,505	392,424	51.8%	365,082	48.2%
Cobb	1,863,401	595,450	32.0%	1,267,951	68.0%
DeKalb	1,847,744	811,517	43.9%	1,036,227	56.1%
Douglas	354,749	140,604	39.6%	214,145	60.4%
Fayette	303,062	122,734	40.5%	180,328	59.5%
Fulton	3,100,597	1,179,499	38.0%	1,921,098	62.0%
Gwinnett	1,992,935	588,177	29.5%	1,404,758	70.5%
Henry	469,151	180,920	38.6%	288,231	61.4%
Rockdale	236,253	111,272	47.1%	124,982	52.9%
ARC 10-counties	11,417,664	4,304,751	37.7%	7,112,913	62.3%

Source: ARC’s Travel Demand Model

Paulding County’s population shrinks by 25 percent, the largest negative difference in the region. Next are Cherokee (-21 percent) and Barrow (-18 percent).

Note: The estimates of daytime population are based on worker flows, thus they do not count flows that may include the non-working population or those in the area for business trips, conventions or tourism.

ALMOST 38 PERCENT OF THE TRIPS IN THE 10-COUNTY ARC REGION GO BEYOND COUNTY BOUNDARIES

Table 2 looks at the total number of daily trips (for any purpose, including non-work trips) and finds that nearly 38 percent of all trips go beyond an individual county’s borders. Almost 52 percent of all trips beginning in Clayton County end somewhere else, which is the highest percentage in the region. In contrast, only 30 percent of trips that begin in Gwinnett end somewhere else, which is the lowest percentage in the region.

MORE TRAVEL OCCURS DURING PM PEAK THAN DURING OTHER TIMES OF DAY

ARC’s travel demand model tracks vehicle trips during four times of day – AM Peak (6 AM to 10 AM); Mid-Day (10 AM to 3 PM); PM Peak (3PM to 7 PM); and Night Time (7 PM to 6 AM). As Chart 1 shows, approximately 33 percent of all trips (including non-work trips) occur during the PM peak period, the highest percentage among all

time periods. About 29 percent of all trips occur during the Mid-Day hours. Again, these trips could be for any purpose, including work and non-work trips.

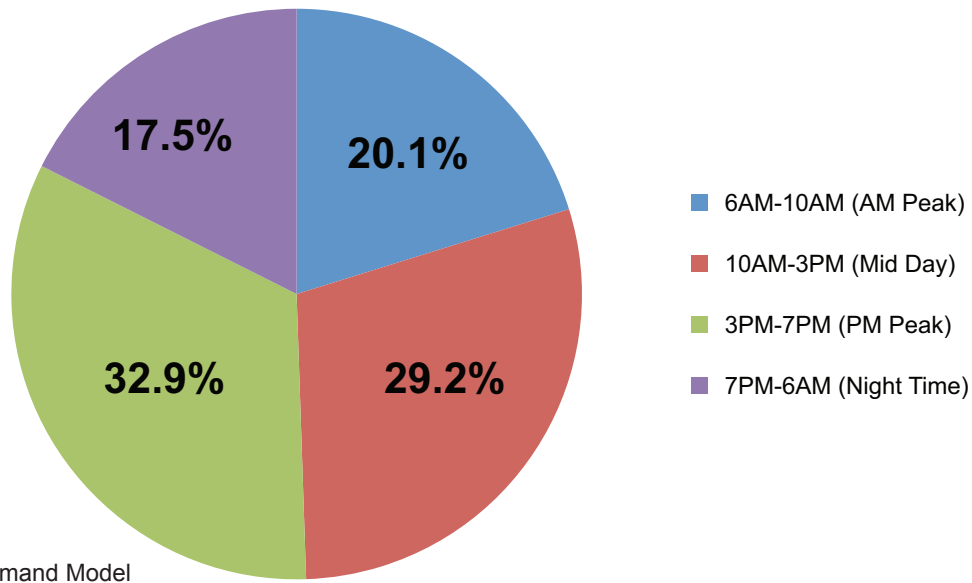
Since most work-related travel occurs during the AM and PM peak hours, Chart 2 shows the percentage difference between trips beginning and ending in a county for both the AM and PM peak hours. To generalize, “bedroom communities” typically have more AM trips (blue bars) and fewer PM trips (red bars) beginning in the county. The opposite trend holds for “destination communities.”

Paulding County, for example, has approximately 46 percent more trips beginning in the county than trips ending in the county during the AM hours, which is the largest percentage difference for any county in the region.

Paulding County has 17 percent fewer trips beginning in the county than ending in the county during the PM hours, also the largest percentage difference in the region. This indicates that Paulding has traits similar to a “bedroom community.”

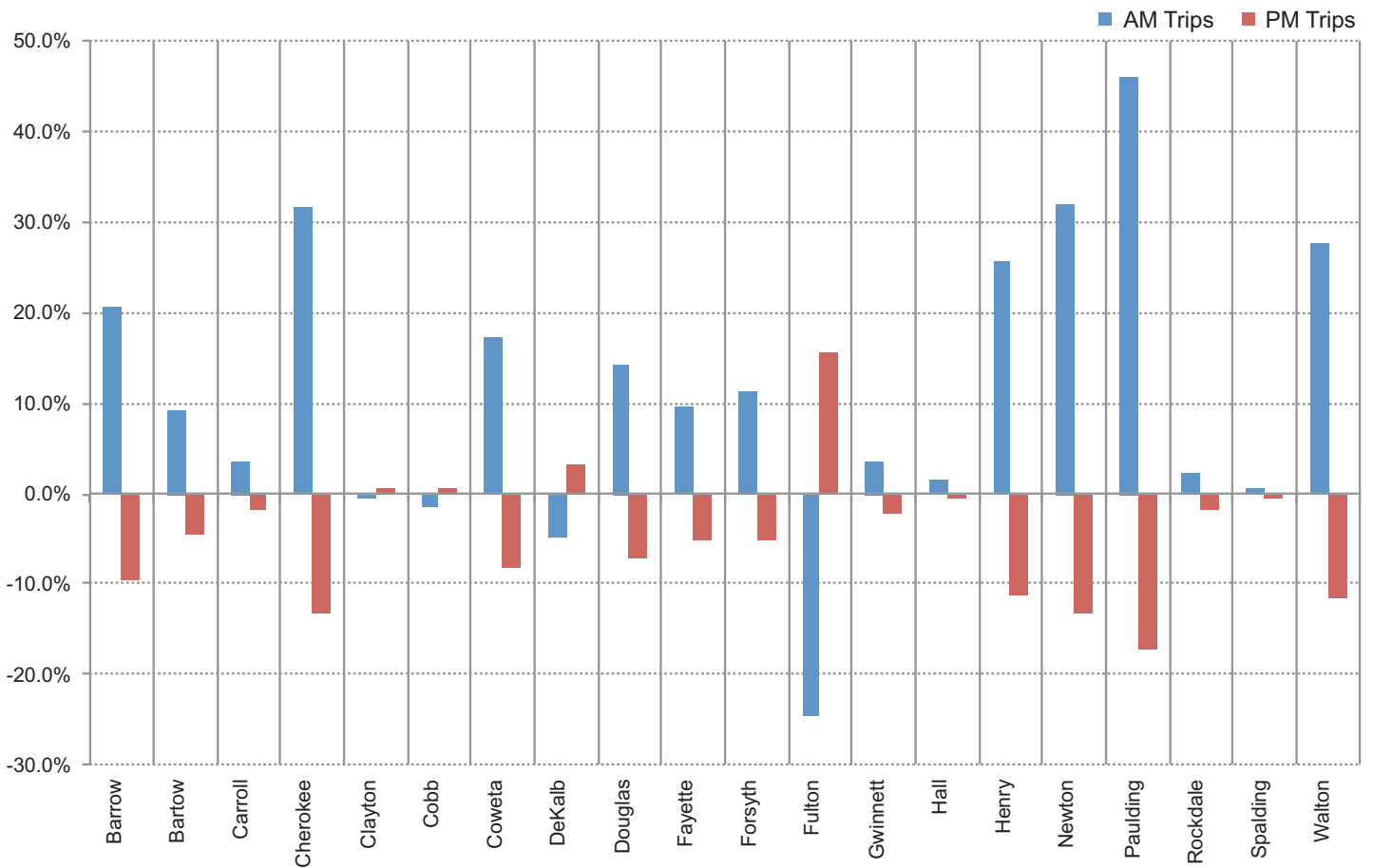
In contrast, Fulton County has almost 25 percent fewer AM trips beginning in the county than ending in the county, with essentially the opposite trip flow in the PM. This indicates that Fulton County is a destination for AM travelers (either for work or non-work purposes).

Chart 1 – Percent of Trips in the 20-County Region by Time of Day



Source: ARC's Travel Demand Model

Chart 2 – Percentage Difference Between Vehicle Trips Beginning and Ending in the County: AM and PM Peak



Source: ARC's Travel Demand Model

Map 1 – Percent Difference Between Trips Starting in Area and Ending in Area: AM Trips

Map 1 shows the percentage difference between AM trips beginning in a Superdistrict* (regardless of where they end) and those ending in that Superdistrict (regardless of where they began). It highlights those areas that can be considered “bedroom communities” and those areas that are “destination communities.”

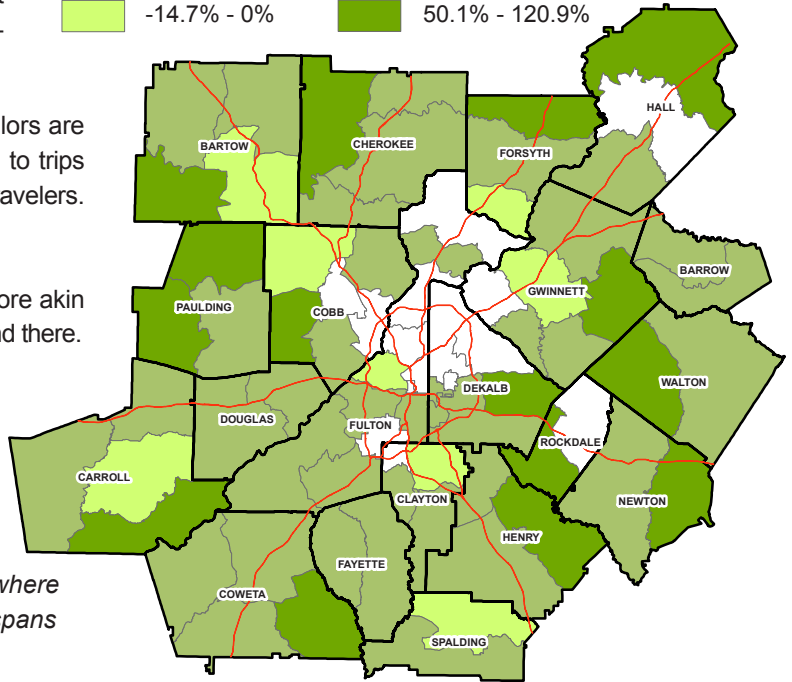
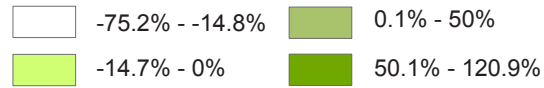
For example, the areas represented by white and light green colors are those that have fewer AM trips beginning there when compared to trips ending there. These Superdistricts are destinations for AM travelers. Again, these trips are for any purpose, not just for work.

In contrast, those areas represented by the darker greens are more akin to “bedroom communities” in that more AM trips begin there than end there.

As can be seen, the majority of “bedroom communities” are in the suburban and exurban areas, while most of the “destination communities” surround the top-end of I-285, following I-75 (Cobb), GA 400 (Fulton) and I-85 (DeKalb and Gwinnett) northward.

**Superdistricts were created by ARC to mirror “market areas,” where possible, and to have a consistent sub-county geography that spans decennial Census years.*

Vehicle Trips AM Peak - Percent Difference

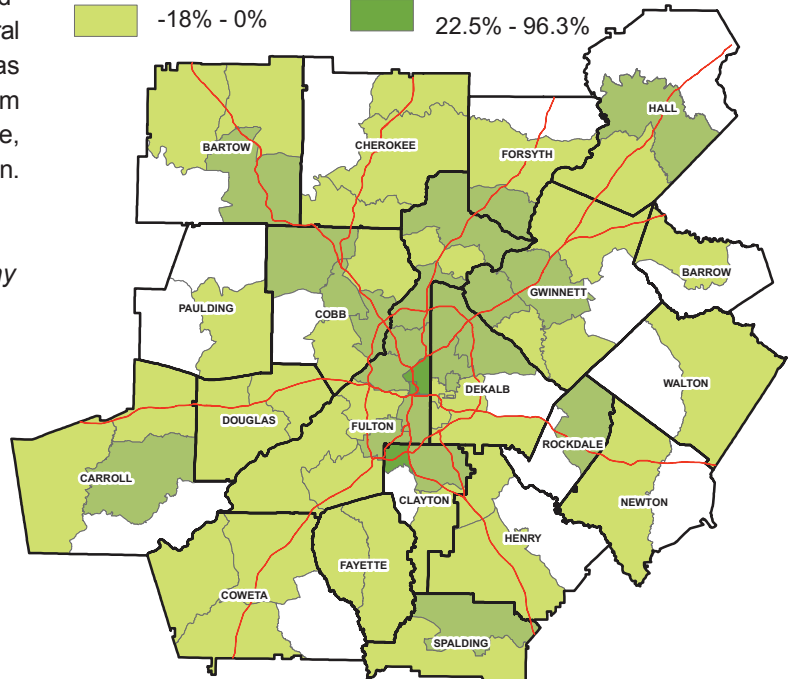
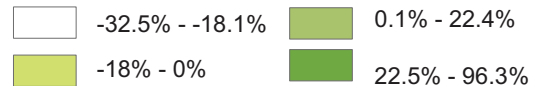


Map 2 – Percent Difference Between Trips Starting in Area and Ending in Area: PM Trips

Map 2 is a contrast of Map 1 in that it shows the percentage difference between PM trips beginning in a Superdistrict* (regardless of where they end) and those ending in that Superdistrict (regardless of where they began). While this map shows the same general trends shown in Map 1, it highlights suburban and exurban areas that are more like “destination communities” than like “bedroom communities,” such as areas in Bartow County near Cartersville, in Carroll County near Carrollton, and in Spalding County near Griffin.

** Superdistricts were created by ARC to mirror “market areas”, where possible, and to have a consistent sub-county geography that spans decennial Census years.*

Vehicle Trips PM Peak - Percent Difference



For more information on these issues or to suggest new subjects, please email mcarnathan@atlantaregional.com.

© 2011 Atlanta Regional Commission • 40 Courtland St. NE, Atlanta, GA 30303-2538 • Phone: 404.463.3100 • Fax: 404.463.3105