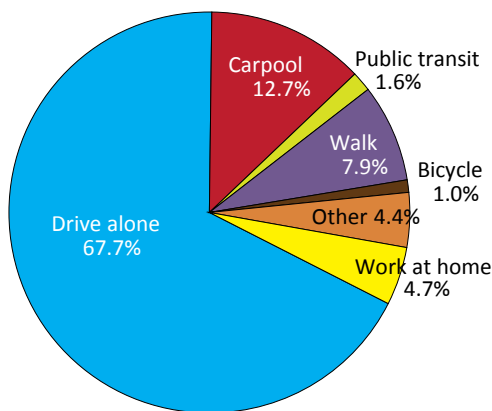


# How Alaskans Get to Work

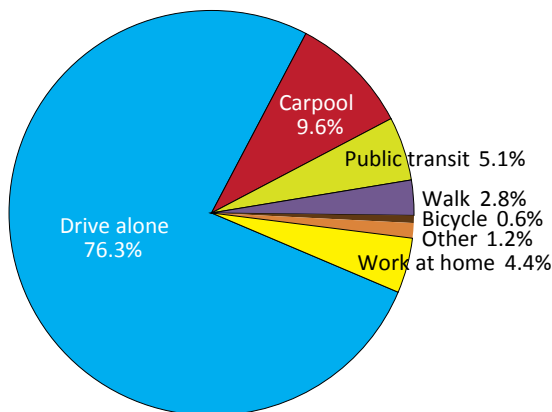
## More people walk, few take public transit

### 1 Less Driving in Alaska COMMUTING METHODS, 2014

**Alaska**



**United States**



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

By **CONOR BELL**

**W**ith one person per square mile, Alaska has the lowest population density in the nation by far. But even with these vast expanses, Alaskans are more likely to walk to work than other Americans, and we also tend to have shorter commutes.

Rural Alaskans rely much more on walking and other uncommon ways to get to work, such as snow machines, boats, or planes. Workers in the largest population centers – Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and Fairbanks – commute in similar ways to the rest of the U.S., although with the exception of Mat-Su, even urban Alaskans have reduced travel times.

### Most Alaskans drive

Though Alaskans rely less on cars, driving is still the chosen method for a sizable majority, with 68 percent driving themselves to work and another 13 percent carpooling. (See Exhibit 1.) Alaska had 709,751 cars and pickup trucks registered as of 2014, close to the total number of residents. Driving is more common in urban areas, whereas in most rural areas, less than half of workers drive.

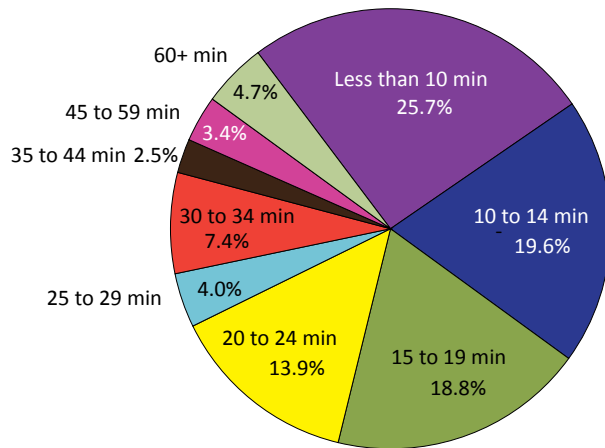
Eight percent of Alaskans walk to work, over twice the U.S. average, mostly due to over half of rural workers walking. People working in seafood processing often live in dormitories at or near their jobs, making them especially likely to walk. In Anchorage, just 3 percent of workers walk.

Rates of commuting by public transportation are low throughout Alaska. Rural areas don't have the demand or infrastructure for a bus system. While Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Mat-Su have the population size to support public transit, their commuting rates are still less than half the national average. Only Juneau residents

# 2

## Most People Have Short Commutes

ALASKA, 2014



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

### Average By Area

United States	25.7 minutes
Alaska	18.9 minutes
Anchorage	19.4 minutes
Mat-Su	33.6 minutes
Fairbanks	19.4 minutes
Juneau	14.8 minutes
Bethel	7.4 minutes

rode the bus at a rate comparable to the United States as a whole, both at about 5 percent.

Another 1 percent of Alaskans bike to work, which is slightly higher than the national average.

### A few unconventional options

Alaskans stand out for a handful of unconventional commutes. Four percent of Alaskans use other methods, over three times the nation’s rate. For the rest of the U.S., “other methods” almost always means motorcycles or taxis. In Alaska it often means by plane, typically to the North Slope. Three-quarters of Alaska residents working in the North Slope Borough live elsewhere in the state.

Other methods in Alaska include boats, four-wheelers, and snow machines. Nearly 50,000 snow machines were registered in Alaska in 2014.

### Alaskans’ commutes shorter

The average commute time for Alaskans was 19 minutes each way, versus 26 minutes nationally. Travel time has remained steady in Alaska, increasing by only two minutes since 1980. Over a quarter of residents have commutes shorter than 10 minutes. (See Exhibit 2.)

Alaskans are mostly spared the longest commutes common elsewhere; just 18 percent have commutes over 30 minutes one way and 5 percent have commutes over an hour. Mat-Su residents are the outlier. Because it’s common to commute to Anchorage, 22 percent spend over an hour getting to work.

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## GOVERNMENT JOBS

Continued from page 11

government center.

Anchorage has a relatively small percentage of its employment in local government, but it still has the highest number of these jobs because of the larger population being served — for example, more teachers are necessary for a higher number of students.

Anchorage also holds the largest share of federal and state government jobs. In 2014, the municipality had 8,437 federal jobs and 10,776 state jobs. Those numbers represent 56.6 percent and 40.6 percent of the state’s total federal and state employment, respectively.

Juneau had 708 federal and 4,269 state government jobs in 2014, which ranked the city and borough third behind Fairbanks for its share of Alaska’s federal and state employment. Although Juneau is the capital, the state’s university system has a larger presence in Anchorage and Fairbanks, and some state services such as transportation and social services are in higher demand in the two larger cities.

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