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# 2021 Commuting Trends in Florida

A Special Report from FDOT Forecasting and Trends Office



January 2023

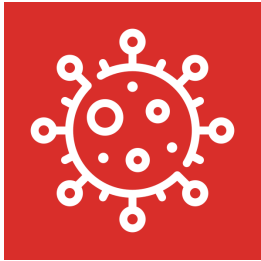


2021 FLORIDA

# COMMUTING TRENDS SUMMARY

**FTO** FORECASTING & TRENDS OFFICE

BASED ON 2021 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY



## POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19

- A significantly greater share of workers worked at home.
- A sharp decrease in the share of workers using transit for commute trips.
- The average commute times decreased for the first time since 2011 (with one exception in Florida in 2023 when a decrease of 0.1 minute was observed).



## INCREASED AUTO AVAILABILITY

Florida's zero-vehicle households decreased to 5.9% in 2021, down from 6.1% in 2019 and from the peak of 7.4% in 2012. This compares with a national level of 8.0% in 2021.



## DECREASE IN OVERALL COMMUTE TIMES

The average one-way commute in Florida slightly decreased from 28.4 minutes in 2019 to 27.1 minutes in 2021. The same trend is observed nationally as the average commute time decreased from 27.6 minutes to 25.6 minutes. In Florida, the percentage of commuters who made commute trips of 45 minutes or longer decreased from 18.7% to 16.6%.



## MOBILE WORKFORCE

In 2021, 17.4% of Florida commuters worked outside their county of residence, compared to 19.7% in 2019. Nationally, 23.5% of commuters worked outside their county of residence, a decrease of 4.4% from 2019.



## INCREASE IN NO-WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

From 2019 to 2021, the share of households with zero workers slightly increased from 31.0% to 31.2% in Florida. Nationally, the share of households with zero workers increased from 26.3% to 27.4% during the same period.



## INCREASE IN WORK-AT-HOME POPULATION

The work-at-home population increased significantly both in Florida and the U.S. In 2021, 16.6% of workers in Florida worked at home, up from 7.0% in 2019. In the US, 17.9% workers worked at home, up from 5.7% in 2019.

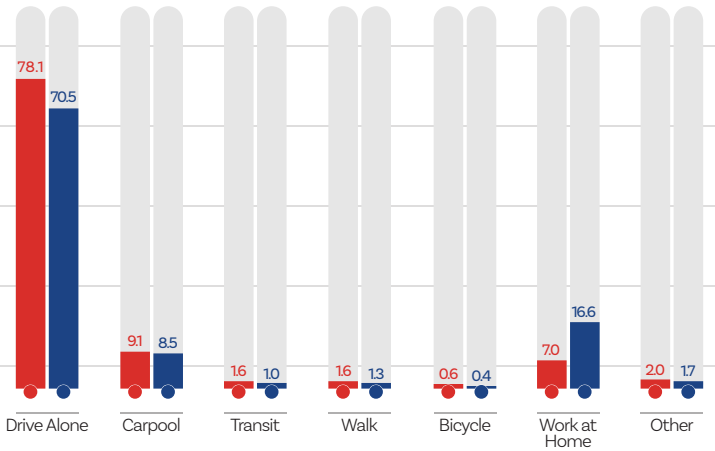


# 2021 FLORIDA COMMUTING TRENDS SUMMARY

BASED ON 2021 AMERICAN  
COMMUNITY SURVEY

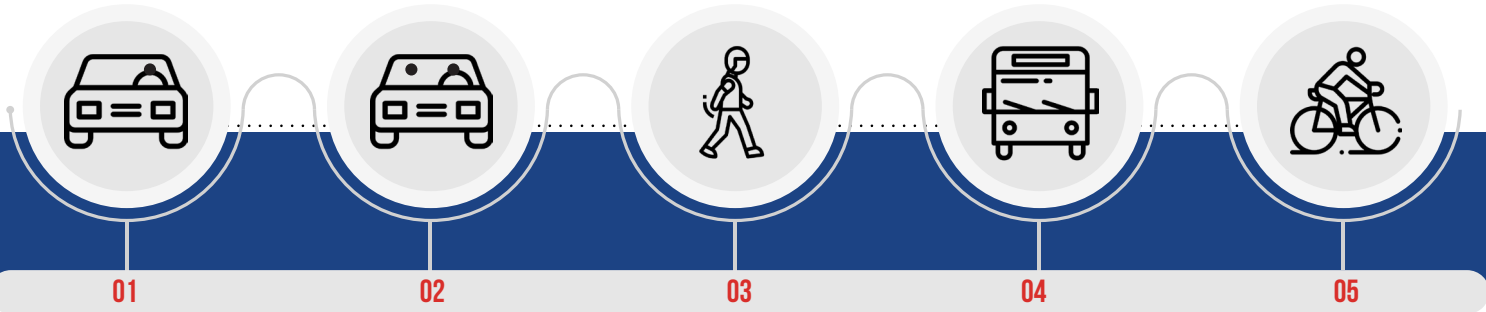
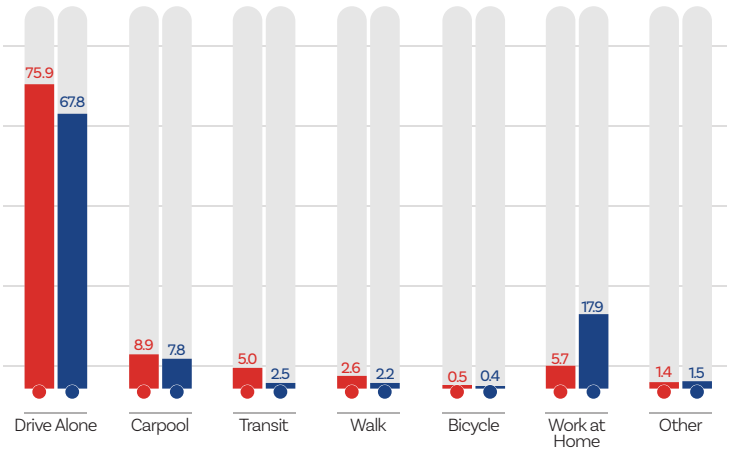
Florida Mode Share (%)

● 2019 ● 2021



U.S. Mode Share (%)

● 2019 ● 2021



## 01 Continued dominance by driving alone

In Florida, 70.5% of commuters drove alone, lower than 2019 but 2.7% above the national share. The number of commuters driving alone in Florida dropped by 753,197 in 2021.

## 02 Slightly less carpooling

For workers who did not work from home, carpooling remains the second most common means of commuting. From 2019 to 2021, the carpooling mode share decreased from 9.1% to 8.5% in Florida and from 8.9% to 7.8% nationally.

## 03 Decrease in commuting by walking

Commuting by walking dropped from 1.6% to 1.3% in Florida from 2019 to 2021. This share changed from 2.6% to 2.2% nationally.

## 04 Significant decrease in commuting by transit

From 2019 to 2021, transit use for commuting decreased from 1.6% to 1.0% in Florida. Nationally, transit use also saw a sharper decline from 5.0% to 2.5%.

## 05 Decrease in commuting by bicycling

From 2019 to 2021, the bicycle commuting share decreased from 0.6% to 0.4% in Florida and from 0.5% to 0.4% in the U.S.



2021 FLORIDA

# DETAILED COMMUTING TRENDS

BASED ON 2021 AMERICAN  
COMMUNITY SURVEY

While commuting constitutes only a portion of the overall travel demand, commute traffic determines peak period travel demand which often governs the planning and design of transportation systems. Travel demand is complex and influenced by multiple continuously evolving factors. Understanding the travel demand trends and the underlying influencing factors could lead to a better understanding of future travel needs, more accurate travel demand forecasting, and more effective decision making at the state and local levels.

## TEN-YEAR COMMUTING TRENDS IN FLORIDA AND THE UNITED STATES

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a demographics survey program conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Compared to the decennial census, the ACS is sent out annually to a random sample of addresses (about 3.5 million) and includes topics that are not on the decennial census, such as transportation. The ACS provides current data to communities every year in the form of estimates. This report is based on the ACS 1-year estimates, which can be downloaded from Census Bureau's new platform: <https://data.census.gov/>. For more information on data collection, sampling design, non-sampling error, definitions, and the concept of Margin of Errors (MOE) related to the data, see <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology.html>

**Table 1** summarizes the 10-year commuting trends for Florida and U.S. from 2011 to 2021. Year 2020 has been excluded from the analysis, because the 2020 ACS data collection process was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**TABLE 1 - FLORIDA AND U.S. ACS TRENDS**

<b>VEHICLES AVAILABLE - FLORIDA</b>	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021
No vehicles available	7.3%	7.4%	7.2%	6.9%	6.8%	6.6%	6.3%	6.2%	6.1%	5.9%
1 vehicle available	41.7%	42.2%	41.6%	41.2%	41.0%	40.4%	39.7%	39.5%	38.9%	38.9%
2 vehicles available	37.8%	37.4%	37.7%	38.2%	38.0%	38.1%	38.5%	38.1%	38.2%	38.4%
3 or more vehicles available	13.1%	13.0%	13.5%	13.7%	14.2%	14.9%	15.5%	16.2%	16.8%	16.8%
<b>VEHICLES AVAILABLE - U.S.</b>										
No vehicles available	9.3%	9.2%	9.1%	9.1%	8.9%	8.7%	8.6%	8.5%	8.6%	8.0%
1 vehicle available	34.1%	34.1%	33.9%	33.7%	33.5%	33.2%	32.7%	32.5%	32.4%	32.9%
2 vehicles available	37.5%	37.3%	37.3%	37.3%	37.2%	37.1%	37.3%	37.1%	36.9%	37.1%
3 or more vehicles available	19.1%	19.3%	19.7%	19.9%	20.3%	21.0%	21.5%	21.9%	22.1%	21.9%
<b>COMMUTING TO WORK - FLORIDA</b>										
Car, truck, or van - drove alone	79.7%	79.3%	79.6%	79.7%	79.7%	79.2%	79.4%	79.1%	78.1%	70.5%
Car, truck, or van - carpooled	9.9%	9.7%	9.4%	9.1%	8.9%	9.2%	9.1%	9.4%	9.1%	8.5%
Public transportation (not taxi)	2.1%	2.2%	2.1%	2.1%	2.2%	2.1%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%	1.0%
Walked	1.5%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%	1.6%	1.3%
Bicycle	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%
Worked at home	4.6%	5.0%	5.1%	5.4%	5.6%	6.0%	6.1%	6.2%	7.0%	16.6%
Other means	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.7%	1.7%	2.0%	1.7%
<b>COMMUTING TO WORK - U.S.</b>										
Car, truck, or van - drove alone	76.4%	76.3%	76.4%	76.5%	76.6%	76.3%	76.4%	76.3%	75.9%	67.8%
Car, truck, or van - carpooled	9.7%	9.7%	9.4%	9.2%	9.0%	9.0%	8.9%	9.0%	8.9%	7.8%
Public transportation (not taxi)	5.0%	5.0%	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%	5.1%	5.0%	4.9%	5.0%	2.5%
Walked	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%	2.7%	2.8%	2.7%	2.7%	2.6%	2.6%	2.2%
Bicycle	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
Worked at home	4.3%	4.4%	4.4%	4.5%	4.6%	5.0%	5.2%	5.3%	5.7%	17.9%
Other means	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%
<b>ZERO-WORKER HOUSEHOLDS</b>										
Florida	32.9%	33.0%	32.7%	32.1%	32.2%	32.0%	31.9%	31.6%	31.0%	31.2%
U.S.	27.5%	27.3%	27.0%	26.9%	26.8%	26.6%	26.5%	26.5%	26.3%	27.4%
<b>MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK</b>										
Florida (mins)	25.8	26.2	26.1	26.4	27.0	27.4	27.8	28.0	28.4	27.1
U.S. (mins)	25.5	25.7	25.8	26.0	26.4	26.6	26.9	27.1	27.6	25.6

Both in Florida and nationally, the percentage of work-at-home workers gradually grew from 2011 to 2019, and had a sharp increase in 2021 under the impact of COVID-19 (Figure 1). As a result, workers using other commuting modes all decreased to varying extents in 2021. In 2021, the percentage of work-at-home workers reached an all-time high of 16.6% in Florida and 17.9% in the nation.

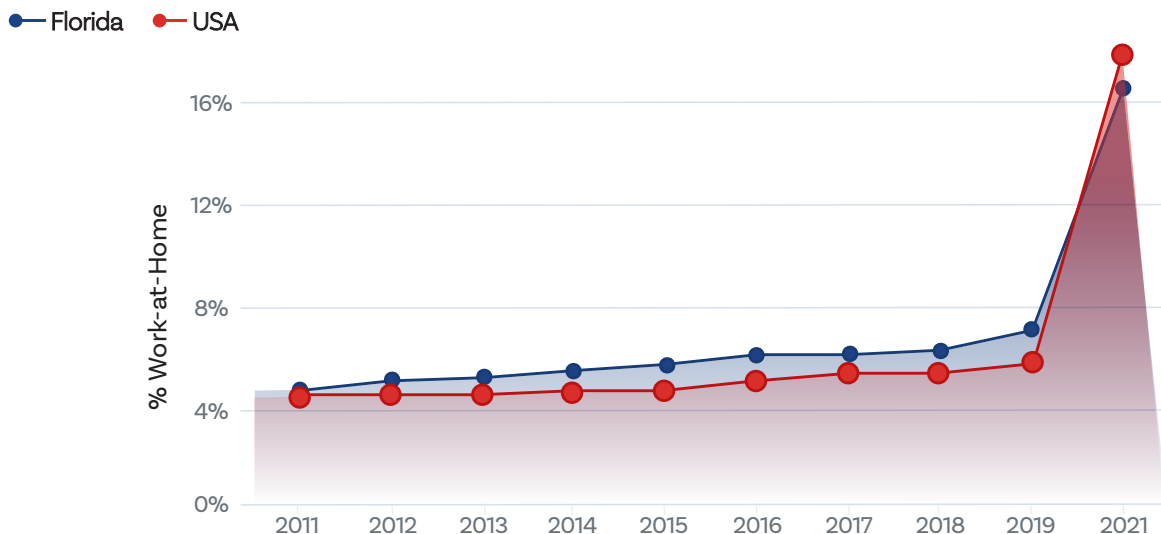


FIGURE 1 - WORK-AT-HOME SHARE, FLORIDA VS U.S.

Florida has a higher share of households with no workers than the national average in large part due to its concentration of retirees. In Florida, the share of households with no workers was 31.2% in 2021. This is a slight increase compared to 2019 (31.0%), and the first increase since 2015 (Figure 2). The share of households with no workers in the U.S. was 27.4% in 2021, which was also higher than its 2019 value (26.3%).

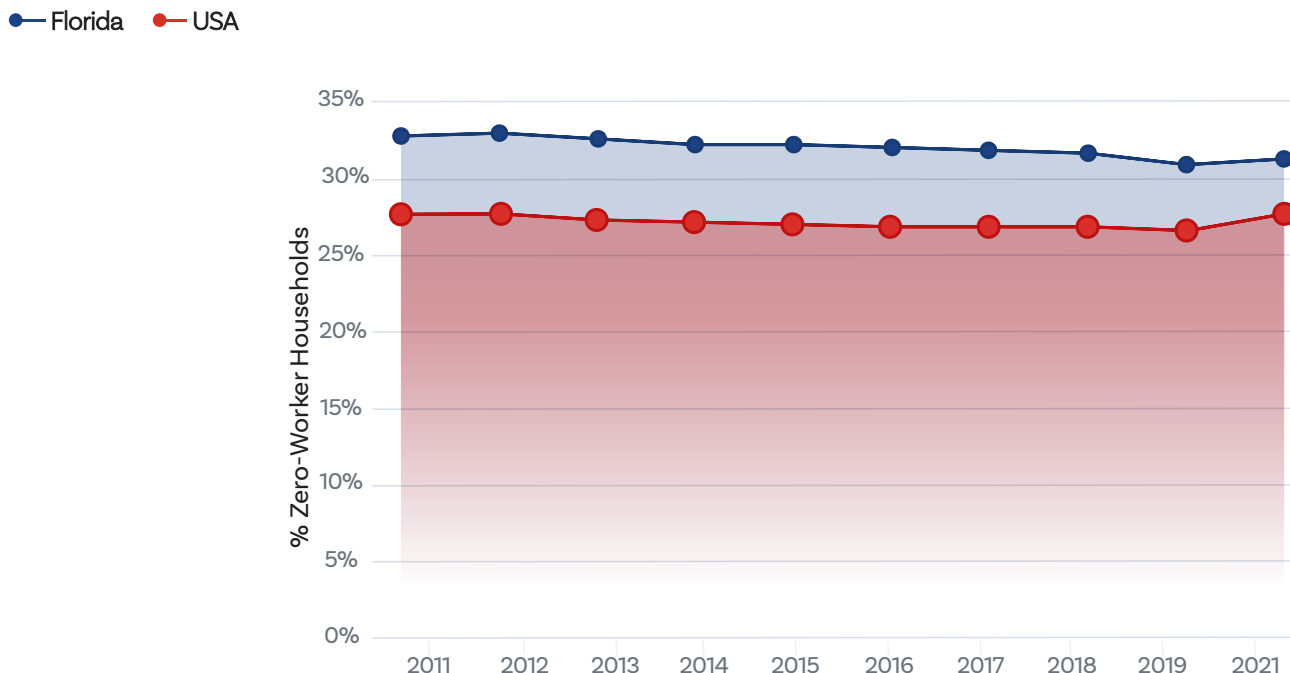
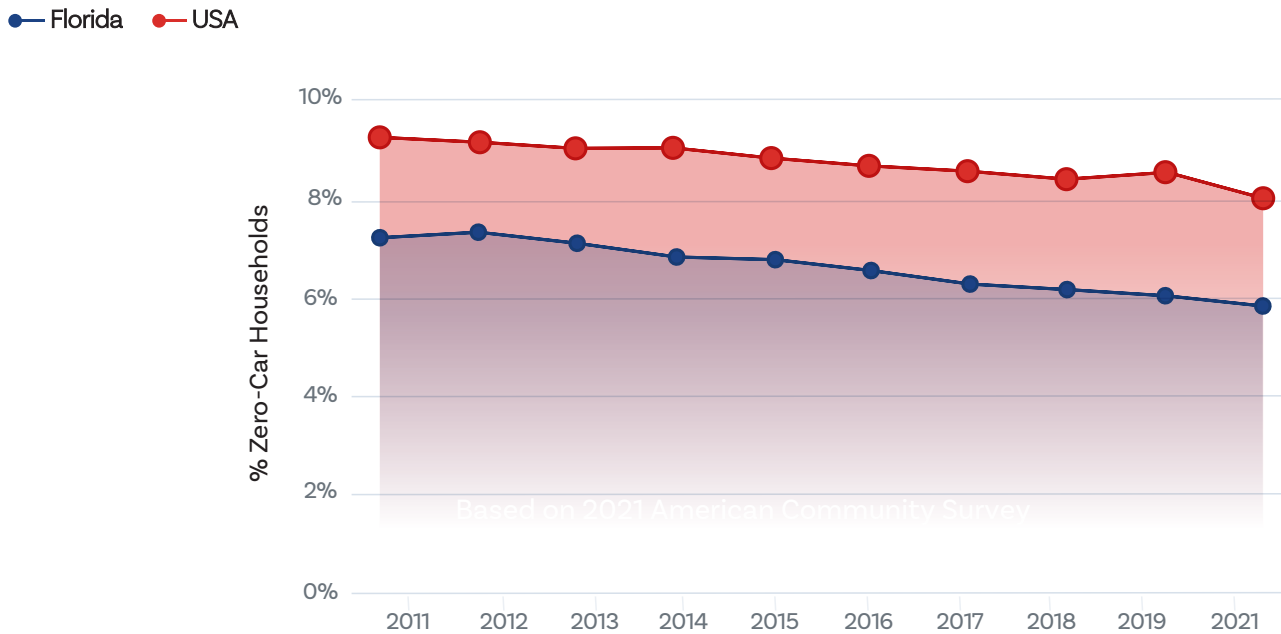


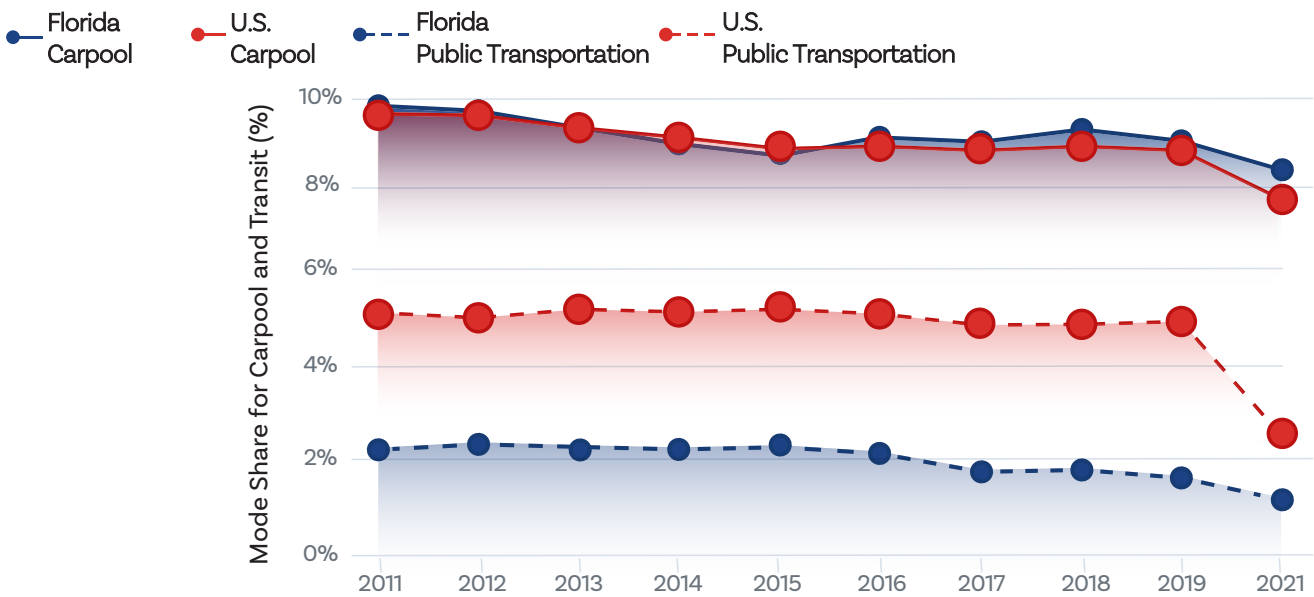
FIGURE 2 - HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO-WORKERS

As presented in **Figure 3**, the shares of zero-car household in both Florida and U.S. have generally been decreasing since 2011, with Florida's share approximately 2% lower than the national value. From 2011 to 2021, the share of zero-car household in Florida decreased from 7.3% to 5.9%, while that in the U.S. dropped from 9.3% to 8.0%. From 2019 to 2021, the share of zero-car household decreased by 0.2% in Florida and by 0.6% nationwide.



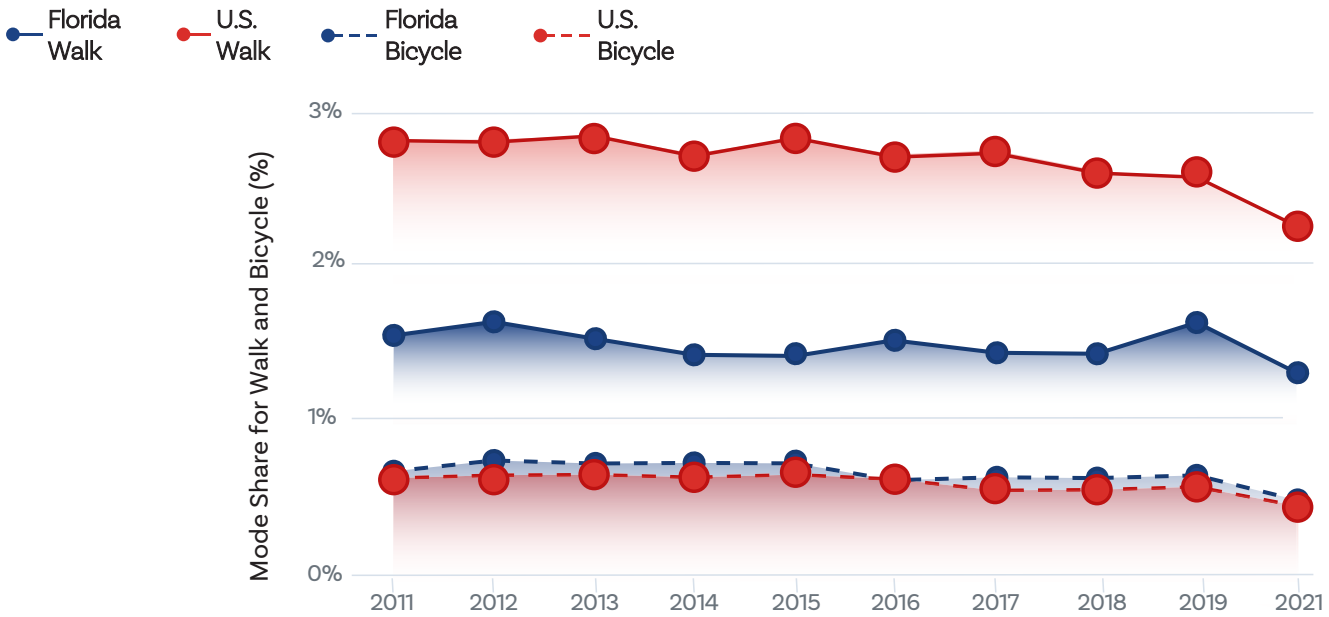
**FIGURE 3 - ZERO-CAR HOUSEHOLDS**

**Figure 4** compares Florida and national trends in commuting via carpool and transit. The mode share of carpool in Florida (8.5%) was slightly higher than the national average (7.8%), while the mode share of commuting by transit in Florida (1.0%) was less than half of the national average (2.5%). From 2019 to 2021, the mode share of carpool saw a slight decrease of 0.6% in Florida compared to a 1.1% decrease nationally. The percentage of commuters using transit also decreased: from 1.6% to 1.0% in Florida, and from 5.0% to 2.5% nationally.



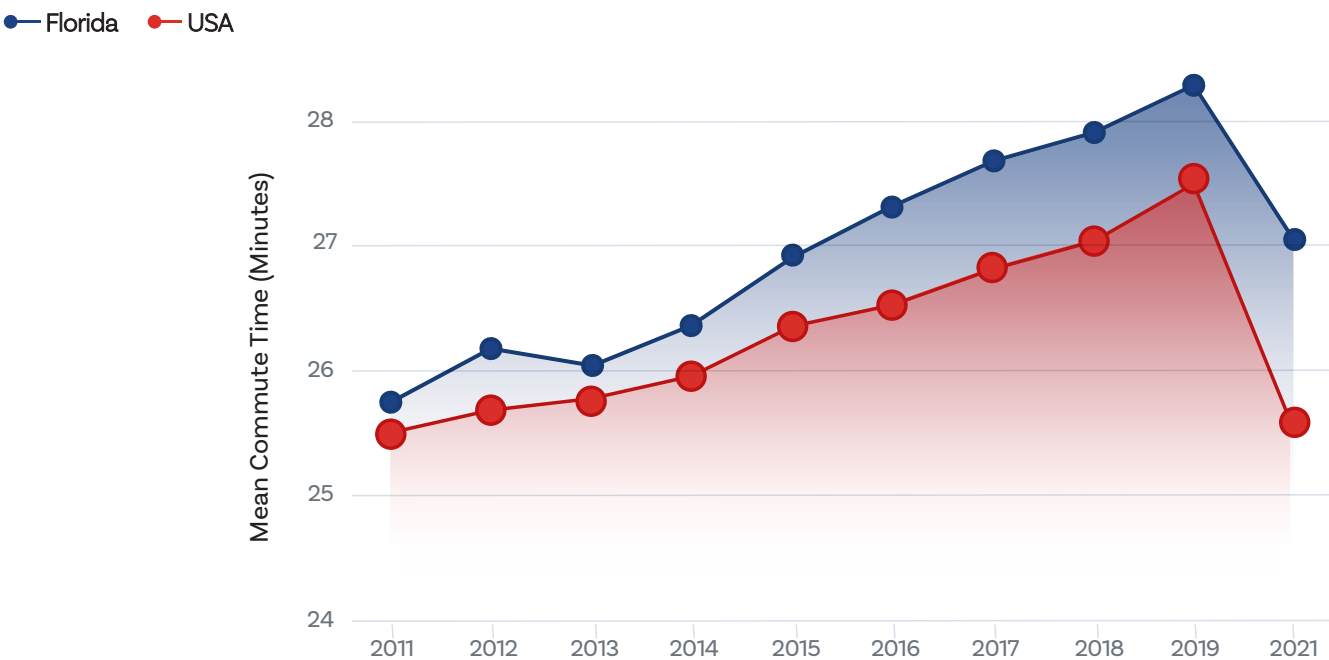
**FIGURE 4 - TRANSIT AND CARPOOL COMMUTING**

Florida and national shares of walk and bike commuting exhibited slight fluctuations over the past decade (**Figure 5**). While Florida consistently had a much smaller share of walking commuters than the national average, Florida's share of bicycle commuters remained equal to or marginally greater than the national share. In 2021, the share of bicycle commuters dropped from 0.6% to 0.4% in Florida, and from 0.5% to 0.4% in the U.S.



**FIGURE 5 - WALK AND BICYCLE COMMUTING**

Mean commute times decreased for the first time since 2014 in Florida and since 2011 in the U.S (**Figure 6**). In 2021, Florida's average commute time was 1.5 minute longer than the national. Compared to 2019, the average commute time in Florida decreased from 28.4 minutes to 27.1. The same trend is observed nationally as the average commute time decreased from 27.6 minutes to 25.6 minutes.



**FIGURE 6 - MEAN COMMUTE TIMES**



# YEAR 2021 COMMUTING CHARACTERISTICS IN FLORIDA

**Table 2** shows the transit mode shares for commuting in Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in Florida, in comparison to the state and national values. Transit mode shares in all Florida MSAs were below the national average. The transit commuting share in the state of Florida is 1.0%. Only two (2) of the MSAs were above 1.0%: Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach and Gainesville.

**TABLE 2 - TOP FLORIDA MSAS RANKED BY TRANSIT MODE SHARE TO WORK, 2021**

Rank	Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	Transit, %
1	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL Metro Area	2.0%
2	Gainesville, FL Metro Area	1.9%
3	Sebastian-Vero Beach, FL Metro Area	0.9%
4	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL Metro Area	0.8%
4	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL Metro Area	0.8%
6	Jacksonville, FL Metro Area	0.7%
6	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL Metro Area	0.7%
8	Tallahassee, FL Metro Area	0.6%
9	North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL Metro Area	0.4%
10	Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL Metro Area	0.3%
10	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL Metro Area	0.3%
12	Key West, FL Micro Area	0.2%
12	Crestview-Fort Walton Beach-Destin, FL Metro Area	0.2%
12	Lake City, FL Micro Area	0.2%
12	Port St. Lucie, FL Metro Area	0.2%
16	Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent, FL Metro Area	0.1%
16	Panama City, FL Metro Area	0.1%
16	Naples-Marco Island, FL Metro Area	0.1%
16	Punta Gorda, FL Metro Area	0.1%
20	Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL Metro Area	0.0%
20	Ocala, FL Metro Area	0.0%
20	Homosassa Springs, FL Metro Area	0.0%
20	Sebring-Avon Park, FL Metro Area	0.0%
20	The Villages, FL Metro Area	0.0%
	<b>Florida</b>	1.0%
	<b>United States</b>	2.5%

**Table 3** provides transit commute share data at the county level. The transit mode share data is only available for 38 counties in Florida from the 2021 American Community Survey data. Miami-Dade County had the highest transit share of 2.7% in Florida, which is slightly greater than the national average (2.5%). Only six (6) counties had a transit commute share equal to or greater than the state average (1.0%): Miami-Dade County, Alachua County, Broward County, Orange County, Duval County, and Palm Beach County.

**TABLE 3 - FLORIDA COUNTIES RANKED BY TRANSIT MODE SHARE TO WORK, 2021**

Rank	County	Transit, %	Rank	County	Transit, %
1	Miami-Dade County	2.7%	18	Pasco County	0.2%
2	Alachua County	2.2%	18	Monroe County	0.2%
3	Broward County	1.7%	18	Columbia County	0.2%
4	Orange County	1.2%	24	Lake County	0.1%
5	Duval County	1.1%	24	St. Lucie County	0.1%
6	Palm Beach County	1.0%	24	Bay County	0.1%
7	Indian River County	0.9%	24	Collier County	0.1%
7	Pinellas County	0.9%	24	Charlotte County	0.1%
9	Brevard County	0.8%	24	St. Johns County	0.1%
9	Hillsborough County	0.8%	30	Polk County	0.0%
11	Leon County	0.7%	30	Marion County	0.0%
11	Sarasota County	0.7%	30	Citrus County	0.0%
13	Seminole County	0.6%	30	Clay County	0.0%
14	Osceola County	0.5%	30	Flagler County	0.0%
15	Volusia County	0.4%	30	Hernando County	0.0%
16	Lee County	0.3%	30	Highlands County	0.0%
16	Martin County	0.3%	30	Santa Rosa County	0.0%
18	Escambia County	0.2%	30	Sumter County	0.0%
18	Okaloosa County	0.2%		<b>Florida</b>	1.0%
18	Manatee County	0.2%		<b>United States</b>	2.5%

**Table 4** presents average commute times for 38 Florida counties where data is available in 2021. Fifteen counties' average commute times were longer than the state average (27.1 minutes), while 22 counties had longer commute times than the national average (25.6 minutes). Osceola, Sumter, and Santa Rosa counties were the top three counties with the highest average commute times in Florida. The three counties with the lowest average commute times were Monroe, Leon, and Highlands counties.

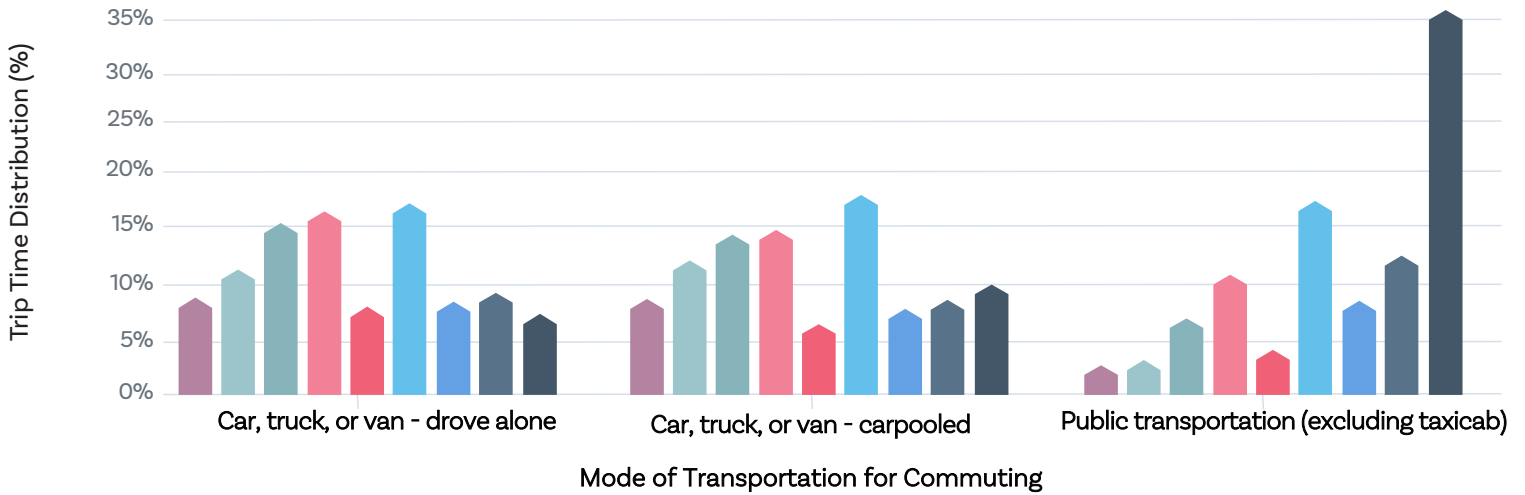
**TABLE 4 - TOP FLORIDA COUNTIES RANKED BY TRAVEL TIME TO WORK, 2021**

Rank	County	Minutes	Rank	County	Minutes
1	Osceola County	33.4	21	Manatee County	25.8
2	Sumter County	31.6	22	Palm Beach County	25.7
2	Santa Rosa County	31.6	23	St. Johns County	25.3
4	Clay County	31.2	24	Columbia County	24.9
5	Pasco County	30.9	24	Martin County	24.9
6	St. Lucie County	30.3	26	Brevard County	24.7
7	Miami-Dade County	29.8	26	Collier County	24.7
8	Lake County	29.1	28	Charlotte County	24.3
8	Polk County	29.1	29	Sarasota County	24.0
10	Citrus County	28.8	30	Pinellas County	23.7
11	Lee County	28.6	31	Indian River County	23.4
11	Flagler County	28.6	32	Duval County	23.2
13	Hernando County	28.2	32	Bay County	23.2
14	Broward County	28.0	34	Escambia County	22.7
15	Orange County	27.4	35	Alachua County	21.6
16	Hillsborough County	26.9	36	Highlands County	21.5
17	Marion County	26.7	37	Leon County	20.2
18	Volusia County	26.5	38	Monroe County	18.0
19	Okaloosa County	25.9		<b>Florida</b>	27.1
19	Seminole County	25.9		<b>United States</b>	25.6

**Figure 7** shows the distribution of one-way commute travel time in Florida by mode in 2021. For commuters who drove alone, 58.7% of them had commute times less than 30 minutes. The percentage of commuters with less than 30 minutes travel time slightly decreased to 56.1% for carpool, and plummeted to 27.1% for transit. Transit trips were noticeably longer due to a combination of wait time, frequent stopping, and transfers. A high percentage (35.5%) of transit commuting trips take 60 or more minutes for a one-way commute.

**Trip Time Interval in Minutes**

■ less than 10   ■ 10 to 14   ■ 15 to 19   ■ 20 to 24   ■ 25 to 29   ■ 30 to 34   ■ 35 to 44   ■ 45 to 59   ■ 60 or more



**FIGURE 7 - COMMUTE TIME BY MODE**

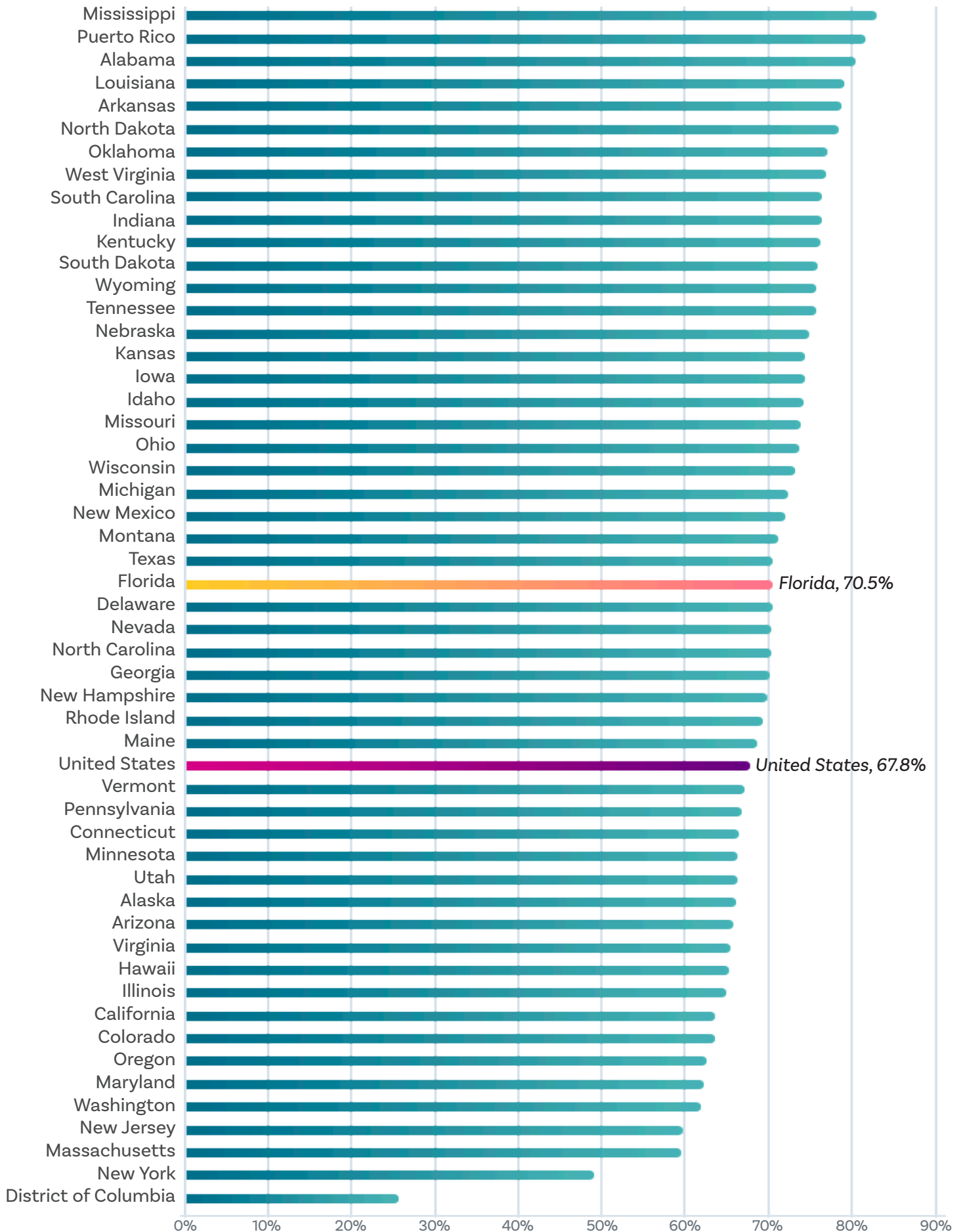
## COMPARISON OF COMMUTING CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN FLORIDA AND OTHER STATES

The percentage of workers that worked outside their county of residence reflects the cross-county commuting activities in a region. **Table 5** ranked states based on this metric in 2021. Thirty-nine (39) states had higher shares of workers that needed cross-county commuting than the state average (17.4%), while 27 states has higher shares than the national average (23.5%). Puerto Rico and Virginia ranked highest (48.5% and 40.2%, respectively). Not surprisingly, Hawaii had the lowest share (0.7%).

**TABLE 5 - PERCENT WORKERS WHO WORKED OUTSIDE COUNTY OF RESIDENCE, 2021**

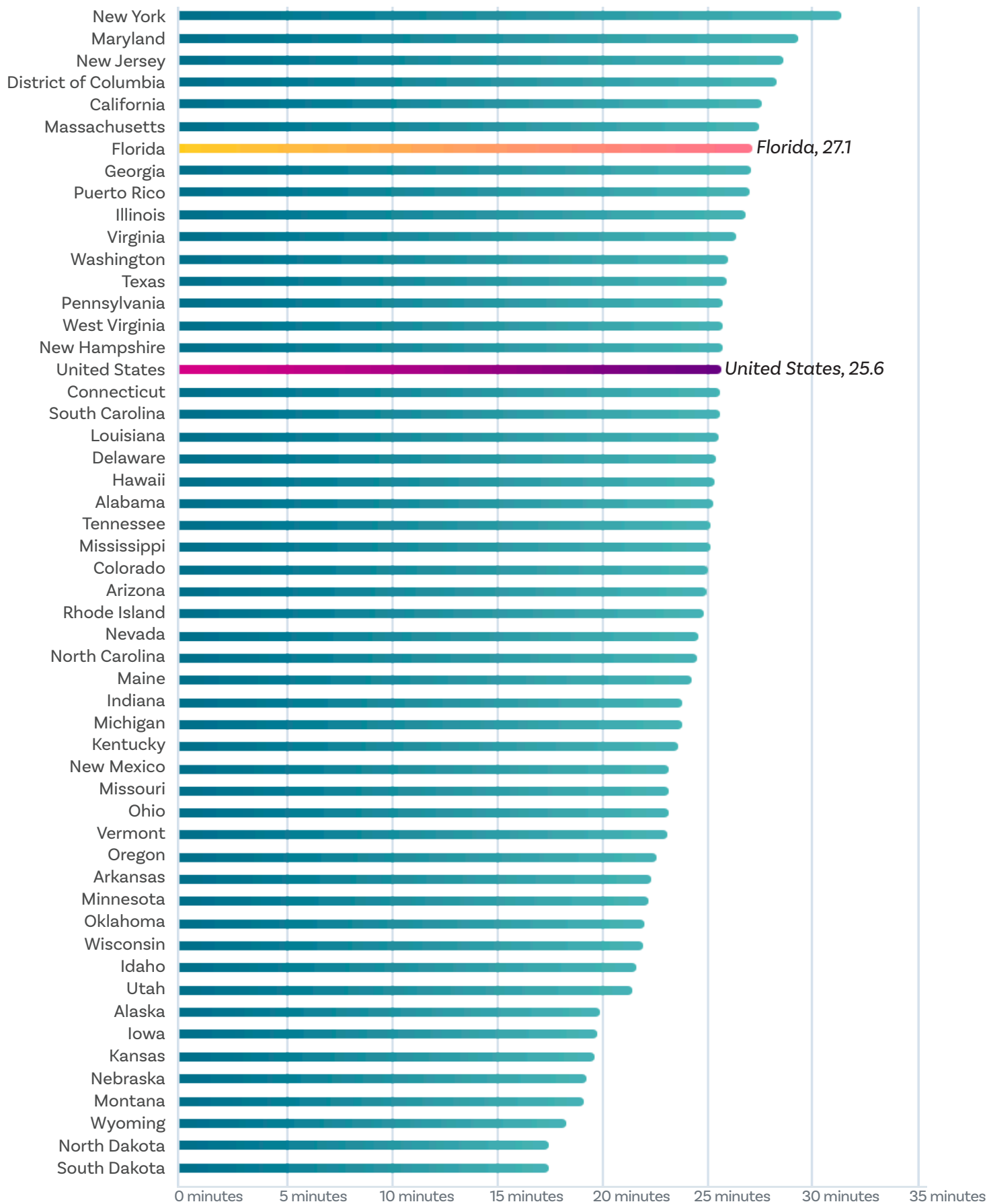
Rank	State	Percent	Rank	State	Percent
1	Puerto Rico	48.5%	28	Iowa	22.6%
2	Virginia	40.2%	29	Illinois	22.5%
3	Mississippi	36.2%	29	Connecticut	22.5%
4	Georgia	35.7%	31	Kansas	21.9%
5	New Jersey	35.1%	32	Idaho	21.4%
6	Maryland	33.9%	33	Texas	20.6%
7	Rhode Island	31.2%	34	Maine	20.4%
8	Missouri	31.1%	34	Vermont	20.4%
9	Indiana	30.6%	34	Nebraska	20.4%
9	West Virginia	30.6%	37	South Dakota	20.1%
11	Kentucky	30.2%	38	Oregon	18.2%
12	Minnesota	30.0%	39	Delaware	17.9%
13	New Hampshire	29.5%	40	<b>Florida</b>	17.4%
13	Louisiana	29.5%	41	Washington	15.6%
15	South Carolina	27.7%	42	Utah	15.4%
16	Ohio	27.6%	43	New Mexico	14.4%
16	New York	27.6%	44	California	13.9%
18	Tennessee	26.7%	45	North Dakota	13.5%
19	Colorado	26.6%	45	District of Columbia	13.5%
20	Alabama	26.3%	47	Montana	8.1%
21	Michigan	26.1%	48	Wyoming	6.9%
22	North Carolina	26.0%	49	Alaska	6.6%
23	Massachusetts	25.8%	50	Nevada	5.6%
24	Wisconsin	25.5%	51	Arizona	5.4%
25	Oklahoma	25.0%	52	Hawaii	0.7%
26	Pennsylvania	24.5%		<b>United States</b>	23.5%
27	Arkansas	23.9%			

**Figure 8** provides comparisons across states in Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) shares. The SOV share in Florida was 70.5% in 2021, which was lower than that of 25 other states but still higher than the national average of 67.8%.



**FIGURE 8 - PERCENT SOV FOR ALL STATES AND THE U.S., 2021**

**Figure 9** compares average commute times by all modes across the nation in 2021. With an average commute time of 27.1 minutes, Florida was among the states that had the longest travel times to work. Only five (5) states and the District of Columbia had longer commute times than Florida. The national average commute time (25.6 minutes) was slightly shorter than that in Florida.



**FIGURE 9 - AVERAGE COMMUTE TIME BY ALL MODES FOR ALL STATES AND THE U.S., 2021**

## POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19

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Three major changes in travel behaviors were observed in 2021, likely due to the impact of COVID-19:

- A significantly greater share of workers worked at home, reducing the percentage of commuters in the total population.
- A sharp decrease in the share of workers using transit for commute trips.
- The average commute times decreased by 1.3 minutes in Florida and by 2 minutes in the U.S., breaking a trend of increasing commute times since 2011 (with one exception in Florida in 2013 when a decrease of 0.1 minute was observed).

The tables and figures in the report provide detailed information to support these findings.



## GLOSSARY

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Carpooling	Two or more people share a ride to a common destination in a car, truck or van. Number of persons in the vehicle is used to determine the extent of carpooling and to estimate the number of cars, trucks, and vans in each flow.
Commuting	Commuting (Journey to Work) refers to a worker's travel from home (place of residence) to work (primary place of work).
Metropolitan/Micropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	A core area containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core. Current MSAs were delineated by the United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) based on the 2010 Standards. A metropolitan statistical area must have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more population. A micropolitan statistical area must have at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population. For more information, visit <a href="https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/metro-micro.html">https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/metro-micro.html</a>
Public Transportation	In the ACS, public transportation includes the following modes: bus; subway or elevated rail; long-distance train or commuter rail; light rail, streetcar, or trolley; and ferryboat.
Peak Period	A timeframe (an hour or multiple hours) during the day when traffic volumes are the highest. Typical peak periods include AM peak period, midday period, and PM peak period.
Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) Trip	A trip to or from destination by an individual driving alone in a car, truck or van.
Vehicles Available	The number of passenger cars, vans, and pickup or panel trucks of one-ton capacity or less kept at home and available for the use of household members. Vehicles rented or leased for one month or more, company vehicles, and police and government vehicles are included if kept at home and used for nonbusiness purposes. Dismantled or immobile vehicles are excluded, as are vehicles kept at home but used only for business purposes.
Means of Transportation to Work	The principal mode of travel or type of conveyance that the worker usually used to get from home to work during the reference week. Options include car, truck, or van (and the number of people in vehicle); five public transportation modes; taxicab; motorcycle, bicycle, walked, worked from home, and other method.
Travel Time to Work	The total number of minutes that it usually takes the worker to get from home to work during the ACS survey week.



## **Forecasting and Trends Office Florida Department of Transportation**

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