

Where Hamilton Works: Local and Regional Commuting Trends

Understanding commuter flows within and between cities is important for urban planning and infrastructure investment. With growing regionalization of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, this *UrbanInsights* bulletin looks at the flow of workers in and out of Hamilton, Ontario to get a sense of the changing picture of employment flows. All statistics are from the Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey unless otherwise stated.

Commuting From Hamilton

There are 200,865 commuters in the Hamilton Census Subdivision (CSD). Of that total, nearly 70 percent work in the City of Hamilton (Table 1). For the 30 percent that commute out of Hamilton each day, Burlington is the most popular destination representing approximately 12 percent of workers overall. Oakville, Toronto, and Mississauga are the next major destinations representing just over 10 percent of workers collectively. Table 1 shows the top 20 commuting destinations from Hamilton.

Table 1: Top 20 Commuting Destinations From Hamilton, 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada

DESTINATION (from Hamilton CSD)	Total	Percentage of Total
Hamilton	139,470	69.43%
Burlington	23,445	11.67%
Mississauga	7,145	3.56%
Oakville	6,895	3.43%
Toronto	6,835	3.40%
Brantford	2,060	1.03%
Milton	1,820	0.91%
Cambridge	1,700	0.85%
Guelph	1,420	0.71%
Haldimand County	1,345	0.67%
Brampton	1,205	0.60%
Grimsby	910	0.45%
St. Catharines	870	0.43%
Waterloo	565	0.28%
Kitchener	525	0.26%
Lincoln	480	0.24%
Brant	400	0.20%
Niagara Falls	400	0.20%
Vaughan	400	0.20%
West Lincoln	330	0.16%
Total (All cities)	200,865	100%
Total (Excluding Hamilton)	61,395	30.57%

Source: Statistics Canada

Commuting To Hamilton

Over 38,000 people commute into Hamilton each day. Of that total, over 30 percent (about 13,000) come from communities east along the lakeshore, including Toronto, Mississauga, Oakville, and Burlington. Burlington is the largest single source of commuters into Hamilton. Table 2 shows the top 20 commuter origins to Hamilton.

Table 2: Top 20 Commuting Origins To Hamilton, 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada

ORIGIN (to Hamilton CSD)	Total	Percentage of Total
Hamilton	139,470	78.44%
Burlington	7,755	4.36%
Haldimand County	5,070	2.85%
Grimsby	3,160	1.78%
Brantford	2,960	1.66%
St. Catharines	2,150	1.21%
Mississauga	1,920	1.08%
Oakville	1,820	1.02%
West Lincoln	1,740	0.98%
Toronto	1,370	0.77%
Brant	1,275	0.72%
Lincoln	1,250	0.70%
Cambridge	930	0.52%
Milton	770	0.43%
Norfolk County	655	0.37%
Guelph	610	0.34%
Welland	590	0.33%
Niagara Falls	560	0.31%
Brampton	500	0.28%
Kitchener	415	0.23%
Total (All Cities)	177,810	100%
Total (Excluding Hamilton)	38,340	21.56%

Source: Statistics Canada

Regional Geographical Perspective

From a regional geographic perspective, the number of commuters from Hamilton that travel within the Hamilton CMA, which includes Burlington and Grimsby (39.7%) is relatively evenly split with those that travel to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) – 40.6 percent. A much smaller percentage (18.4%) travel to the Western Greater Golden Horseshoe (WGGH, see Table 3). Conversely, commuters to Hamilton (see Table 4) come primarily from within the WGGH (52%), with the next largest source being from within the CMA (28.5%). A smaller number of commuters come from within the GTA – 18.2 percent. The general geographic boundaries of the regions is illustrated in Figure 1. A full list of what local municipalities and townships that fall under each category is provided in the appendix.

Table 3: Commuters from Hamilton by Geographic Region

DESTINATION (from Hamilton CSD)	Commuters	Percentage of Total
Hamilton CMA (Excluding Hamilton)	24,355	39.67%
GTA	24,945	40.63%
WGGH	11,285	18.38%
Other	810	1.32%
Total (Excluding Hamilton)	61,395	100%

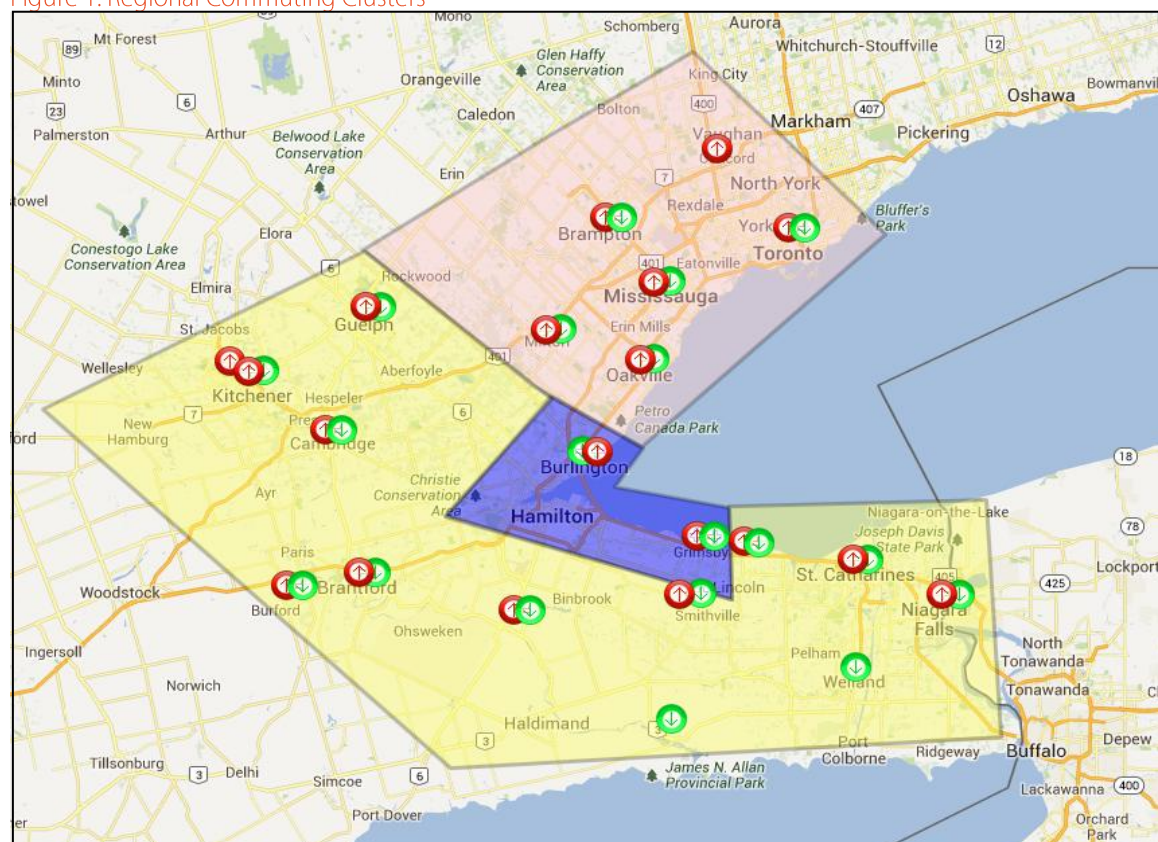
Source: Statistics Canada

Table 4: Commuters to Hamilton by Geographic Region

ORIGIN (to Hamilton CSD)	Commuters	Percentage of Total
Hamilton CMA (Excluding Hamilton)	10,915	28.47%
GTA	6,980	18.21%
WGGH	19,965	52.07%
Other	480	1.25%
Total (Excluding Hamilton)	38,340	100%

Source: Statistics Canada

Figure 1: Regional Commuting Clusters



Source: Geostreet.ca/CCS

Comparisons with 2006 Census

In 2010, the CCS published a bulletin examining commuter flow in and out of Hamilton using Statistics Canada 2006 Census figures. What follows is a comparison between the 2006 data and data from the 2011 National Household Survey.

Note: Since the 2006 Census, the Government of Canada's data collection methodology changed from a mandatory long-form census to a voluntary long-form survey and mandatory short-form census. The result was the 2011 National Household Survey. Due to these changes, the following comparisons look at proportions of commuter flow rather than raw amounts to account for differences.

In terms of outflow, the proportions have changed little in the years between 2006 and 2011. The gap between those who travel within the Hamilton CMA and those who commute to Toronto has shifted very slightly – 41.2 percent and 39.9 percent in 2006 versus 39.7 percent and 40.6 percent in 2011. The proportion of commuters traveling to the WGGH has slightly increased – 17.4 percent in 2006 versus 18.4 percent in 2011 (see Table 5).

For inbound commuting, the proportion of commuters who travel from Burlington and Grimsby to Hamilton has slightly decreased (31.2% vs. 28.5%), while the proportion of those commuting in from the GTA has increased (15.1% vs. 18.2%). The proportion of those commuting in from the WGGH has remained relatively static.

Table 5: Commuters from Hamilton by Geographic Region – 2006 vs. 2011

DESTINATION (from Hamilton CSD)	2006 Percentage	2011 Percentage
Hamilton CMA (excluding Hamilton)	41.19%	39.67%
GTA	39.99%	40.63%
WGGH	17.40%	18.38%
Other	1.43%	1.32%

Source: Statistics Canada

Table 6: Commuters to Hamilton by Geographic Region – 2006 vs. 2011

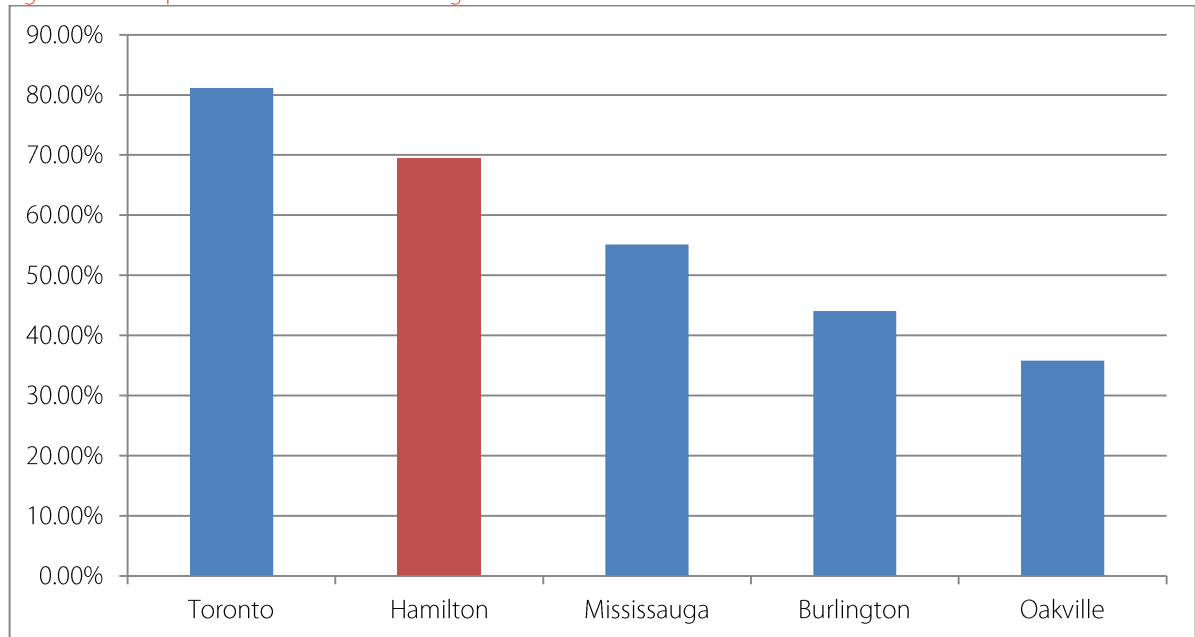
ORIGIN (to Hamilton CSD)	2006 Percentage	2011 Percentage
Hamilton CMA (excluding Hamilton)	31.21%	28.47%
GTA	15.11%	18.21%
WGGH	51.68%	52.07%
Other	1.99%	1.25%

Source: Statistics Canada

Comparison with Intra-Commuting in the GTA

Figure 2 and Table 7 demonstrate that despite increasing regionalization of communities in southern Ontario, Hamilton still retains a high percentage of people who live and work within the city. Some of the areas traditionally deemed "bedroom communities" such as Burlington, Mississauga, or Oakville maintain approximately 55 percent or less of their workforce within their city boundaries, while Hamilton has maintained close to a 70 percent intra-commuting rate.

Figure 2: Comparison of Intra-Commuting Rates in Hamilton vs. the Greater Toronto Area



Source: Statistics Canada

Table 7: Intra-commuting Rates in Hamilton and Select GTA Communities, 2006 vs. 2011

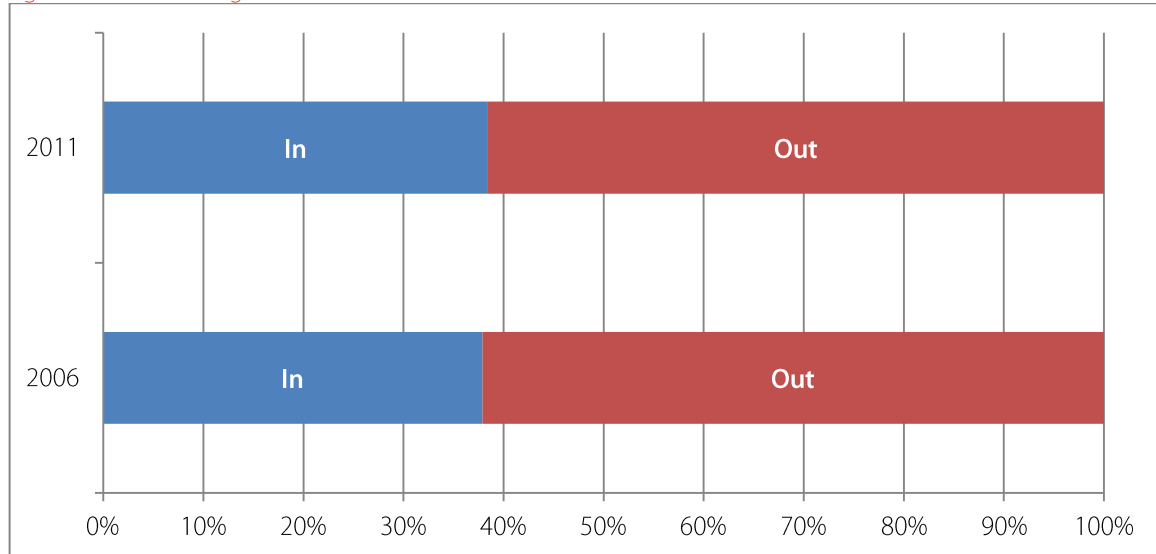
Municipality	2006 Percentage	2011 Percentage
Hamilton	70.37%	69.43%
Burlington	44.16%	44.06%
Oakville	36.67%	35.82%
Mississauga	54.59%	55.11%
Toronto	80.58%	81.13%

Source: Statistics Canada

Commuting Balance

The commuting balance is defined as the ratio of those commuting into Hamilton versus those commuting out. In 2011, the commuting balance was 1.60 in favour of those commuting out (Figure 3). This means that there were more people commuting out of Hamilton than in. However, the ratio appears to be decreasing over time compared to 2006 when the commuting balance was 1.64. This means that while more people are still commuting out rather than into Hamilton, the proportion of those commuting in is increasing.

Figure 3: Commuting Balance



Source: Statistics Canada

Conclusions

Hamilton maintains a strong intra-commuting level with the vast majority of people (69.4%) living and working in the city. This is in contrast to bedroom communities in the GTA as where intra-commuting rates do not exceed 56 percent. In terms of commuting flows, while more people commute out of Hamilton than commute in each day, the proportion is starting to balance out. Further, the proportion of commuters from the GTA to Hamilton appears to be increasing. In general, people commuting from Hamilton tend to travel within the CMA or east to the GTA, whereas people commuting to Hamilton come from a wider area including significant flows from communities to the west.

Appendix - Regional Definitions

GTA = Greater Toronto Area, WGGH = Western Greater Golden Horseshoe

Ajax	GTA	Kingston	OTHER	Haldimand County	WGGH
Aurora,	GTA	London	OTHER	Hamilton	WGGH
Barrie	GTA	Montréal	OTHER	Kitchener	WGGH
Brampton	GTA	North Dundas	OTHER	Lincoln	WGGH
Clarington	GTA	Ottawa	OTHER	Niagara Falls	WGGH
Halton Hills	GTA	Peterborough	OTHER	Niagara-on-the-Lake	WGGH
Markham	GTA	Saugeen Shores	OTHER	Norfolk County	WGGH
Milton	GTA	Stratford	OTHER	North Dumfries	WGGH
Mississauga	GTA	Surrey	OTHER	Pelham	WGGH
Newmarket	GTA	Tillsonburg	OTHER	Port Colborne	WGGH
Oakville	GTA	Windsor	OTHER	Puslinch	WGGH
Oshawa	GTA	Woodstock	OTHER	St. Catharines	WGGH
Pickering	GTA	Blandford-Blenheim	WGGH	Thorold	WGGH
Richmond Hill	GTA	Brant	WGGH	Wainfleet	WGGH
Toronto	GTA	Brantford	WGGH	Waterloo	WGGH
Vaughan	GTA	Caledon	WGGH	Welland	WGGH
Whitby	GTA	Cambridge	WGGH	West Lincoln	WGGH
Burlington	HAMILTON CMA	Central Elgin	WGGH	Wilmot	WGGH
Grimsby	HAMILTON CMA	Centre Wellington	WGGH	Woolwich	WGGH
Calgary	OTHER	Fort Erie	WGGH		
Ingersoll	OTHER	Guelph	WGGH		
Kincardine	OTHER	Guelph/Eramosa	WGGH		