

2007 Town of Chapel Hill Employee Travel Survey Results¹

The Town of Chapel Hill is covered under a Transportation Management Plan, and subsequently, all Town employees are required to complete the biennial travel survey that is required of the other TMP sites. The Town had a very high response rate of over 73%, with 479 of the 650+ Town employees completing the survey.

Place of Residence

In 2007, Town employees commuted to work from 38 different towns in 13 counties. This represented an increase from 2005, in which employees commuted from 30 different towns in 11 counties. The majority of Town employees commute from locations outside Chapel Hill (Table 1); however, the percentage of employees commuting from Orange County did not significantly change from 2005 to 2007, decreasing just over a 1.1%. The counties experiencing the most growth of Town employees since 2005 are Durham and Alamance Counties, increasing by 2.1% and 2.8%, respectively. Other counties experiencing changes in the number of Town employees are Wake County, which decreased by 1.1%, and Guilford County, which decreased by 1.6%.

Table 1. Town employee county of residence, 2005-2007

County	Percent Town Employees %		% Change
	2005	2007	
Orange	46.6	45.5	-1.1
Durham	17.4	19.5	2.1
Alamance	12.1	14.9	2.8
Chatham	11.8	10.9	-0.9
Wake	7.2	6.1	-1.1
Granville	0.7	1.0	0.3
Guilford	2.0	0.4	-1.6
Caswell	0.7	0.4	-0.3
Person	0.7	0.4	-0.3
Johnston	0.3	0.4	0.1
Lee	0.7	0.2	-0.5
Randolph	--	0.2	--

¹ Data for this report was collected by April 15, 2008.

Travel Mode

According to the 2007 survey, over 92% of Town of Chapel Hill Employees drive their personal vehicles to work daily (Table 2), a number that is somewhat higher than the town-wide results of 89.3% for 2007. This percentage also represents an increase of nearly 1% from 2005 results. The percentage of Town employees commuting by alternative modes is relatively low (less than 10%), which may indicate a need for the more active encouragement of alternative commutes. While the percentage of employees commuting by bicycle and walking has increased by 1% each, those employees using transit and carpooling decreased by 0.9% and 0.5%, respectively.

Table 2. Town employee travel mode, 2005-2007

Mode	Percent Town Employees %		
	2005	2007	% Change
Drive alone	91.6	92.4	0.8
Carpool	4.5	4.0	-0.5
Bicycle	1.0	2.0	1.0
Walk	1.0	2.0	1.0
Transit*	1.9	1.0	-0.9
Vanpool	0.0	0.0	0.0

*Transit includes both park-and-ride and other transit

Commute Distance and Time²

The majority of Town employees are commuting from distant locations, with over 64% commuting more than 10 miles to work and over 34% commuting more than 20 miles (Table 3). Correspondingly, it is also taking Town employees longer to get to work, with over 68% commuting for more than 15 minutes, and more than 25% commuting for more than 30 minutes (Table 4). Distance to work percentages have not changed much since 2005; in fact, employees seem to be living closer to work, with increases in the “less than 5 miles” and “5-10 miles” ranges, and decreases in the “10-20 miles” and “over 20 miles” ranges. However, time to work increases have been significant in the “10-15 minutes” and “over 30 minutes” ranges, a possible indicator that congestion is increasing. Future analysis may want to examine exactly where Town employees are coming from in order to provide more support for alternative commuting to reduce travel distance and times.

² Note that all commute distances and times are self-reported by Town employees.

Table 3. Town employee distance to work, 2005-2007

Distance to Work	Percent Town Employees %		% Change
	2005	2007	
< 5 miles	14.5	15.4	0.9
5-10 miles	20.3	20.5	0.2
10-20 miles	29.7	29.6	-0.1
> 20 miles	35.5	34.5	-1.0

Table 4. Town employee time to work, 2005-2007

Time to Work	Percent Town Employees %		% Change
	2005	2007	
< 10 minutes	10.0	9.0	-1.0
10-15 minutes	19.6	22.6	3.0
15-30 minutes	48.6	42.7	-5.9
>30 minutes	21.8	25.7	3.9

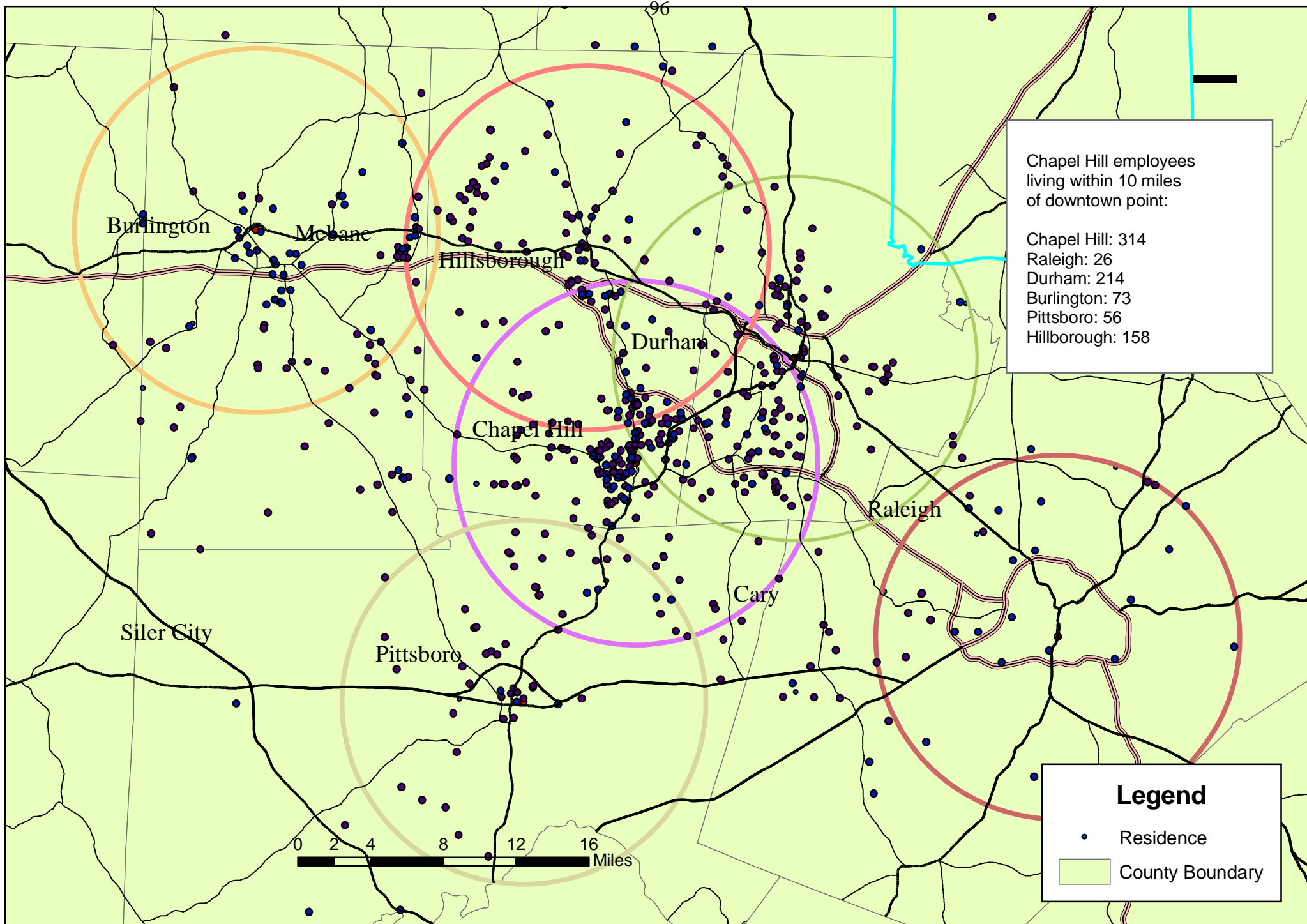
Behavioral Change

In an attempt to discover how to encourage alternative commutes, Town employees were asked what would induce them to change their commuting habits (Table 5). The largest number, 223 employees (19.6%), said that they would consider changing their commuting habits if they could save money. The second most popular response (at 10.9%) was that commuting habits would change if employees had a ride home in an emergency (a service that Triangle Transit already provides for transit users). Others responded that they would change their habits if they could work a reduced work week or more flexible hours, a likely response from firefighters working overnight shifts. Other barriers to changing commuting habits appeared to be the convenience and frequency of transit (the fifth-most popular response, by 8.4% of respondents), as well as finding someone to carpool with (8.8% of respondents). Although 11.9% answered that they would not change their commuting habits, the majority of the answers indicate a general willingness by Town employees to use alternative modes if those modes are made more cost effective or convenient than driving alone.

Table 5. Reasons reported for considering commuting change, 2007

Reason employee would change commuting habits	Number of Employees	Percent of Employees *
Could save money	223	19.6
Had a ride home in an emergency	124	10.9
Could work a reduced work week	106	9.3
Could find someone to carpool with	100	8.8
Transit was more convenient/frequent	96	8.4
Could maintain a more flexible work schedule	75	6.6
Had access to a shared vehicle/shuttle at work for errands	60	5.3
Did not have parental responsibilities that required my car	52	4.6
Had information about transit/carpooling	34	3.0
Had help setting up/learning about a vanpool	34	3.0
Had reserved/preferred carpool parking	17	1.5
Had showers/lockers at my workplace	12	1.1
Other	71	6.2
Would not consider changing my commuting habits now	135	11.9
<i>Total Respondents</i>	1139	

Town of Chapel Hill - Employee Spatial Distribution 2008



Note: Of 681 total employees, 45 employees had P.O. Boxes and 20 addresses could not be located on the map