



Displacement and Commuting in the San Francisco Bay Area and Beyond: An Analysis of the Relationship Between the Housing Crisis, Displacement, and Long Commutes

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Project Objective

This project aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of supercommuting patterns in the San Francisco Bay Area and northern Central Valley regions of California, leveraging multiple data sources to capture a detailed and nuanced picture. It investigates the associations between demographic factors—such as income, occupation, age, and place of residence—and supercommuting behaviors to identify key drivers of this phenomenon. The study also examines how commuting patterns have been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, shedding light on the broader impacts of societal and economic disruptions. Additionally, it explores the relationship between migration from the Bay Area to the Central Valley and supercommuting, offering critical insights into how household relocations from urban cores to fringe areas contribute to supercommuting trends. By addressing these objectives, the study fills an important gap in existing research and provides evidence to inform policy and planning practices.

Problem Statement

The analysis leverages four distinct datasets to provide a comprehensive portrait of supercommuting, incorporating varying definitions, temporal trends, demographic and mode-specific comparisons, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach addresses the complexity of supercommuting and highlights its evolving patterns in response to regional changes.

Research Methodology

This study advances the understanding of supercommuting as a phenomenon, from multiple standpoints, datasets, and definitions. The data provide specific estimates of levels and trends over time at the county level. In the full report, we discuss dataset differences, strengths, and weaknesses. Travel surveys, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), Census LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), and mobile-phone derived data (StreetLight) all provide different snapshots, but we illustrate that together, they yield a comprehensive picture of supercommuting trends.

Results

Our findings suggest several takeaways for transportation planning in the Bay Area and Central Valley, California, and nationally:

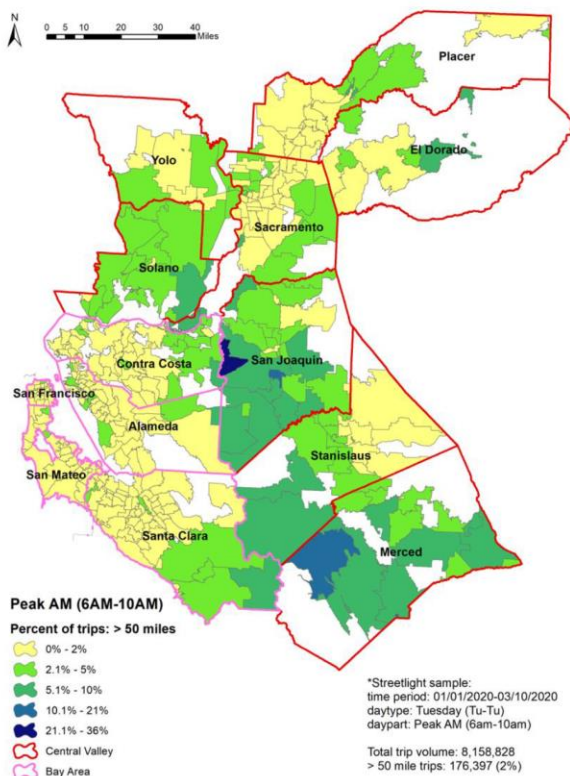
- Analyzing multiple data sources is necessary when looking at supercommuting, as no single dataset provides thorough enough coverage.
- Supercommutes are resilient (either by choice or necessity) and have not been generally deterred by the COVID-19 pandemic, at least in 2020. During the early months of COVID-19, supercommute shares decreased in many ZCTAs, particularly in the Bay Area, though the highest

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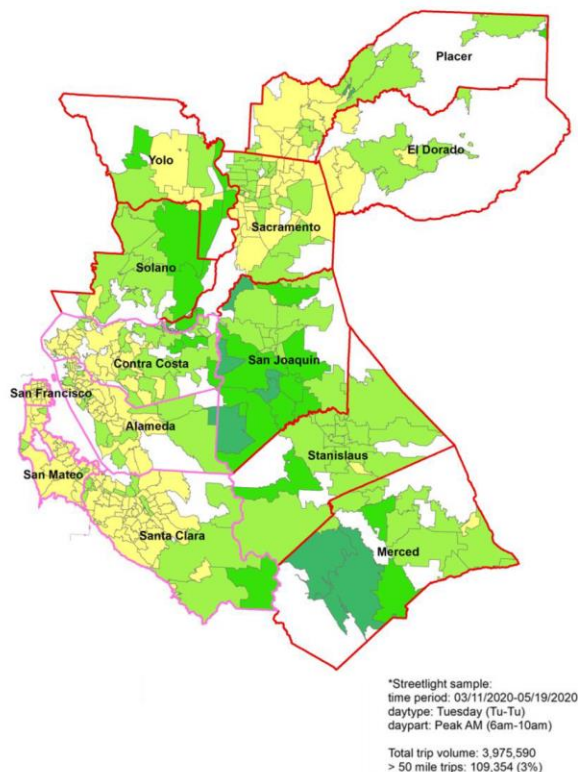
supercommute shares remained in the same key counties, likely due to essential worker residence patterns.

- Supercommutes are much more prevalent among Central Valley to Bay Area commuters, and much more so among carpool and public transit mode shares. This is in context of very low public transit mode shares. Thus, the burden of long duration (and distance) commutes falls heaviest on transit commuters in the region, most of whom are already of lower socioeconomic status.
- In-migration from the Bay Area is correlated with increased supercommuting in receiving Central Valley neighborhoods. Strategies to better connect employees with employers, whether by commute assistance (e.g., vanpools), telecommuting, or switching to more local employment may relieve these commuting burdens, and should be explored.
- Megaregional transportation planning across the regions of Northern California is an important level of intergovernmental coordination to increase wellbeing by managing and possibly decreasing supercommuting.

Pre COVID-19 (01/01/2020-03/10/2020)



During COVID-19 (03/11/2020-05/19/2020)



Data Source: StreetLight, 2021