#1 of 10: Spread in Mean Commute Across the Market, in Minutes (2024)

Atoka leads Tennessee in commute spread

Source: ALEX Intelligence · Published November 14, 2026

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THE DATA

15.5

Spread in Mean Commute Across the Market, in Minutes (2024)

Atoka and Millington represent the extremes in average commute time across the Memphis metro.

This 15.5-minute spread reflects a growing spatial polarization in access to employment and amenities. Atoka, with a mean commute of 36.2 minutes, is the most isolated city in the metro, while Memphis, at 21.1 minutes, is the most accessible. The gap suggests a bifurcation in regional connectivity that favors urban cores and penalizes outlying communities.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-14-memphis-commute-spread



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01

Commuting divides the region

The 15.5-minute spread in mean commute time reveals a structural imbalance in the Memphis metro. Atoka's 36.2-minute average commute—driven by limited transit access and low density—indicates deep spatial segregation. Meanwhile, Memphis and nearby cities like Germantown and Collierville benefit from centralized employment hubs and better infrastructure. This divergence undermines regional cohesion and may distort future investment patterns, favoring areas with shorter commutes and higher mobility.



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02

Accessibility defines value

As industrial growth accelerates in Shelby County—evidenced by Peak and ITT Goulds Pumps' new facilities—commute time becomes a critical determinant of labor market access. Workers in Atoka face disproportionate time costs, reducing their ability to participate in high-growth sectors. This creates a feedback loop: longer commutes deter talent, limit housing demand, and reduce property appreciation potential. Meanwhile, areas with shorter commutes will see intensified competition for housing and increased capital flows, reinforcing existing inequalities.

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