

TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS TOOLKIT



commute seattle



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

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CHAPTER 1

COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION BASIC INFORMATION



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COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION (CTR) OVERVIEW

In 1991, the Washington State Legislature passed the **Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Law** requiring employers to work with employees to reduce the number and length of drive-alone commute trips made to their worksite.

What is CTR?

The CTR Law (RCW 70.94.521 - 551) was adopted in 1991 as part of the Washington Clean Air Act. The purpose of the law is threefold – to reduce:



Emissions of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants



Traffic congestion



Energy consumption



Does CTR work?

The City of Seattle's CTR Program is a partnership connecting large employers to resources and tools to support the use of travel options that keep businesses and the economy thriving. Employers participating in the CTR program have contributed to a **11% reduction in the city's drive alone rate (DAR) since 2007.**



For more than 20 years, this partnership has helped over 250 employers city-wide provide transportation benefits for more than 139,000 daily commuters whose travel choices make significant contributions to reducing air pollution, traffic congestion and energy consumption. Recent survey results show that 64% of commuters traveling to CTR-affected worksites choose to get to work by transit, biking, walking, ridesharing and modes other than driving alone. The city aims to grow this partnership with businesses and continue to reduce the number of commuters driving alone.

What does the law require?

The law requires major employers to develop and implement a commute trip reduction program. The program must be designed to reduce the number and length of drive alone commute trips made to the worksite. The employer must submit a regular employer program report to SDOT and/or Commute Seattle for review and approval.

Every two years, the employer must conduct an employee commute survey - or supply equivalent data - showing employee commute behavior and the worksite's progress toward commute trip reduction goals. If the employer does not meet reduction goals, the jurisdiction can require the employer to change or modify its program.

What is a major employer and a CTR affected employee?

A major employer is a public or private employer that employs 100 or more CTR affected employees. A CTR affected employee is a full-time employee at a single worksite who is scheduled to begin their regular workday between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., on two or more week days, for at least 12 continuous months during the year. A full-time employee is one who is scheduled to work an average of at least 35 hours per week.

What are the CTR goals?

The City of Seattle's CTR program's success is grounded in the contributions made by large employers. Building on this success, the City of Seattle has set a new city-wide goal to reduce the city's DAR an additional 10% by 2017.

In order to meet this reduction, the city has adjusted goals and programming for large employers based on available infrastructure and travel options at their location. Eight geographic areas, called networks, have a specific DAR goal that employers within that network will work to achieve by 2017.

Local networks will foster stronger relationships between peer employers and encourage sharing of best practices to leverage commuter habits and trends. By focusing on specific geographies, the new CTR goals and programming are more responsive to local conditions that employers face and will help Seattle achieve greater reductions in commuters driving alone.



What this means for employers:

As a CTR affected employer you become part of a network of similar employers who are working towards the same trip reduction goals. You will have access to local resources and other employers within your geographic area and will receive programming to help you achieve your reduction goals.

City of Seattle Program Requirements – SMC 25.02

An affected employer is required to make a good faith effort to develop and implement a CTR program that will encourage its employees to reduce drive alone commute trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per employee. The CTR program must include the mandatory elements outlined below:

- **Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC)** – Designation of an employee transportation coordinator to administer the CTR program and to act as a liaison for one or more worksites of an affected employer. The ETC's name and contact information must be displayed prominently at each worksite.
- **Information Distribution** – Distribution of the CTR program summary to affected employees at least twice a year and to each new affected employee when the new affected employee begins employment.
- **CTR Program Elements** – The employer's CTR Program shall include elements as needed to meet CTR goals. An affected employer's CTR program shall specifically identify **at least two** of the following measures to be implemented by the affected employer:
 - Provide bicycle parking facilities and/or lockers, changing areas and showers for employees who walk or bicycle to work.
 - Provide commuter ride-matching services to facilitate employee ride-sharing for commute trips.
 - Provide subsidies for transit fares.
 - Provide employer vans or third-party vans for vanpooling.
 - Provide subsidy for carpool and vanpool participation.
 - Permit the use of the employer's vehicles for carpool and/or vanpool commute trips.
 - Permit alternative work schedules, such as a compressed workweek, that reduce commute trips by affected employees between six (6:00) a.m. and nine (9:00) a.m. A compressed workweek regularly allows a full-time employee to eliminate at least one (1) workday trip every two (2) weeks, by working longer hours during the remaining days, resulting in fewer commute trips by the employee.

- Permit alternative work schedules such as flex-time that reduce commute trips by affected employees between six (6:00) a.m. and nine (9:00) a.m. Flex-time allows individual employees some flexibility in choosing the time, but not the number, of their working hours.
- Provide preferential parking for high-occupancy vehicles.
- Provide reduced parking charges for high-occupancy vehicles.
- Collaborate with transportation providers to provide additional regular or express service to the work site (e.g., a custom bus service arranged specifically to transport employees to work).
- Construct special loading and unloading facilities for transit, carpool and/or vanpool users.
- Provide and fund a program of parking incentives such as a cash payment for employees who do not use the parking facilities.
- Institute or increase parking charges for SOVs.
- Establish a program to permit employees to telecommute either part- or full-time, where telecommuting is an arrangement that permits an employee to work from home, eliminating a commute trip, or to work from a work center closer to home, reducing the distance traveled in a commute trip by at least half.
- Provide a shuttle between the employer's worksite and the closest park-and-ride lot, transit center, or principal transit street.
- Attend at least four meetings of a local transportation management association, transportation management organization, or employer transportation network group each year.
- Implement other measures designed and demonstrated to facilitate the use of non-SOV commute modes or to reduce vehicle miles traveled that are agreed upon between the SDOT Director and the affected employer.

If you have any questions or need any information please contact:

Patrick Green

206-613-3126

patrickg@commuteseattle.com

Sarah Spicer

206-684-5017

sarah.spicer@seattle.gov

Billy Duss

206-613-3257

billyd@commuteseattle.com

For more information please visit:

www.seattle.gov/waytogo or www.commuteseattle.com



THE CTR LAW



In 1991, the Washington State Legislature passed the **Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Law**. It requires employers to work with employees to reduce the number and length of drive alone commute trips. The CTR Law is part of the Washington Clean Air Act and a key component of the State's Climate Action Plan.

What is the purpose?

- To reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants
- To reduce traffic congestion
- To reduce energy consumption

How does it help businesses?

- Allows adding employees without increasing traffic congestion
- Providing commute options contributes to employee satisfaction and retention
- Tax incentives and credits are available for providing transportation benefits

Who is required to participate?

Employers who have 100+ employees at a single worksite who:

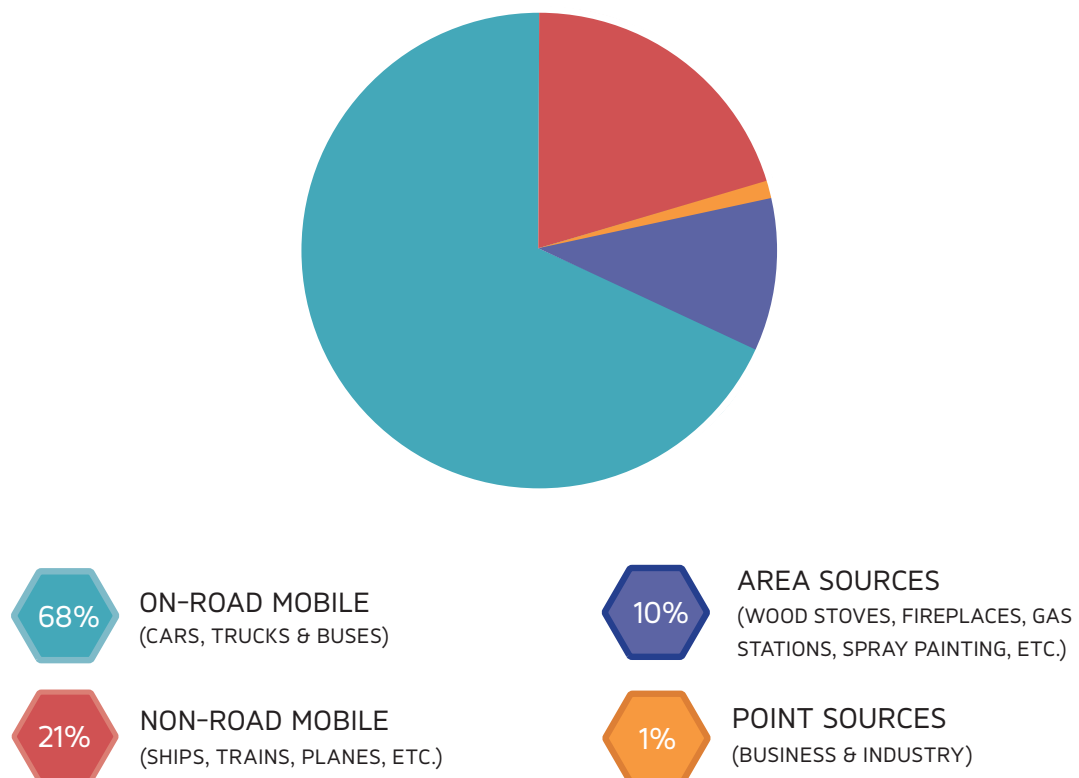
- Arrive between 6-9AM, 2+ weekdays for 12 continuous months of the year
- Full-time: scheduled 35+ hours per week



Clean air facts

Personal transportation, including commuting, is responsible for the majority of air pollution in the Puget Sound area. Transportation emissions from employees commuting to work are business' second highest energy use after electricity. In Washington state, transportation accounts for nearly 45% of GHG emissions.

2006 Sources of Air Pollution in Puget Sound Area





THE CTR LAW CHECKLIST

- ☐ Appoint and maintain an individual to act as an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC).
- ☐ Develop and promote a program that helps employees reduce drive-alone commute trips.
- ☐ Submit a transportation program report for review and approval every two years.
- ☐ Conduct a commuter survey to measure employees' commute habits every two years.
- ☐ Exercise a good faith effort by collaborating with the local jurisdiction in its administration and implementation of the law.

*Specific requirements for work sites located in the Seattle city limits are described in greater detail on the Seattle CTR Program Requirements document.

Resources

- **Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.02**
- **WA State Commute Trip Reduction Law**



CTR IN SEATTLE

Basic Facts:

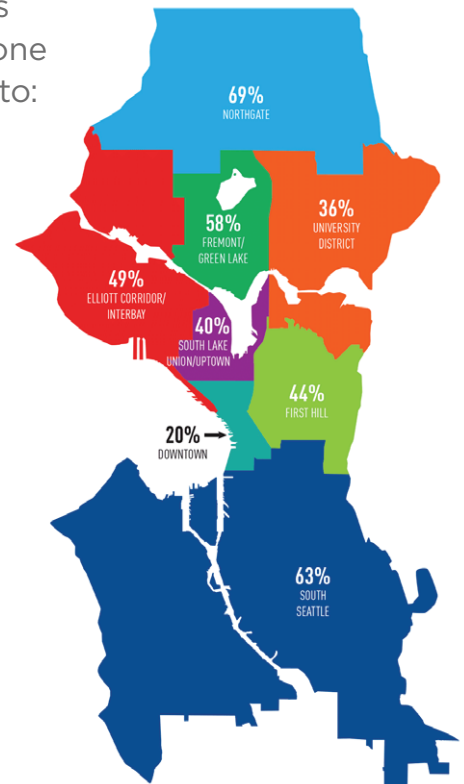
- **Over 250** CTR employers in Seattle
- Represent **over 139,000 daily commuters**

What makes Seattle's program unique?

Seattle has allocated CTR-affected worksites into 8 geographic networks and set drive alone rate (DAR) goals by network. This allows us to:

- Set goals that are responsive to local conditions
- Identify trip modes that are most successful in the area
- Provide clear expectations based on peer performance
- Provide resources and programming that meet employer needs

Our CTR Champions program supports worksites in their development of transportation programs that provide employees with healthy commute options. The annual Champions awards event gives special recognition to our strongest performing work sites.



What results has Seattle seen so far?

- Between 2007-2012, CTR employers contributed a **11% reduction in the city's DAR**
- While results are still being tallied, we anticipate reaching the goal of a further 10% reduction by 2017

Resources

- **SDOT CTR**
- **Commute Seattle CTR**



CTR CHAMPIONS

CTR-Affected Employers that have distinguished themselves by:

- Reducing drive alone commuting
- Offering transportation benefits to employees
- Actively engaging in the CTR program

These employers are celebrated and publicly acknowledged at the annual Champions breakfast. They are the strongest performers in their Network Areas and usually have Drive Alone Rates that are better than the goal set for their Network Area.

Platinum Level Champions have earned the highest level of recognition. They demonstrate the following:

- Current Drive Alone Rate (DAR) meeting or exceeding the network area goal
- Current DAR lower than that of their neighbors and/or your previous cycle
- Offer transit subsidies, ORCA Business Passport
- Promote walking or biking to work
- Offer telework or compressed work weeks
- Offer a pre-tax option for transit
- Offer free rides home in case of emergency
- Attend a ETC educational seminar or event during the previous 3 months
- Promoted a transportation campaign such as Bike Month or Ride Transit Month

Resources

- **SDOT CTR**
- **CTR Champions Profiles**
- **CTR Champions Best Practices by Award Level**
- **CTR Champions Awards 2015 and 2016 programs**



ETC JOB DESCRIPTION

The CTR Law **requires** affected employers to appoint an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) to implement, promote and administer the CTR Program on an on-going basis. Our experience with over 250 organizations affected by the CTR Law has shown that selecting the appropriate staff is critical to the success of your program.

While an ETC can be placed at any level or in any department in your organization, the following list outlines the factors that can affect your ETC's success.

ETCs need the professional skills to complete the following legally mandated requirements

- Develop the CTR Program and Report
- Implement the approved CTR Program
- Coordinate the distribution and collection of the biennial CTR measurement surveys to all employees at your worksite
- Promote the CTR Program to employees through production and distribution of informational pieces



ETCs succeed in the right environment

Generally speaking, organizations that manage parking for large numbers of employees tend to develop transportation programs closely associated with their facilities departments. In contrast, organizations that do not manage parking for employees to develop programs more closely related to their Human Resources department.

While ETCs can be located anywhere in your organization, our experience has shown ETCs have more leverage if they work directly in the center of their transportation program.

Common Characteristics of ETCs

To fulfill these duties, our experience has shown that the most successful ETCs share the following abilities and characteristics:

- Flexibility in schedule and duties to implement and promote your program
- The ability to work well with people and have access to all employees
- Good computer skills
- Excellent communication and organization skills



Select a CTR Program Manager (Optional)

Although you are not required by law to appoint a separate CTR “Program Manager,” the broader, more complex tasks of developing a program and policies that fit with your organization’s culture may best be facilitated by someone other than your ETC. A Human Resources or Personnel Manager is often an appropriate CTR Program Manager. A Program Manager may help to ensure ongoing compliance with the CTR Law, particularly for larger organizations. In addition to the characteristics of ETCs, Program Managers generally share the following characteristics:

- Policy and budget authority
- Access to your management team (or a member of the team)
- Access to facilities and internal communications staff
- The ability to understand how employee transportation programs benefit the organization
- Skills and background necessary to develop and manage an employee transportation program

Once again, these staffing decisions are key to the success of your CTR Program. If you have questions on these positions, please call your CTR Specialist, **Patrick Green at 206-613-3126 or email patrickg@commuteseattle.com**.



COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION PROGRAM – EMPLOYER SERVICES

The City of Seattle's CTR Program is a partnership connecting large employers to resources and tools that support the use of travel options and keep businesses and the economy thriving. As a CTR affected employer you become part of a network of similar employers who are working towards the same trip reduction goals. You will have access to local resources and other employers within your geographic area and will receive program assistance to help you achieve your reduction goals.

As an affected employer involved in the CTR program you will receive:

- Company and network specific mode split data
- Customizable employer transportation program summary brochure
- Transportation fair planning support
- Company specific RideshareOnline.com network
- Employee zipcode mapping to match up ridesharing partners
- Commute options promotional posters
- Invitations to education seminars covering transportation issues and programs
- Annual Wheel Options campaign
- Access to neighborhood CTR events
- Transportation alerts and notifications
- Trip reduction and CTR program consultative services
- Scholarships for transportation conferences
- Annual CTR Champions awards celebration

If you have any questions or need any information please contact:

Patrick Green

206-613-3126

patrickg@commuteseattle.com

Sarah Spicer

206-684-5000

sarah.spicer@seattle.gov

Billy Duss

206-613-3257

billyd@commuteseattle.com

For more information please visit:

www.seattle.gov/waytogo or www.commuteseattle.com



COMMUTE SEATTLE CTR SERVICES

Commute Seattle is SDOT's service delivery partner for Seattle's citywide CTR Program.



Who is Commute Seattle?

Public-private partnership of SDOT, King County Metro, Sound Transit and the Downtown Seattle Association. Provides resources and services to make commuting more convenient, affordable, and sustainable.



Serves:

Seattle employers, property managers, and commuters

Vision:

Create a more livable, sustainable, and economically competitive Seattle

Mission:

Help downtown users live more and drive less by improving access and mobility to and within downtown



Patrick Green

206-613-3126
patrickg@commuteseattle.com



Billy Duss

206-613-3257
billyd@commuteseattle.com

Commute Seattle's CTR Services Specialists support our CTR Affected Employers and voluntary CTR work sites by providing the following services:

- Regulatory compliance with the Washington State Commute Trip Reduction Law and Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.02
- Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) outreach and coaching
- Educational seminars and networking opportunities for ETC's and their employees
- Customized transportation consultations to help create and manage a successful employee commute program
- Information on commute options, resources, and incentives, including emerging technologies
- Information on transportation infrastructure and service changes such as new light rail and bus route changes improving access and mobility to and within downtown

Resources

- **Commute Seattle CTR**
- **Commute Seattle ETC email alerts**
(to subscribe, email info@commuteseattle.com)
- **Commute Seattle monthly newsletters**
- **Commute Seattle seminars and trainings**



CTR PROGRAM REPORT

A standard report completed by CTR-affected worksites that describes transportation programming and amenities, especially the actions taken to promote alternative commute modes (i.e., non-drive alone).

How often must an employer submit a CTR Program Report?

The City of Seattle requires CTR-affected employers to submit a Program Report biennially, online, on even years. Newly affected work sites must complete their first Program Report within six months of becoming affected by the Law.

What is the Program Summary?

The Program Summary is any piece of communication used to describe transportation benefits and options to employees. Examples include a flyer, brochure, intranet site, and website.

Example question from Program Report



CTR PROGRAM REPORT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Locate the most recent Program Report completed for your work site.
- ☐ Find out how transportation benefits and amenities are communicated to employees.
- ☐ Ask Human Resources and Facilities whether any transportation benefits or amenities have changed.
- ☐ Annually assess transportation benefits and amenities employee communications.
 - Is everything covered
 - Is it clear how to access benefits and amenities
 - Is it clear who can answer questions about benefits and amenities
 - Are supervisors aware of transportation offerings
- ☐ Revise employee communications as needed.
- ☐ Attend a Commute Seattle Program Report/Summary training.

Resources

- **Program Report Questions Template**
- **Completed Program Report**
- **Program Summary template**
- **Program Summary key elements**
- **Program Report and Summary webinar**



CTR EMPLOYEE SURVEY

A survey completed by employees at CTR-affected worksites. Employees answer questions about how they commute. Responses are aggregated and measure progress towards work site Drive Alone Rate reduction goals.

The state-provided **Employee Questionnaire** is available in paper or online format and takes about 5 minutes.

Who administers the Survey?

The designated work site ETC distributes and collects the surveys.

How often must an employer complete a CTR employee survey?

The City of Seattle requires CTR-affected employers to administer an employee survey biennially on odd years. Newly affected work sites must complete their first employee survey within 90 days of becoming affected by the Law.

Worksites that do not obtain the minimum required 50% employee response rate will field the survey again at a date agreed upon with Commute Seattle & SDOT.

What is the Survey Report?

WSDOT processes the surveys and Commute Seattle provides the results to ETCs. The Survey Report includes your worksite's overall Drive Alone Rate (DAR) and progress towards your DAR goal, how employees commute, why employees choose these commute options, where employees commute from, and responses to any supplemental questions requested by the employer.

State of Washington
Employee Questionnaire

4. Last week, what type of transportation did you use each day to commute TO your usual work location?

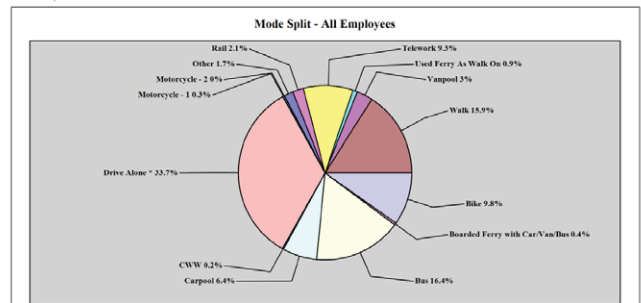
5. If you carpooled or carpooled as part of your commute, or if you rode a motorcycle, how many people (age 16 or older) were usually in the vehicle including yourself?

6. What is your household size? (Write numbers in the boxes and fill in the corresponding circles.)

Section of paper CTR Survey

Commute Trips By Mode - All Employees

Q.4a: Last week, what type of transportation did you use each day to commute TO your usual work location? (Mode used for the longest distance.)



Mode	Trips During This Survey Week	% of Trips During This Survey Week	% of Trips During Previous Survey Week	Employees Who Used This Mode at Least Once During This Survey Week	% of Employees Who Used This Mode at Least Once During This Survey Week	% of Employees Who Used This Mode at Least Once During Previous Survey Week
Drive Alone *	1,411	33.7%	42.1%	414	46.3%	55.9%
Carpool	268	6.4%	8.7%	98	11.0%	15.4%
Vanpool	126	3.0%	2.6%	34	3.8%	3.4%
Motorcycle - 1	12	0.3%	0.5%	5	0.6%	0.8%
Motorcycle - 2	2	0.0%	0.0%	1	0.1%	0.2%

Section of Survey Report



CTR EMPLOYEE SURVEY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Inform your leadership and supervisors of the survey at least two months in advance (some worksites will need additional time).
- ☐ Confirm a date to start the survey with Commute Seattle.
- ☐ Attend a Commute Seattle survey training.
- ☐ Revise employee communications as needed.
- ☐ Arrange for incentives for employees who complete the survey.
- ☐ If conducting the online survey, prepare the online account with either domain or individual email information.
- ☐ If conducting the paper survey, determine how you will distribute and collect paper surveys.
- ☐ The day the survey starts, send notification to employees, and plan time to respond to questions.
- ☐ The week of the survey, check the completion rate and send reminders to employees and supervisors.
- ☐ Notify Commute Seattle when you have reached the required response rate and are ready for the survey to be closed (if online) or collected (if paper).

Resources

- **CTR Survey template**
- **CTR Survey Report**
- **Tips for getting employees to take the survey**
- **CTR Survey webinar**

CHAPTER 2

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM CREATION & IMPLEMENTATION



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INTRODUCTION TO TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)

TDM strategies have been implemented by cities from London to Bellevue to Seattle and by companies large and small. Some basics to a successful company TDM program include parking management – either by providing extra incentives for those who do not drive a single occupancy car, or by switching from monthly parking to weekly or daily rates, promoting carpooling or transit use to your employees, providing proper facilities for employees who want to walk, run, or bike to work, and providing flexible scheduling or teleworking opportunities if appropriate.



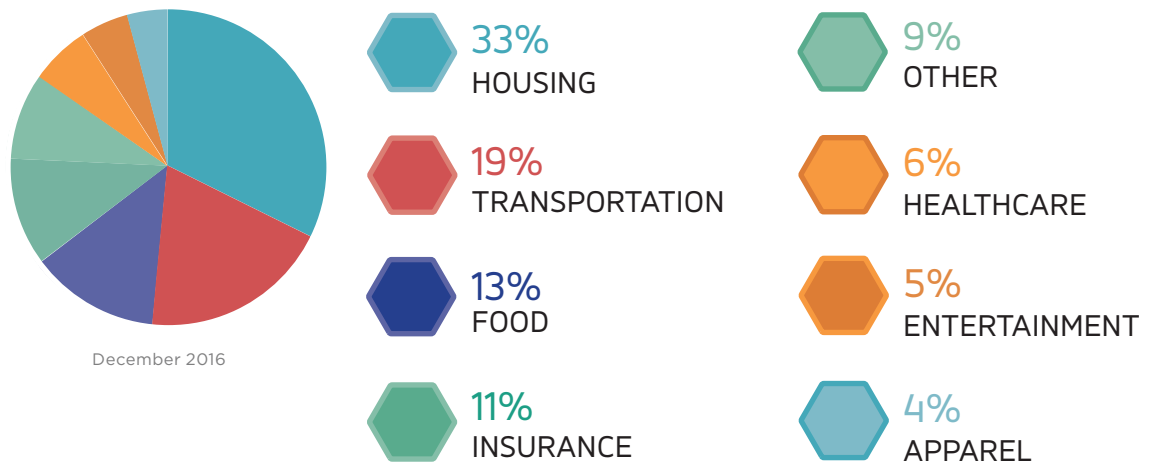
How Does TDM Fit Into Our Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program?

There is considerable overlap between TDM and CTR programming. From promoting and providing ORCA cards to providing priority parking for carpools and vanpools to having racks and showers for bike commuters you are helping support your employees commuting habits and implementing TDM and CTR strategies.

Did You Know?

Transportation is the second largest expense for most American households (after housing). Transit users in cities with robust transit systems can save up to \$10,230 per year by taking transit rather than owning a vehicle.

Average American Family



Resources

- [Transportation Demand Management Listserv](#)
- [Introduction to CTR Law](#)
- [SDOT's Best Practices for TDM](#)
- [Commute Seattle](#)



RELATED PROGRAMS: TMPs, MUPs, MIMPs, & LEED

What are TMPs?

TMP Stands for Transportation Management Programs. These plans, developed by the City of Seattle and building managers, help to facilitate the tenant's use of a full range of travel options including walking, biking, using transit, and carpooling. These TMPs also assist in reaching LEED building certification (see below), and support larger goals of the Seattle 2030 District.

The purpose of these plans is to help mitigate the impact of traffic and parking for these large buildings. Once the need for a TMP is identified in the City's environmental review, goals are developed and included in the building's Master Use Permit. The goals of TMPs are generally the same as CTR and complement each other.

What are MUPs?

Master Use Permits (MUPs) are a type of land use permit needed for the construction of new developments in the City of Seattle. This permit typically requires a public comment period and is granted by the City's Office of Hearing Examiner. This permit must be issued before any building permits will be issued and will often look at the traffic impacts of your development.



A view from the rooftop garden on the Russell Investment Building, which is LEED-Platinum certified and is home to multiple CTR-affected companies.

What is LEED?

LEED stands for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design and is an international designation for best-in-class building strategies and practices for building green buildings. To receive LEED certification, building projects must satisfy certain requirements, including addressing transportation-related carbon emissions. There are various levels of LEED certification including Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum.

What are MIMPs?

Major Institution Master Plans (MIMPs) are overall plans for 13 of the city's largest colleges, universities and hospitals. These large institutions have specific goals and requirements to ensure their employees have minimal impact on nearby neighbors and businesses. Some examples of institutions with MIMPs include the University of Washington, Virginia Mason Medical Center and Seattle Central College.

MIMPs often include sections on reducing employee DAR and mitigating their impact on street parking around the institution.



Resources

- [City of Seattle – TMPs](#)
- [Great TMP Buildings](#)
- [Seattle 2030 District](#)
- [City of Seattle – MUPs](#)
- [City of Seattle – MIMPs](#)
- [Information on LEED certification](#)



UTILIZING PEER SUPPORT

Your fellow ETCs are an invaluable resource for you while implementing CTR programming and expanding your transportation benefits. They have experience working with management to implement change, know the unique challenges of your industry, and can simply give you someone to bounce a few ideas off of.

Setting up informal coffee hours with other ETC's in your neighborhood allows you to collaborate and work with your neighbors and could expand and promote carpool and vanpool opportunities along with other programs to reduce your DAR.

Commute Seattle and our relationship with the Downtown Seattle Association also provides unique opportunities to network with ETC's and business leaders across the city. Many of our panel discussions include a pre or post-event networking opportunity allowing you to meet leaders from around Seattle.

Resources

- **Challenge Seattle**
- **Seattle 2030 District**
- **Commute Seattle Events Calendar**
- **Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT)**
- **National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)**
- **Washington State Ridesharing Organization (WRSO)**

CHAPTER 3

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM ELEMENTS



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RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Impact level
Basic

Basics of a successful transportation program include:



Provide free or subsidized ORCA passes for employees for employees either through **ORCA Business Choice**, or **ORCA Business Passport**



Providing a secure location for employees who bike commute to lock their bikes, or allowing them to bring bikes into the office



Setting up company policies to allow employees to telework or utilize a compressed work week when necessary



Offer pre-tax benefits allowing employees to save even more when they choose an alternative means of commuting

If possible, charge for parking



Beyond these basics, other factors like **location, industry and company culture** will impact what elements will have the biggest impact on your company's DAR. When implementing these benefits, be creative! Some innovative transit benefits include:



Providing carpoolers and vanpoolers priority parking spots



Give regular bus commuters one “free” day of parking a month when life demands they drive



Have a drawing for “Commuter of the Month” where using your ORCA pass is the entry to the drawing



Reimbursing employees for carshare or rideshare trips for work



RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM ELEMENTS CHECKLIST

- ☐ Provide ORCA passes for employees.
- ☐ Provide a safe, dry place for employees to lock their bikes.
- ☐ Charge for parking.
- ☐ Provide showers and lockers for active commuters.
- ☐ Offer pre-tax transportation benefits.





Impact level
Advanced

PRE-TAX AND TAX-FREE BENEFITS

Employers can receive tax benefits for providing certain types of employee transportation benefits. Employers who subsidize their employees' commute may receive equivalent deductions free of additional payroll and federal income taxes.

Employer savings:

- Reduce employer FICA taxes
- 2016 Transit/Vanpool: **\$255/employee/month** limit
- 2016 Qualified Parking: **\$255/employee/month** limit

Employee savings:

- Pre-tax spending accounts
- Tax-free employer-subsidized transportation benefits for transit and vanpooling, increasing take home pay
- Reduced vehicle operating and parking expenses

Case Study



Joe is single and makes \$100,000 per year working at ACME Company. He has no children, doesn't own his own home, and has no other sources of income or deductions.

- Joe must pay **\$27,267 per year** in Federal Withholding and FICA taxes.
- He pays **15.65%** on first \$8,500 earned, **20.65%** on dollars earned between \$8,500 and \$34,500, etc...
- The rate that Joe is taxed on *his last dollar earned* is **33.65%**
- Joe's employer pays **\$7,650** per year in FICA taxes. ACME Co's FICA tax rate is **7.65%**. When Joe spends pre-tax income on qualified benefits, **he saves 33.65%, ACME saves 7.65%.**



PRE-TAX | TAX-FREE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Build a case for pre-tax/tax-free benefits and present to key decision makers.
- ☐ Consult a tax advisor or other professional for detailed information regarding the tax implications of Commuter Tax Benefits.
- ☐ Set up the program: make arrangements with payroll and accounting to prepare the program to offer to employees.
- ☐ Spread the news: for employees to participate they need to know what's offered to them. Distribute flyers and emails with details about what the incentives include, how it will benefit them, when it will be available, how they can sign up, and how they receive their benefit.
- ☐ Sign them up: employers should have their employees complete a participation form. The form should include type of transit pass or voucher they want, and how much should be deducted from their income to pay for benefit.
- ☐ Start the program and distribute passes.



RESOURCES

Employer Resources

- **ORCA Passport for Downtown Seattle Employers:**
ORCA Passport information and cost comparison tool
- **King County Metro Tax Guide**
(Covers WA State and Federal commuter tax benefits for employers)
- **Internal Revenue Service**
(Provides code regarding qualified commuter fringe benefits in IRS Section 132(f))
- **Best Workplaces for Commuters**
- **Commute Seattle Tax Toolkit**



Commuter Benefits Work For Us

The Commuter Benefits Work for Us Coalition consists of transit agencies, non-profit advocacy organizations and businesses dedicated to promoting the transit commuter benefit as an effective federal tool to help encourage increased use of public transportation and van pools.

Third Party Administrators

- **WageWorks**
- **Commuter Check**
- **Transit Check**
- **Tranben, Ltd**



Impact level
Cutting Edge

TRANSIT

Employer transit programs provide tools, resources, and subsidies to encourage employees to use various modes of transit to get to work. In Seattle, these transit modes include bus, streetcar, light rail, and train. Employers use transit programs as a recruitment and retention tool, and to save money as an alternative to investing in parking infrastructure.



The most successful transit programs engage employees at multiple times and levels. For example, while onboarding a new employee, an employer can present a transit plan for the employee's daily commute along with any financial subsidies. An employer can also present transit options to staff during unusual infrastructure changes or special events that make driving to work more challenging, such as a bridge closure or lane reduction.

Company Example



KPFF Consulting Engineers is a multi-office, multi-discipline engineering firm founded in Seattle in 1960, with a staff of 240 in their downtown Seattle office. As a leader in transportation engineering in the region, the goals of KPFF's employee transportation program reflect their organizational mission of improving transportation options in the future. Furthermore, improving quality and lowering costs of commuting is an important way to take care of their employees.

Leverage Nearby Transportation Facilities

Central to KPFF's transportation program is the **ORCA Business Passport**. With direct office access to the transit tunnel, and located within blocks of the streetcar and other main transit stops, commuting with the ORCA card is very convenient for KPFF employees. Over 80% of employees use it regularly.



TRANSIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Create a summary sheet of your employer's current transportation benefits, nearby transit options (e.g., bus stops, train stations, etc.), and links to resources for navigating transit. See suggested resources on next page.
- ☐ Create a template for new hires to request a transit plan to get to and from work.
- ☐ Create a workflow for communicating these benefits and options to new hires and all employees throughout the year. What's the best way to capture employee attention? An intranet landing page? Direct emails? A flyer posted to a communal bulletin board or common area such as the receptionist's desk, cafeteria, or restrooms?
- ☐ Expand financial subsidies and incentives by providing recommendations to upper management. These recommendations may include: pre-tax commuter accounts, ORCA Business Choice, or ORCA Business Passport. See links to these options under Employer Resources.
- ☐ Promote seasonal transit campaigns such as Wheel Options or create your own.
- ☐ Keep up to date on current transportation events and changes and communicate these to employees.



RESOURCES



Employer Resources

- [Transportation Summary Sheet Template](#)
- [Commute Seattle - ORCA Business Passport](#)
- [Guide: ORCA 101](#)
- [Recorded Webinar: ORCA 101](#)
- [Guide: Tax Free Transportation](#)
- [Recorded Webinar: Taxes and Transportation](#)
- [King County ORCA Employer Accounts Page](#)

Employee Resources

- [Commute Seattle Commuter Portal](#)
- [Google Maps](#)
- [Citymapper](#)
- [OneBusAway](#)
- [King County Metro Trip Planner](#)
- [Sound Transit Trip Planner](#)
- [Map of ORCA Vending Machines](#)



Impact level
Advanced

USING A VANPOOL/VANSHARE OR COMPANY SHUTTLE

The fact of the matter is not every employee will be able to take transit to work. For employees who lack direct or frequent transit service vanpool, vanshare, or a company shuttle may be a great option. If your company offers **ORCA Business Passport** the deal is even better, since the ORCA card will cover a vanpool or vanshare fare!

What is Vanpool?

An official carpool service run by King County Metro that goes from employees' homes to work.

Official Vanpools must have a driver, backup driver, and book keeper. Vans, insurance and gas are provided. If your company is enrolled in ORCA Passport, Vanpools are likely paid for and covered by Passport.

What is Vanshare?

An official carpooling service run by King County Metro that goes from transit hubs to work.

Official Vanshares must have a driver, backup driver, and book keeper. Vans, insurance, and gas are provided. If your company is enrolled in ORCA Passport, Vanshares are likely paid for and covered by Passport.

What are company shuttles?

Private busses and vans contracted by employers to get employees to and from the worksite.

These shuttles offer route flexibility and connections that may not be offered by Vanpool/Vanshare. Because these are privately run companies, ORCA cards do not work on company shuttles.

Company Example



Amazon has quickly become the undisputed king of Vanpools/Vanshares. With dozens of vans arriving to its South Lake Union campus every day. By promoting **rideshareonline.com**, and providing priority parking for

vanpools and vanshares, employees who may not have easy transit access to South Lake Union are now reducing their impact on the environment and reducing congestion across the Puget Sound!



VANPOOL / VANSHARE / COMPANY SHUTTLE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Sign up for an account at www.rideshareonline.com and search for existing Vanpools/Vanshares that fit your schedule.
- ☐ If an existing route doesn't work, ask co-workers and neighbors about starting a new Vanpool/Vanshare.
- ☐ Consider setting up an internal notification and new vanpool tracking system, making it easier for co-workers to find one another and build worksite-specific vanpools.
- ☐ Share Commute Seattle's Carpooling Guide, which provides questions and considerations to answer to ensure your new vanpools are successful.

Resources

- [Rideshare Online](#)
- [King County Metro Vanpool Riders Wanted](#)
- [King County Metro Vanshare Riders Wanted](#)
- [Shuttle Express](#)
- [MTR Western](#)
- [Commute Seattle's Carpooling Guide](#)



Impact level
Advanced

CARPOOLING

Both formal and informal carpools are a great way for employees to reduce the cost and stress of commuting. Carpooling gives drivers access to the HOV lanes on I-5 and 405, reduces the cost of parking, and is good for the environment. For businesses, carpooling saves money and increases teamwork across departments and team. As an ETC, consider working with your property manager to designate priority parking spots for carpools and vanpools, and look at reducing the cost of parking for carpools to provide even more incentive to share a ride with a co-worker.

Carpooling can be tricky. To ensure a successful carpool, make sure these questions are answered:



- Where are we meeting?
- Who's driving?
- Are we reimbursing the driver? If so, how?
- What happens if I'm running late?
- Does my employer offer benefits for carpooling?
- What are the rules of the carpool?

Company Example



Located in the Elliott Corridor, F5 networks is just outside the downtown core, but still manages a carpool rate of over 7%, with an additional 7% utilizing a more formal Vanpool/Vanshare program. The biggest key to F5's success is the work

done by their ETC, from the pre-boarding process through the first weeks of employment, their ETC works to connect new employees to existing carpools and helps to make it a smooth transition into the new commute.



CARPOOLING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask your property manager or parking management company about providing priority parking for carpools or if a discounted rate can be offered for carpools. Be sure to communicate this to your employees.
- ☐ Setup an internal webpage or bulletin board for employees to post about starting or joining a carpool.
- ☐ Share Commute Seattle's Carpooling Guide, which provides questions and considerations to answer to ensure your new carpools are successful.

Resources

- **Commute Seattle's Carpooling Guide**





Impact level
Cutting Edge

CARSHARE / BIKESHARE

Carshare and bikeshare companies are on the leading edge of transportation management. These companies allow users to use a car for a short-term to move around a designated area. Current examples of carsharing include Car2Go and ReachNow which allow users to borrow cars to go throughout the city.

While this is an emerging area of transit benefits, many carshare companies are working on offer corporate accounts soon.



Does your company have employees that use their personal vehicles to travel to meetings?

Reimbursing employees for using a carshare or bikeshare service is an easy way to eliminate the feeling of needing a personal vehicle to get to work and can reduce your company's DAR.



How much is your company spending on taxis to the airport?

Car sharing companies are moving into the airport parking business! Their rates are much cheaper than a traditional taxi or Uber, and can save your employees the time and stress required to book rental cars, or room in park-and-fly lots near SeaTac.

Does your company maintain fleet vehicles?

Many companies are looking to reduce their costs associated in purchasing and maintaining company or fleet vehicles. With low pay-by-the-minute costs, car sharing may be cheaper than purchasing and maintaining a company car. And with larger-sized cars being added to carshare fleets, you can now head across town with whatever cargo you may need to carry.



CARSHARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check with HR to see what travel expenses are currently reimbursed and how much is being spent on these reimbursements.
- ☐ Consider joining as a corporate member or reimburse employees who use carsharing for work-related trips to provide extra perks and benefits for your employees.

Resources



ReachNow is a premium car sharing service, owned by the BMW Group. ReachNow is designed to provide a user experience that's as convenient as owning a car: Drive on your own terms without the hassle and expense of traditional car rental programs.
www.bmwcarsharing.com



Car2go offers an innovative mobility solution via a carsharing network of eco-friendly smart for two vehicles. A flexible and “on demand” mode of transportation, Car2go complements existing public transportation by bridging the gaps between the “first and last mile” of a member’s commute.
www.car2go.com



Zipcar provides members with access to a wide-variety of cars—small cars, big cars, BMWs, vans, etc.—in cities, campuses and airports around the globe. Once you join, you can reserve by the hour or day, right away or up to a year in advance. Gas and insurance always included and flexible one-way trips with a guaranteed parking spot at your destination have recently been added. Details can be found at
www.zipcar.com



Impact level
Cutting Edge

RIDESHARE

Rideshare encompasses all on-demand driver/taxi services including app-based companies Uber and Lyft.

How is rideshare different than carshare?

Unlike carshare services, rideshare services assume that you are requesting driver services in a vehicle that does not belong to you.

Do I need a corporate account to offer rideshare to employees?

No. Simply share direct links to resources and instructions for how to use rideshare options. Sharing information is free and encouraged! Corporate accounts are available if your employer wishes to further encourage employees to use these services as a supplement to other commute options.

Why should an employer offer rideshare to employees?

Rideshare options encourage employees to leave personal vehicles at home or live a car-free lifestyle. Combining rideshare with transit provides peace of mind for one-off occasions when an employee may need to get to a destination outside of a transit network or outside of normal transit schedules.

Company Example

U B E R



Wunderman, a creative agency located in the City of Seattle, has partnered with Uber for Business. According to Uber, “Wunderman is the first advertising company to partner with Uber on a national level, which means their employees can rely on Uber to get them where they need to go in over 320 cities and 58 countries globally.”

“Wunderman required an ‘on demand’ service that would be reliable and affordable. Our people deserve the comfort and convenience that Uber offers them. The change is in part a reflection of how our colleagues live, as well as work. The Uber for Business offering, the intuitive technology, even the cars themselves, fit with who we are as an agency and the type of work we do for our clients.”

-Mark Read, CEO, Wunderman



RIDESHARE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Incorporate rideshare vendors and options into your communications and programming. No employer account necessary! Do not assume employees are aware these services exist or that they understand how rideshare may supplement a normal commute.
- ☐ Reach out to vendors for free incentives such as coupons or credits to offer to employees as incentives. Invite vendors to transportation or health fairs to speak to employees directly.
- ☐ Research corporate account options with rideshare vendors. Each will have unique corporate account options. Consider which is right for your employees and budget.
- ☐ Share corporate account options with upper management and stakeholders.



RESOURCES



Wherever you're headed, count on Lyft for rides in minutes. The Lyft app matches you with local drivers at the tap of a button. Just request and go.



Tap the app, get a ride: Uber is the smartest way to get around. One tap and a car comes directly to you. Daily commute. Errand across town. Early morning flight. Wherever you're headed, count on Uber for a ride—no reservations needed.



Need a commute option that adapts to your changing schedule? Meet iCarpool - a mobile app to carpool with others going your way instantly! There's no fixed schedule or commitment. It's share-the-expense carpooling that is flexible, instant and social!
www.icarpool.com

Additional Resources

- [Commute Seattle's Rideshare Guide](#)
- [Rideshare Online](#)
- [King County Metro Vanpool Riders Wanted](#)
- [King County Metro Vanshare Riders Wanted](#)
- [Shuttle Express](#)
- [SP+](#)



Impact level
Advanced

FREE RIDE HOME

Free Ride Home (also known as Guaranteed Ride Home or Home Free Guarantee) programs provide employees with a direct trip home in case of an emergency. These programs further encourage employees to use transit and other alternative commutes by easing anxiety over transportation needs in case of one-off emergencies.



A Free Ride Home program may include:

- The option to take home a company vehicle
- A contract with a taxi company or ridesharing/carsharing (e.g., Uber, Zipcar) service to provide free rides to employees
- Reimbursement policy for employees taking a taxi or ridesharing/carsharing service home
- Metro's "Home Free Guarantee" program (for purchase or included as part of ORCA Business Passport)

Company Example

gettyimages[®]

As an ORCA Business Passport client, Getty Images employees receive up to 8 free guaranteed ride home trips a year. Through a simple phone request, speaking to a live operator, a Getty Images employee who arrived at work by an alternative mode (bus, carpool, bicycle or walking) can request a free emergency cab ride to almost any location in the Puget Sound region.

The guarantee ride home benefit provides a peace of mind for those employees who cannot rely on transit outside of peak commute times to get home or to family members with urgent care needs.



FREE RIDE HOME CHECKLIST

- ☐ Review current commute options available to employees. Does your employer contract with ridesharing/carsharing services? Does your employer have a fleet of vehicles onsite? Does your employer currently offer ORCA Business Passport or Metro's Home Free Guarantee?
- ☐ Consider purchasing Free Ride Home services if necessary.
- ☐ Draft clear Free Ride Home policies for review and approval by all stakeholders: executive team, department heads, managers, HR. Best practices include a maximum number of free rides per employee per year, requirement that employee chose a non-drive-alone commute the day of emergency, and clear parameters for what constitutes an "emergency" (*e.g., an illness in the family vs. a car breaking down*).
- ☐ Launch and communicate Free Ride Home policies to employees and include in transportation benefits.

Resources

- [King County Metro's Home Free Guarantee](#)
- [YellowCab](#)
- [Uber](#)
- [Lyft](#)
- [ReachNow](#)
- [Car2Go](#)



Impact level
Cutting Edge

PARKING MANAGEMENT

The single most effective way to reduce your company's DAR is to switch away from monthly parking passes, which incentivize employees to drive to work every day rather than consider their best commute options for the day.

Common ways to manage parking in a smarter way include:

- Switching from monthly parking passes, to daily parking rates, possibly capped at an amount that doesn't make it prohibitively expensive for employees who have to drive to work every day
- Priority parking for carpools and/or vanpools
- Discounted parking rates for carpools/vanpools

Alternative parking management strategies:

Free Parking Days

Allow employees who commit to taking an alternative mode into work the ability to park for free 3-5 days a month, giving them flexibility needed to commit to their alternative mode.

Parking Cash Outs

Offer employees a portion of the cost of the monthly parking your company pays for their spot if they give up.

Company Example



Seattle Children's
HOSPITAL • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION

By eliminating monthly parking, transitioning to a daily parking rate and adding incentives for employees who take alternative means of transportation into work, Seattle Children's Hospital has reduced their company DAR from 73% in 1995 to 38% today.

Seattle Children's Hospital has embraced and continues to embrace many parking

management strategies including variable pricing for employee parking (with employees who arrive during peak commuting hours paying the highest rates), to providing priority parking for carpools and vanpools, to providing shuttles from popular transit hubs to their campus.



PARKING MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Evaluate your current parking situation. Who manages the parking? How many spots do you have? How are parking passes currently structured?
- ☐ Work with your property manager, parking management company, or facilities department to install necessary pay stations, parking arms or other physical amenities (if needed).
- ☐ Transition from annual or monthly parking passes to weekly and daily parking rates, while rolling out incentives like preferred parking spots, discounted/free parking, or cash-out options for employees who carpool, vanpool, or take other transportation alternatives to work.
- ☐ Work with advanced mobility services like **Luum** to address next steps in your parking management program.





Impact level
Basic

BICYCLE

Compared to the hundreds of dollars a month investment needed to provide parking spaces for employee vehicles, bicycle parking is a cost-effective and healthy investment in your employees and your company. Currently about 3% of employees bike to work, but this number is growing rapidly.

Evidence shows that biking to work is good for businesses and employees alike. Biking to work can also easily be combined with taking transit, allowing commuters to skip past bottlenecks, dangerous intersections, or allow employees to take faster express busses over slower local busses.



Let's Celebrate!

The annual Bike Month and Bike Everywhere Day (May) are great ways to begin promoting bicycle programs to your employees and encourage them to try biking to work in a supported, low-stress way.

The essentials of a successful bicycle program include:

- A safe, dry place for employees to lock their bikes
- A place for employees to change clothes and (ideally) shower before getting to work.



People who bike to work are, on average, **15% more productive, and take fewer sick days** than employees who drive.

More advanced bicycle programs include:



Identifying employees who would act as bike team captains, answering questions and addressing concerns of new bike commuters.

Cash-out options for employees who commit to biking to work.

Corporate fleet of shared bikes

Mobile bike mechanics to tune employee bikes while they're at work.



Company Example



Surrounded by trucks and traffic from the Port of Seattle, the SODO headquarters of Starbucks doesn't look like an ideal place to bike. This hasn't stopped Starbucks from providing tremendous support for their dozens of daily bike commuters. Beyond the basics, Starbucks also offers a workbench and tools for employees to use, drying racks for wet clothing, a "bike buddy" program for new and aspiring bike commuters, and either a free membership to their on-site gym or a cash incentive for daily bike commuters.

Future plans to support bike commuters include doubling the number of racks and lockers available and installing a forced-air drying rack in the common area of their new bike facility.





BICYCLE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ask your property manager if your location already offers bicycle racks, lockers, and shower facilities. If your building currently offers these basics, be sure to communicate this to your employees.
- ☐ Promote established bike events like **Bike Month** and Cascade Bicycle Club's **Ride in the Rain**.
- ☐ Identify employees who would like to act as a bike team captain, answering questions and concerns of new bike commuters.
- ☐ Provide benefits for bicycle commuters, like cash-out options, lunches or snacks, or federal tax benefits.
- ☐ Join **Seattle's Bike Friendly Business Network** to promote your company.





RESOURCES



Getting Your Program Going

- [Bike Month & Beyond Training Slides](#)
- [Commute Seattle's Bike Commuting 101 Webinar](#)
- [Bike Friendly Business Network](#)
- [Sample Email for Bike to Work Month](#)
- [Cascade Bicycle Club](#)

Bike Maps

- [King County Bike Map](#)
- [City of Seattle Bike Map](#)
- [Google Maps Bicycle Layer](#)

Bike Racks

- [Request a Public Bike Rack from SDOT](#)
- [Sportworks](#)
- [Urban Racks](#)
- [Dero](#)
- [PFL Spaces](#)



Impact level
Cutting Edge

WALKING



Employer walking programs provide structure and encouragement for walking commutes, combining walking with transit, or incorporating walking into meetings and daily routines in the office.

Employers use walking programs to promote employee health and well-being, reduce healthcare costs for both the employer and employee, and encourage creative thinking.

Successful walking programs provide an avenue for peer support such as walking groups or clubs, and positive peer competition through internal campaigns and challenges.

Company Example



As the City of Seattle's largest employer, all eyes are on Amazon to see how their employees influence commuter trends in the region. Perhaps not surprisingly, as an employer that invests in a dense urban setting, they have seen unprecedented growth in the number of walking commuters at their Seattle campuses.

Amazon's commuter trends match the general growth of walking and active transportation in the region as a whole. More and more people are choosing to live close to work or combine walking with another form of transit.



WALKING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Create a communication plan around the benefits and options for walking to, from, or at the office. Incorporate various ability and accessibility options.
- ☐ Create a physical or digital sign-up sheet for those interested in forming a walking group or club (e.g. *“Lunchtime Walkers”*).
- ☐ Create a peer-competition for number of steps taken during a certain timeframe, days walking to work or combining transit with walking, or number of walking meetings conducted in a team or department.
- ☐ Compare healthcare costs before implementing a walking program and two years after implementing a walking program to see how the activity has impacted your employer’s and employees’ bottom line.

Resources

- [Walkscore](#)
- [Google Maps](#)
- [Feet First](#)
- [SDOT Walking Maps](#)
- [Access Seattle](#)
- [FitBit](#)
- [MapMyRun](#)



Impact level
Advanced

TELEWORK

Teleworking (i.e., telecommuting, remote work) allows employees to work from a remote location, whether at home or satellite office, within the framework and expectations described in standard policies.

Employers offer the telework option to:

- Avoid absences or tardiness caused by regional construction or adverse weather
- Continue standard levels of productivity during office relocations
- Accommodate employees required to attend offsite client meetings
- Support other departmental or employee specific needs



Telework policy best practices include:

- Standard policies for all employees (i.e., not “rewarding” employees with the telework option)
- Clear approval processes with direct supervisor or manager
- Clear guidelines for remote office needs, both physical (e.g., desk and private room) and digital (e.g., phone access, laptop, internet)

Company Example



Holland America Line®

Holland America in Seattle leads the way with one of the highest reported telework “trips” of the last two years. In 2015, Holland America reported that at least 175 employees took advantage of their telework policy in one week alone.

Holland America plans to merge and consolidate offices with Princess Tours in 2016/2017. During this process, their telework options will become invaluable in maintaining consistent communications and productivity levels among employees.



TELEWORK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Review current telework policy if one exists.
- ☐ Request major stakeholder input: executive level, department heads, managers, HR, IT.
- ☐ Incorporate recommendations into policy and circulate for review and approval (*multiple iterations likely for consensus*).
- ☐ Purchase any necessary digital (*e.g., remote access tools, security software, etc.*) or physical (*e.g., laptops*) resources.
- ☐ Train managers or direct supervisors on teleworking policies and request procedures.
- ☐ Launch telework policy and communicate to all employees and new hires, and include as part of transportation benefits.

Resources

- **King County's Worksmart Program**
- **Kitsap Telework Toolkit**
- **Telework Virginia**
- **Kitsap Telework Toolkit**
- **Telework Virginia**



Impact level
Advanced

FLEX SCHEDULE & CWW

Employers can increase productivity and morale by offering flexible “flex” schedules and /or compressed work week (CWW) programs.



Flex-Schedule

Allow employees to come to work during non-peak hours of traffic, making their commute quicker and less stressful while reducing traffic congestion for everyone.

Compressed Work Week

Allow employees to work the same hours each week but longer hours each day, allowing a day off each week or every other week.



Company Example

The Human Resources and Transportation Services departments at the University of Washington have coordinated efforts to provide a robust and highly utilized flexwork policy. Flexwork is available to any employee who meets qualification standards, makes a proposal, and receives approval from a supervisor.





FLEX SCHEDULE & CWW CHECKLIST

- ☐ Make a case for Flex-Schedule/CWW based on current job descriptions and employee commute demands.
- ☐ Determine program goals such as number of participating employees, employee retention, and employee satisfaction levels.
- ☐ Formalize policies and forms (e.g., employee agreement).
- ☐ Train managers and supervisors on employee eligibility, best-practices, and enrollment.
- ☐ Communicate and launch program.

Resources

- [King County's WorkSmart Program](#)
- [University of Washington](#)
- [UC Davis WorkLife and Wellness](#)
- [Commute Solutions](#)



Impact level
Basic

SUBSIDIES & REIMBURSEMENTS

A **subsidy** is a broad term for financial support provided by an employer to offset the costs of any commute mode. A subsidy is provided before the employee makes the purchase to use a commute mode.

A **reimbursement** is the same as a subsidy, but provided to the employee after the purchase is made.

Common examples of subsidies:

- Transit subsidy via employer accounts such as ORCA Business Choice or Passport.
- Commuter pre-tax benefits for any alternative commute mode.
- Pre-paid HOV, Vanpool, Vanshare, or other rideshare parking spot (reserved for exclusive use by vehicles that fall into these categories).
- Rideshare, carshare, and bikeshare subsidies for regional vendors.



Common examples of reimbursements:

- Post-commute reimbursement via receipt tracking and processing, or online account.
- Bike repair reimbursements via receipt tracking.



Pros/Cons of subsidies and reimbursements:

Subsidies provide direct financial support to employees, often saving the employer and employee money through tax benefits. Transit subsidies combined with parking management strategies have been proven to reduce drive alone rates more than most other strategies.

Reimbursements often require greater administrative time investment and may eliminate the opportunity for employer and employee cost savings via tax benefits.

Company Example



Casey Family Programs walks the walk and talks the talk (so to speak). As an organization with a mission to provide stable and caring homes for youth across the nation, they see transportation benefits as a key component to building healthy and sustainable communities for people of all ages and backgrounds.

By fully subsidizing transit, vanpool, vanshare, and home free guarantee for their employees they make it easy for employees to choose alternative modes of transportation when they can.

The choice to promote transit also saves the organization money. As a downtown employer, parking spaces can be a financial burden. Subsidizing transit and alternative modes allows Casey Family Programs to spend resources where they are needed most: on the families they support.



SUBSIDIES & REIMBURSEMENTS CHECKLIST

- ☐ Research your reimbursement and subsidy options (e.g., **ORCA Business Choice or Passport**, see resource section for more options).
- ☐ Bring upper management and stakeholders (Accounting, HR, Executives) to table for budget planning.
- ☐ Invest in the most appropriate subsidy for your workforce.
- ☐ Communicate reimbursement and subsidy policies to all new hires and current employees.

Resources

- **ORCA Business Accounts | King County Services**
- **ORCA Business Accounts | Commute Seattle Services**
- **Tax Benefits | Commute Seattle Webinar: Taxes and Transportation**
- **RideshareOnline.com**

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING



commute seattle



Seattle
Department of
Transportation



Impact level
Basic

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Just as it sounds, behavior change is the term used to describe the steps and processes, both emotional and logistic, that a person experiences when trying something new. A common example would be when an employee tries bicycling to work for the first time.

How does it apply at the individual level?

While you may often focus on the high level rates of commute behavior at your workforce (e.g., 25% drive alone rate vs. 70% transit rate), any commute change begins at the individual level. An individual must feel empowered to choose an alternative commute mode through education, incentives, and peer support.

How can an employer manage individual behavior change while providing transportation options?

There are many ways to manage individual behavior change. Generally one identifies the type of change required, the tools needed to facilitate that change, and the barriers (emotional or logistic) to the success of that change.

Company Example

W UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

The University of Washington harnesses the power of motivational interviewing to engage, empathize with, and then empower employees to consider alternative modes of transportation.

Targeting new and relocating employees, the university's online commuter portal provides a platform for employees to request assistance with getting to

and from work. The award winning transportation services team takes it from there; using freely available tools and resources, they provide options that best fit the needs of the employee while also promoting alternative modes of transportation whenever possible.



INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Identify the behavior change required
Example: *Susan is interested in biking to work.*
- ☐ Identify the tools and resources needed
Example: *Susan requires a bike, a helmet, a bike rack, a locker, a shower, a safe bike route to and from work, and knowledge of the basic rules of the road.*
- ☐ Identify the barriers to the success of the change
Example: *Susan has no prior experience biking to work and feels uncomfortable on city streets.*
- ☐ Provide sustainable solutions to the barriers
Example: *Pair Susan with a colleague who also bikes to work to try a bike route once or twice and share best practices. Provide subsidized bike maintenance to Susan and all other bicycle commuters in your workforce who commit to biking at least two days a week for 3 months.*

Resources

- [Commute Seattle Resources](#)
- [University of Washington Commute Options Portal](#)

See Onboarding Best Practices



Impact level
Basic

POSTING PROGRAM INFORMATION

A Program Summary is any communication piece used to share transportation options with your employees. Examples include a PDF, physical flyer, or intranet site.

What if I do not have a Program Summary?

Feel free to use our [Program Summary Template](#) as-is or as inspiration for creating your own communication piece.

What makes for a GREAT Program Summary?

The employers with the most success reducing drive alone rates tend to have the following information on their Program Summaries:

- Mission statement and call to action to encourage the reduction of drive alone rates
- Mode-split and statistics to provide context for how employees get to work
- Exact subsidy amounts and how to apply for, retrieve, or use subsidies
- Detailed instructions for accessing on-site amenities such as bike lockers, showers, or HOV parking spaces
- Links to online tools and resources such as agency websites and Google Maps
- Link to transportation coordinator contact information

Company Example



Woodland Park Zoo's transportation benefits flyer represents every best practice for communicating commute options to employees. They clearly tie their benefits to the sustainability goals of the organization, provide context for how employees are currently getting to work at the worksite and in the neighborhood, step by step instructions for requesting benefits or accessing amenities, and up to date online resources for planning a trip or joining a commuter campaign.



POSTING PROGRAM INFORMATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Create or revise your current Program Summary.
- ☐ Share your Program Summary digitally and physically with new hires and all current employees.
- ☐ Consider creative ways to remind employees of their options such as posting to bathroom stalls or at cafeteria tables.
- ☐ Utilize times of change when employees are most receptive to trying a new alternative commute mode. Times of change may include an office relocation, a major infrastructure change (e.g. bridge closure) or improvement (e.g. new bus lines), or special event (e.g., presidential visit).

Resources

- [Program Summary Template](#)



Impact level
Basic

NEW EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING

New employee onboarding is a structured process where a new employee learns the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their new position. This process can include:

- Formal new employee orientation
- One-on-one meetings
- Videos
- Online courses or modules
- Printed materials

Evidence shows that employees at companies that have some sort of structured onboarding process have higher job satisfaction, better job performance, and increased knowledge about their role, the company, and the benefits provided by the company.

Commute behaviors are most likely to change when an employee is going through a major change in their life, such as having a child, moving, or changing jobs. Including your company's transportation benefits in the onboarding process, or offering a "commute concierge" for new employees are two extremely effective ways to reduce your DAR.



Themes that many companies include when talking about their transportation benefits and encouraging non drive-alone commutes include:

- We want your commute to be easy and stress-free
- Transit benefits support our company values
 - These could include environmental, neighborhood/ community engagement, or many other corporate values
- We want you to enjoy the neighborhood
- We are committed to employee wellness, and taking alternative transportation aligns with this
 - Transit users are typically more active than car commuters
 - Transit use decreases vehicle emissions, and the health impacts these emissions have

Company Example

W UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

With thousands of new employees every year, the University of Washington has had a lot of practice in perfecting their onboarding process.

Even before new employees start at UW, they are told about their parking and transportation options, and within the first few days of working they are provided with their employer-subsidized ORCA Card.

Beyond the first few days of a new employee's career, the University of Washington Transportation Services team provides resources and continuous information about traffic impacts, bus routes coming to and from their campuses, and opportunities to become involved in their bike buddy program, where seasoned bike commuters can help new commuters find safe routes to and from work, and provide tips on how to stay dry and safe during their commute.

UW also hosts transportation and benefits fairs to keep employees up-to-date on their current transportation options.





NEW EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check with your company's HR department and see if there is a dedicated onboarding process, and what is included in that process.
- ☐ Begin promoting transportation benefits as soon as possible, ideally during the pre-boarding process.
- ☐ If possible, provide your new employee with an ORCA Card, show them their closest bus stop, introduce them to a bike captain or bike commuter, and show them bike parking, showers, locker room, and any other transportation benefits on the first day.
- ☐ Continue the conversation about transportation benefits throughout the first few weeks and months, reinforcing your company's commitment to alternative transportation, wellness, the environment, or community engagement.
- ☐ Consider offering a transportation fair at least once a year, where representatives from transit agencies, car-sharing companies, bicycling groups, and others come and speak with your employees about the products and services they offer.

Resources

- [Commute Seattle Onboarding Presentation](#)



Impact level
Basic

TRANSPORTATION FAIRS & OTHER EVENTS

Similar to, and often combined with wellness or benefits fairs, transportation fairs are a great way to provide your employees with the latest commuter information. They often include information on transit service changes, new tools and technologies, new services such as iCarpool or carsharing services, and much more.

Commute Seattle can connect you to various government agencies, transit agencies, shared mobility companies, and community groups that can table at your fair. Commute Seattle offers fee for service options to setup and run a transportation fair (or fairs) at your workplace.

As your employees become more aware of their various transportation options, you can also consider providing additional events on topics like:

- Bike Commuting
- Ridesharing and Carpooling
- Winter Cycling
- New apps and technologies





TRANSPORTATION FAIRS & OTHER EVENTS CHECKLIST

- ☐ Talk to your Human Resources department to see if there is a benefits or wellness fair already scheduled.
- ☐ Decide who you want to invite to the fair. Would your employees benefit from information on carsharing? Bus route changes? Other groups?
- ☐ Be sure that tables are provided for presenters.
- ☐ Promote fair to employees.
- ☐ Do you want a transportation fair, but don't have the time to set one up? Commute Seattle offers to setup fairs for a fee. Reach out to info@commuteseattle.com for more information.

Resources

- [Commute Seattle – Commuter Education Services](#)
- [Groups You May Want to Include in Your Fair](#)

Please contact Commute Seattle for current contacts at these groups



Impact level
Basic

NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

One of the most common barriers to overcome when switching your employees commutes away from single occupancy vehicles is the perception that they need a car to run errands after work. What many employees don't realize is their workplace is often surrounded by corner markets, grocery stores and coffee shops where many small errands can be complete before heading home.

By promoting your neighborhood amenities – including its parks, stores, and shops – to your employees you're encouraging them to support local businesses, explore the neighborhood, and make it easier to reduce your company's drive alone rate.



What If I Don't Know What My Neighborhood Has to Offer?

Don't worry! Tools like [walkscore.com](https://www.walkscore.com) provide handy maps of nearby markets, pharmacies, ATM's, restaurants and more.

You can also combine your neighborhood's amenities into other programs. A lunch-time walking group is a great way to promote your company's wellness program while allowing employees to explore the area. Consider holding some meetings at the local coffee shop to support small businesses and provide a new location for your weekly meetings.



NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES CHECKLIST

- ☐ Get to know the neighborhood yourself, whether by taking lunch-time walks, using tools like [walkscore.com](https://www.walkscore.com), or talking with co-workers who already frequent the nearby businesses.
- ☐ Combine neighborhood promotion with other events and initiatives. Hold walking meetings, or meetings at local coffee shops. Have a walking group promoted through your company wellness program.

Resources

- [Walkscore](https://www.walkscore.com)
- [Google Maps](https://www.google.com/maps)



Impact level
Cutting Edge

COMMUTE CONCIERGE – TRIP PLANNING FOR EMPLOYEES

Your employees probably know how to drive to and from work, but do they know the safest bike route or the fastest bus route? A Commute Concierge program is an internal program that helps employees plan their morning and afternoon commute.

The concierge can help them find busses that get them to work, the closest park and ride, or an existing internal carpool or vanpool through the Rideshare Online platform. By eliminating uncertainty towards a new commute your concierge program makes it easier for employees to find a carpool or vanpool and easier for them to figure out which bus will get them home.

If your company has regular bike commuters or bike captains, ask them if they would be willing to talk about their commutes and help new commuters find the safest routes to and from work. These tips and this community goes a long way in encouraging employees to choose a different commute, even if it's just once a week.

What tools are available to help plan commutes?

There are dozens of apps that help you navigate the Seattle area via car, transit, bike or by foot. Some apps focus on, and support one mode really well, while others look at various types of travel all at the same time. Some of the most popular apps and resources are Google Maps, Citymapper, OneBusAway, Transit app and Spotcycle.





RESOURCES

☐ **Google Maps**

The classic app can also be used to map out transit directions, biking directions and walking directions while giving estimations for travel time for each mode.

☐ **Citymapper**

This app rolled out in Seattle in 2016 and quickly has caught on. The biggest advantage of Citymapper is it allows you to combine modes of transportation into one trip. Say you're going from Seattle U to the Ave in the U-District. Along with regular transit and driving directions Citymapper will also suggest taking a bike to the light rail or using a bike to complete the last leg of your trip.

☐ **OneBusAway**

OneBusAway is one of the original transit apps. This app will give you real-time arrival information for all Seattle-area busses so you'll never be left wondering how long it is until your next bus arrives.

☐ **Transit App**

Combines multiple transportation options to help you get to where you're going. Transit App includes real-time arrival information for public transit with information about available Car2Go's.

☐ **Spotcycle**

A great app if you use bikeshare in multiple cities. Spotcycle gives real-time information about bike and dock availability in dozens of US and International cities.



Impact level
Basic

PROMOTING ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS / IMPORTANT DATES

Many local government agencies and transportation organizations will manage and launch annual marketing campaigns, free for anyone to participate, with prizes and resources to incentivize people to try alternative modes of transportation.



Bike Everywhere Challenge

Arguably one of the most popular Commuter Campaigns in the City of Seattle, Cascade Bicycle Club's Bike Everywhere Challenge in May provides a free opportunity for employers to incentivize their employees to try biking to work.



Using a simple, online trip-tracking tool, participants can register alone or with a team of co-workers to compete for various prizes provided by local government agencies and partner organizations. Furthermore, employers can promote their own internal challenges and provide private prizes and awards, even competing against industry peers or neighbors.



Don't miss out on these free opportunities to engage employees and gamify your commute to work!

Photos courtesy of Cascade Bicycle club

What are some of the most popular campaigns?



• Bike Everywhere Challenge

Primary Sponsor:
Cascade Bicycle Club
When: Annually, May
Mode: Bicycling



• Bike to School Challenge

Primary Sponsor:
Cascade Bicycle Club
When: Annually, May
Mode: Bicycling



• Ride in the Rain

Primary Sponsor:
Cascade Bicycle Club
When: November
Mode: Bicycling



• Walktober

Primary Sponsor:
Feet First
When: Annually, October
Mode: Walking



• Ride Transit Month

Primary Sponsor: Transportation Choices Coalition
When: Annually, April
Mode: Bus, Train, Light Rail, Ferry, Water Taxi, Vanpool



• Wheel Options

Primary Sponsor: Washington State Ridesharing Organization (WSRO)
When: Annually, October
Mode: Walking, Bicycling, Driving, Carpool, Vanpool, Bus, Train, Teleworking, Compressed Work Week



• Notable Dates

National Dump the Pump Day: June 16
National Walk to Work Day: First Friday April
Mode: Walking



PROMOTING ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS & IMPORTANT DATES CHECKLIST

- ☐ Sign up for alerts from Commute Seattle or directly from the primary sponsors to receive campaign toolkits and invitations to participate.
- ☐ Share communications with employees and instructions on how to log trips and participate.
- ☐ Participate yourself and share your experience.
- ☐ Gain executive level endorsements and participation in challenges.
- ☐ Create and promote internal challenges between departments and teams.
- ☐ Create and promote external challenges between industry peers or neighboring employers.

Resources

- **Commute Seattle Calendar**
- **Cascade Bicycle Club**
- **Washington Bikes**
- **Feet First**
- **Transportation Choices Coalition**
- **Wheel Options**
- **Luum Supported Challenges**



Impact level
Basic

EMPLOYEE INCENTIVES

An incentive is anything that motivates someone to take a particular action, especially a desired, premeditated action.

What are common forms of transportation incentives?

Financial:

Subsidies, reimbursements, and tax-free commuter options incentivize employees in a positive way to choose transit and alternative modes of transportation as the most cost-effective option.

Removing parking subsidies or charging for parking (especially on a daily basis; see Parking Management Strategies) further incentivizes employees to use alternative commute modes when they can.

Communications:

Provide clear instructions for how to access transportation benefits, services, and resources to all new hires and share with current employees with updated information regularly (see Program Information Posted). Providing simple solutions and updates on improved or changing transportation options is the most cost-effective way to change behavior.

Non-financial:

There are many ways of incentivizing employees to choose an alternative commute that will cost your employer little or no money. These include policy implementation, communications, and peer support.

Policy:

Implement clear policies that emphasize alternative commute modes over driving alone. For example, provide a pre-loaded ORCA card (or instructions to retrieve an ORCA card) to every employee on their first day, but request an application for parking options.

Peer Support

Provide opportunities and platforms for your employees to connect to one another, such as quarterly happy hours where employees can join carpools, find people to bike to work with, or sign up for transportation benefits or challenges.

Company Example



“Our programs help us reduce our impact on our community and increase our capacity to serve every child who needs us.”

-Jamie Cheney, Seattle Children's Transportation Director

What makes Seattle Children's stand out? See their award-winning transportation programming below:

- Offer \$4 daily commute bonus
- Parking charged daily, not monthly
- Offer ORCA transit subsidy, including vanpool subsidy
- Free shuttle service for travel between worksites and regional transit hubs as well as to off-site parking lots
- Free bicycles for commuting
- On-site Staff Bicycle Service Center, open 3 days/week
- Two free bicycle tune-ups/year
- Free lockers, showers and towel service
- Free covered and secure bike parking
- Cycling education program
- Regular, mode-specific custom communications
- Integrate transportation programs with employee onboarding
- 10 customer service, planning & operations staff
- Discounted carpool parking
- Guaranteed Ride Home
- Telework and compressed work week



EMPLOYEE INCENTIVES CHECKLIST

- ☐ Review your current transportation benefits and assess the following: how these benefits are communicated, when these benefits are communicated, and how employees are financial incentivized to behave.
- ☐ Empower employees to connect to one another online or in-person.
- ☐ Take advantage of free campaigns offered by local agencies (see Promoting Annual Campaigns / Important Dates).
- ☐ Empower employees to connect to one another online or in-person.

Resources

- [Commute Seattle Resources](#)
- [See Subsidies and Reimbursements](#)
- [See Individual Behavior Change](#)
- [See Program Information Posted](#)
- [See New Employee Orientation](#)
- [See Transportation Fairs & Promotional Events](#)
- [See Neighborhood Amenities, Promotion](#)
- [See Commuter Concierge – Trip Planning for Employees](#)
- [See Promoting Annual Campaigns / Important Dates](#)



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