

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](#)