

APRIL 2026

CASE STUDY:

# Moving Toward Better Commutes

A real-world example from the Downtown Seattle Association, Metropolitan Improvement District, and Commute Seattle





# A company relocation is an opportunity to encourage sustainable commute choices and transportation benefits.

The Downtown Seattle Association (DSA), Metropolitan Improvement District (MID), and Commute Seattle have a shared vision of a healthy, vibrant downtown for all. And, as of November 2025, a shared home at the 2Pine building at Second and Pine after decades of operating out of separate offices.

The relocation and consolidation of teams

presented an opportunity to encourage employees across the company to revisit commute habits and promote non-drive alone options.

Prior to the move, DSA and Commute Seattle operated out of a shared office in the downtown Denny Triangle neighborhood, while the 165 downtown Ambassadors deployed from a separate location a few blocks away.

Although the new location is just five blocks west of the prior worksites, its close proximity to the Third Avenue transit corridor, Westlake Station, and protected bike lanes on Second Avenue, Pine, and Pike Streets presents new commute opportunities.

Read on to learn how commute options were integrated as an essential component of move-planning.



## Making a Plan

The company has two distinct groups of employees: DSA/MID Administrative employees and MID Ambassadors who work across downtown from Belltown to the Stadium District to provide cleaning, safety, and hospitality services on city streets and public spaces.

The organization is a voluntary Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) site and has two employees who fulfill the role of Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC). Before any boxes were packed, the ETCs developed an internal outreach and communications plan to prepare employees

across administrative and Ambassador teams for their new commute.

“How people get to work is a major contributor to the employee experience,” said Employee Transportation Coordinator Elizabeth Baer. “Moving offices is a perfect time to rethink how people are making that choice and how to improve that experience with affordable, sustainable options.”

The ETCs knew to be successful they would have to secure leadership support early on and ensure their outreach and communication strategies would work for both in-office and Ambassador teams.

## Securing Leadership Support

As soon as confirmation of the move was received, the Employee Transportation Coordinators met with the Chief of Staff, who was spearheading the move project planning.

The ETCs provided a brief document of planned outreach activities across all teams with a clear explanation of how each activity supported the organization’s core values. This proposal was then shared with and ultimately approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

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– Elizabeth Baer, Employee Transportation Coordinator



## Engaging Staff

Once leadership buy-in was secured, the Employee Transportation Coordinators got to work developing and implementing their outreach and communication strategies across teams.

### Key pre-move activities included:

- Sharing a detailed commute map of the new office location with nearby bike, walk, and transit options
- Hosting Q&A office hours at both worksites to provide 1:1 trip-planning support and answer questions about commute benefits, like how to use the existing ORCA Passport benefit
- Coordinating with the Chief of Staff to provide pre-move

tours of the new location's bike room and showers

How these pre-move activities were communicated was adapted based on team needs. In-office staff received updates through email and intranet posts while Ambassadors were better reached through printed materials and attending supervisor-led briefings.

Ambassador teams were encouraged to consider active commutes since they would be transitioning from a location without a dedicated space for personal bike storage, to a location with access to a secure employee bike room.

"Just knowing there is a safe and secure place to keep my bike on my commute to work is a huge load off my shoulders," said one MID Safety Supervisor. "My biggest concern on my

bike commutes over the years — aside from getting hit by a distracted driver — is 'am I going to have a safe place to keep my bike, and will it still be there when I get off work?' Having a safe and secure place for my bike will definitely give me peace of mind."

### Move-day and post-move activities included:

- Transit-themed crossword activity included in move-in day employee welcome bags
- Bikes and Bling event hosted in the bike room within the first month of relocating to encourage active commuting

Providing pre, day-of, and post-move activities ensured commute options remained top-of-mind as employees settled into new routines.

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## Lessons Learned

The move prompted conversations at all levels of the organization about commuting, employee well-being, and how a worksite's proximity to transit and bike infrastructure and on-site amenities intersect with sustainability and inclusion goals.

Post-move, the Employee Transportation Coordinators recognized that securing

leadership buy-in early on was essential to implementing outreach and communications well before moving day.

Prompting employees to prepare for their commutes before relocation was intended to nudge employees towards establishing new commute habits. "Change is an opportunity to think about behavior," noted one staff who participated in commute office hours.

More commute behavior insights will become available when employees are surveyed in October 2026 as part of the Commute Trip Reduction mode-split requirement.

Until then, the Employee Transportation Coordinators continue to communicate regularly with employees and new hires about active commute and transit options.

**Change is an opportunity to think about behavior. Proximity to bike and transit infrastructure, on-site property amenities, and employer-provided benefits all influence how employees choose to commute.**

## Lessons to Apply to Your Worksite

Preparing for an office relocation? Don't forget about transportation! Use these tips to make sure your teams are well-prepared to take advantage of your commute benefits, worksite amenities, and nearby transportation infrastructure at from day one.

### 1. Make transportation part of move planning

Don't treat commute planning as an afterthought. Include transportation options at all phases of a move, from site selection to first-day logistics.

### 2. Secure leadership support

As soon as a new location is selected, request a meeting with leadership to propose company-wide outreach focused on commutes. Be sure to underscore how this outreach supports company values or sustainability goals.

### 3. Start early and keep communicating

Consistent plain-language communications to employees before moving day reduce uncertainty and build trust.

### 4. Tailor communications to your workforce

Meet employees where they are. Use digital tools for in-office teams and printed or in-person communications for field-based and front-line teams.



**Need support navigating an upcoming office relocation? Commute Seattle can help! Email your questions to us at [info@commuteseattle.com](mailto:info@commuteseattle.com)**

