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CASE STUDY:

Salal Credit Union

How one site navigates Transportation Management Program and Commute Trip Reduction programs to advance shared goals

Commute Seattle

Seattle Department of Transportation

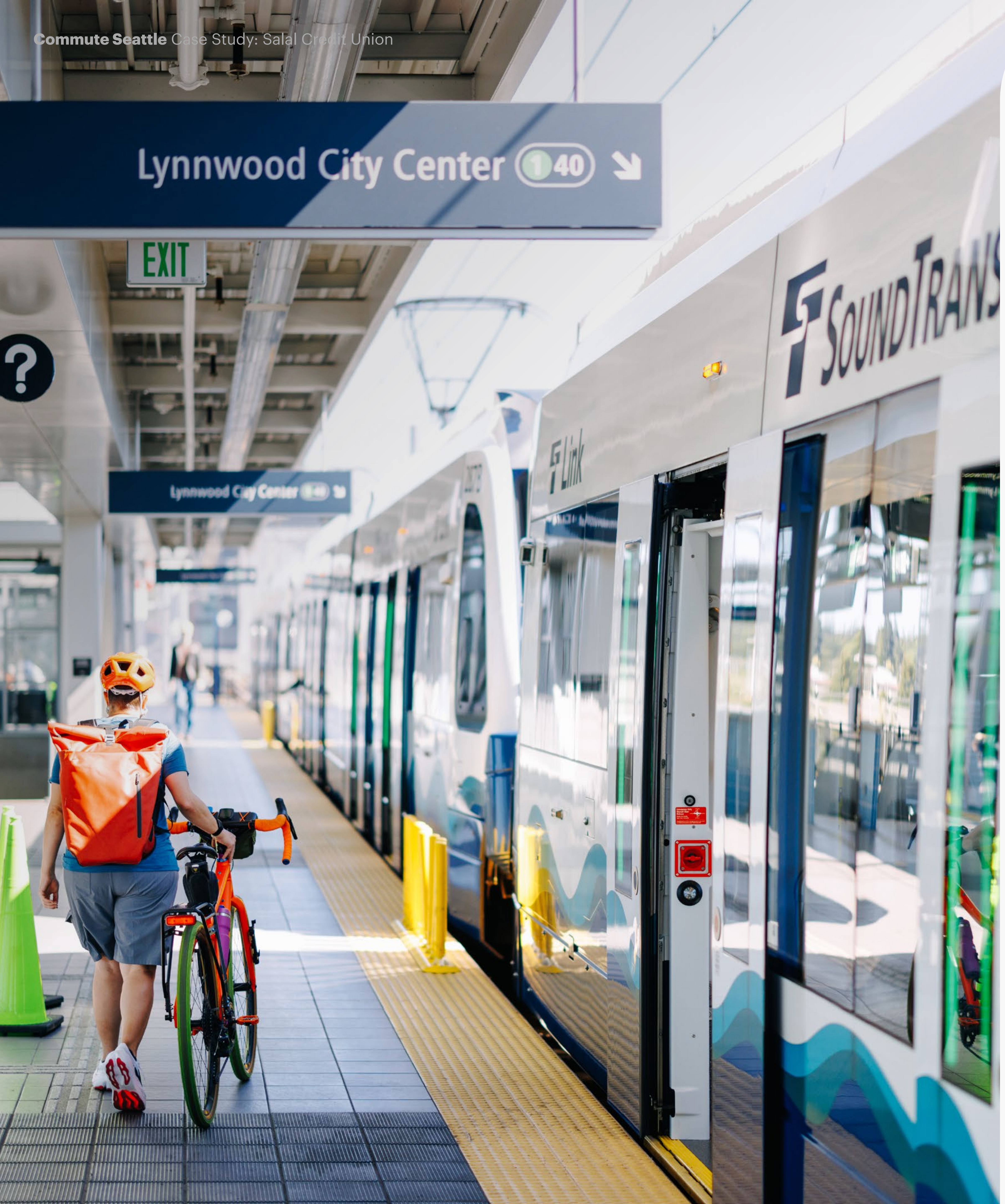
SALAL CREDIT UNION

Salal Credit Union: Supporting Sustainable Commuting

Salal Credit Union offers a unique example of how workplace transportation programs, strategic office location decisions, and employee benefits like remote work and ORCA transit cards can work together to keep drive-alone commuting low.

The company is affected by Washington State's Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) law, and is located in a building with a Seattle-mandated Transportation Management Program (TMP), creating overlapping opportunities to support sustainable commuting.

In this Case Study, we explore Salal's relocation from South Lake Union to Northgate, the evolution of the company's transportation demand management efforts, and how its commute program has helped keep drive-alone trips below both TMP and CTR requirements.



> "We purchased the Northgate building knowing light rail would be opening soon [and] it's near the Northgate Bus Transit Center."

– Mark Verner, Salal Employee and Building Transportation Coordinator

From South Lake Union to Northgate

In 2018, Salal Credit Union relocated their headquarters from South Lake Union to Northgate. Before relocating, Salal Credit Union's headquarters was in South Lake Union. At that time, many employees primarily drove alone to work; transportation benefits and commute support programs were limited, and there were fewer organizational efforts focused on encouraging alternatives to driving.

Proximity to new and future transportation infrastructure was a key factor in the relocation decision-making process.

The new location offered improved access to regional transit and active transportation infrastructure, particularly with the addition of light rail service at Northgate Station in 2021 and the addition of John Lewis Memorial Bridge, providing a direct route for people walking and biking over I-5. Over time, the decision to relocate around transit has paid off in increased frequency and connections. With extended Line 1 light rail service from Lynwood to Federal Way and new Line 2 Service to Redmond, trains arrive every four minutes at the Northgate station and connect people across the region.

The building Salal purchased – 9706 4th Ave – not only came with improved access to transit infrastructure, it also came with a Transportation Management Program (TMP). A TMP is an agreement that's made during a building's construction as part of the master use permit process. TMPs require private development to mitigate traffic congestion and parking impacts by reducing drive-alone trips generated by the new building. TMPs include a drive-alone rate goal for the building and required program elements designed to help the building achieve its goal. The TMP is created at the time of construction and affects the building throughout its lifespan, even when ownership changes.

9706 4th Ave's previous tenant had already installed infrastructure designed to support alternative commuting modes, including dedicated carpool and vanpool parking. Salal took this as an opportunity to rethink how employees travel to work and to introduce new commute benefits and resources.

Building the Commute Program

One of the first steps to building Salal's commute program was onboarding a Building Transportation Coordinator (BTC), a designated representative who makes sure tenants understand their transportation options and coordinates with the city to survey and track program effectiveness.

Next, Salal established a digital Commute Information Center (CIC), giving employees easy access to information about transit options and trip-planning resources.

The organization also introduced and expanded several transportation benefits and amenities, including:

- ORCA for employees using public transit
- Secure bike facilities
- On-site showers and lockers
- Carpool and Vanpool options
- Parking information
- Hybrid and remote work flexibility

Transportation information has become part of onboarding and employee orientation, helping new hires understand the commute resources available to them. In the training, Salal highlights the transit and biking options in the area. Salal also maintains ongoing communication with employees about transportation options, reinforcing awareness and encouraging participation.

Like many employers, Salal's transportation program also evolved during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote and hybrid work expanded significantly and remain common choices for employees in 2026, offering benefits such as greater workplace flexibility, improved work-life balance, broader access to talent, and reduced transportation-related impacts.

Hybrid work policies also help reduce parking demand and provide employees with greater flexibility in how and when they commute. Salal owns their building and shares its parking garage with multiple tenants. Vanpool participation remains relatively low, despite available infrastructure.

> "More of the new hire employees seem to take public transit compared to employees hired before the move to Northgate," said Verner. "The benefit with the biggest impact is the ORCA card subsidy. Employees use their ORCA card for the light rail."

CTR Implementation and Program Evolution

In 2025, Salal became aware that it was affected by Washington State's Commute Trip Reduction law, which applies to companies with 100 or more employees that start their shift between 6 – 9 a.m.

Like TMP-affected buildings, CTR-affected businesses are required to implement programs and strategies that reduce the number of employees driving alone.

At the time of becoming CTR-affected, many of the core requirements were already established through the building's TMP obligations and the Salal's existing commute program.

Onboarding into the CTR program was easy because Salal already had a Building Transportation Coordinator that could serve as an Employee Transportation Coordinator to ensure the CTR-requirements are met, and a strong commute program and infrastructure was already in place.

As a result, becoming CTR-affected caused minimal operational disruption. The organization did not need to introduce major new benefits or infrastructure changes because many policies that support TMP-goals also support CTR-goals.

Outcomes and Lessons

Findings from the 2024 Commute Seattle survey show that the commute benefits and infrastructure that Salal Credit Union provides is working to keep their drive-alone rate low. **In 2024, 40% of employees commuted by driving alone, well below their TMP drive-alone goal of 72% and their CTR-network goal of 46.9%.**

Are you a worksite that is affected by both TMP and CTR programs? Here are takeaways you can apply to your worksite:

- One person can serve both Building and Employee Transportation Coordinator roles
- Install a digital commute information center so both tenants and employees stay informed
- Invest early in on-site infrastructure like bike storage and vanpool parking
- Promote on-site amenities to all tenants and employees
- Know your TMP drive-alone rate goal and your CTR network drive-alone goal to generate excitement and support for shared sustainability goals.

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