



commute seattle

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Downtown Seattle Commuters Increasingly Walking, Biking, and Riding Transit

Nearly 70% of Downtown Seattle Commuters Now Choosing Not to Drive Alone

SEATTLE – The proportion of Downtown Seattle commuters driving alone to work has fallen to a new low. According to a new Commute Seattle survey conducted by EMC Research^[1], just 31 percent of Downtown’s estimated 228,000 daily commuters^[2] drive alone to work, continuing a strong downward trend from 35 percent in 2010 and 34 percent in 2012.

Public transit^[3] continues to be the top choice for Downtown commuters (45%), followed by driving alone (31%)^[4], ridesharing^[5] (9%), walking (7%), teleworking (4%), and bicycling (3%).

These encouraging results show that Commute Seattle is approaching its goal of decreasing Downtown’s drive-alone rate to 30 percent by 2016. Commute Seattle has focused its efforts for over ten years on Downtown businesses and property owners, helping them develop commute programs and incentives for their employees. As transit service continues to improve with Proposition 1 improving Metro service within Seattle, new Link light rail extensions on the way, and improved bicycle infrastructure, we expect these positive trends to continue.

Medium sized businesses (20-99 employees) led the way, reducing their drive-alone rate from 37 percent to 30 percent, nearly matching the 27 percent drive-alone rate among Downtown’s largest companies (100+ employees). “These results validate our strategic focus on Downtown small businesses,” said Commute Seattle Executive Director Jessica Szlag. “They reaffirm our commitment to ensure that the benefits of transit are shared by all commuters regardless of the size of their employer.”

Though the *rate* of driving alone declined, rapid job growth means that total traffic volumes are roughly equivalent to 2012, indicating a road network approaching full capacity. However, the overwhelming majority of new job growth is being accommodated by transit, walking, and bicycling.

“Downtown will only continue to grow and thrive if people can get here reliably, and Downtown businesses understand the need for faster, more reliable transit,” says Downtown Seattle Association President & CEO Jon Scholes. “We will continue to work to ensure that Downtown remains the region’s best place to live, work, shop, and play.”

“Seattle has great talent and the business climate to generate new jobs, but we must not let gridlock stifle that growth,” said Seattle Mayor Ed Murray. “We’re making the right investments and we must continue to provide the transportation choices that keep these trends moving in the right direction.”

“More commuters than ever are taking advantage of the reliable transit service we provide to Downtown Seattle,” said King County Executive Dow Constantine, who is also Chair of the Sound Transit Board of Directors. “Our region’s prosperity relies on people’s ability to get to and from work each day, so it’s critical that we build the transportation systems needed to keep up with our growing population.”

About Commute Seattle

Commute Seattle is a not-for-profit Transportation Management Association. Our mission is to help Downtown users live more and drive less by improving access and mobility in Downtown Seattle. We are a public-private partnership of the Downtown Seattle Association, Seattle Department of Transportation, and King County Metro. For more information about Commute Seattle, visit www.commuteseattle.com

[1] The study evaluated peak-hour weekday commute trips that arrived in Center City between 6-9am. Center City includes the Commercial Core, Belltown, Denny Triangle, Uptown, South Lake Union, First Hill, Capitol Hill, the International District, and Pioneer Square.

[2] Employment data are from the Puget Sound Regional Council and the Downtown Seattle Association.

[3] Public Transit includes: bus, commuter rail, light rail, streetcar, and walk-on ferry

[4] Drive alone includes: solo driving, motorcycle, and drive-on ferry

[5] Ridesharing includes: carpool, vanpool

[Attachments: Modesplit Infographic]

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