

# CASE STUDY



## EMPLOYEE COMMUTE SINGLE OCCUPANCY VEHICLE RATE REDUCTION

### Summary

- Seattle Children's Hospital has commitments with the city, the state, and its neighbors to reduce the percentage of single occupancy vehicle (SOV) commute trips made by its workforce.
- The organization has implemented a comprehensive transportation program which includes charging for daily parking at market rate, subsidizing all other modes of commuting, and offering amenities and services to help employees make smart commute choices.
- Seattle Children's transportation programs have reduced the SOV rate from 73 percent in 1995 to 38 percent in 2015, avoided the construction of a \$20 million parking garage, and strengthened employee engagement.

### The problem

In 2010, in order to build more clinical space, Seattle Children's Hospital made a commitment to the city, the state, and its neighbors to reduce employee SOV commute trips from 73 percent to 30 percent by 2030.

### Seattle Children's

With over 300 licensed beds, Seattle Children's serves as the pediatric and adolescent academic medical referral center for Washington, Alaska, Montana and Idaho—the largest region of any children's hospital in the country. For more than 100 years, Seattle Children's has been dedicated to providing top-quality care to every child in the region who needs their services, regardless of the family's ability to pay.



Even before this commitment, the hospital was engaged in reducing SOV commute trips as required by the State of Washington's 1991 Commute Trip Reduction Law.

In addition to regulatory requirements, Seattle Children's manages very limited parking supply, and thus deliberately works to reduce demand for parking.

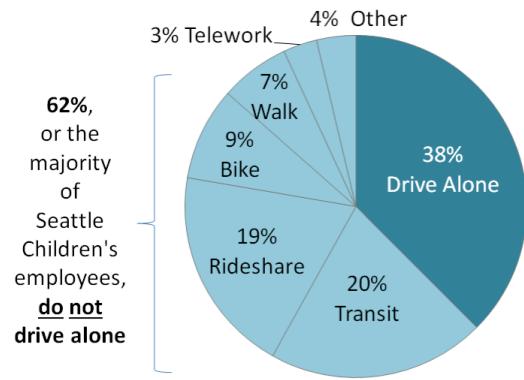
While regulatory requirements impose an aggressive goal, Seattle Children's has embraced the challenge. The hospital seeks to reduce its impact on generating greenhouse gases –because it's the right thing to do– and because asthma and bronchiolitis are two of the top four reasons patients come to the hospital, and air quality has a direct impact on those illnesses.

## The strategy selected

A project team developed a comprehensive transportation plan and set a goal to reduce the SOV rate from its 1995 baseline of 73 percent to 30 percent by 2030. Specifically, a tiered

plan was incorporated into the 20 year master plan and included strategies to:

- Reduce SOV commuting made by workforce members
- Invest in a safer, more efficient transportation network
- Invest in infrastructure for people walking and biking
- Develop a new campus that enhanced the bicycling, walking, and transit experience as the preferred way to arrive at work



## Implementation process

### Commute incentives

Seattle Children's transportation program is built on a foundation of charging a daily rate for parking. The organization eliminated monthly permits, prices parking based on market rates, and revisits parking rates on an annual basis. Additionally, Seattle Children's provides a comprehensive suite of subsidies and amenities to support all other commute options, including:

**Seattle Children's Transportation Benefits**

**Commute Bonus**  
\$4.50/day  
\$90/month  
\$1,000/year

What would you do with an extra \$1,000?



**Children's Provides a Suite of Commute Options**

- A \$4.50 daily commute bonus for staff and faculty who commute to work by rail, bus, carpool, vanpool, walking, teleworking or working from home.
- Discounted fares on ORCA transit cards. For example, a \$78/year (30% off retail) ORCA transit card is good for unlimited bus, train, light rail and foot ferry rides, and pays half the cost of vanpool fare.
- Free employee shuttle service that connects to regional transit hubs in the University District & Downtown.
- Free guaranteed rides home on days you leave your car at home.
- On-site Zipcars<sup>®</sup> with a Children's-specific account for short, mid-day or weekend trips. Members live there or have a home base there.
- Personalized commute assistance to help find affordable, reliable and enjoyable transportation options to and from work.

**Parking Policies**

- Pay-per-use parking rates that differ by time of day with increased driving fees during peak hours – day parking does not incur a fee on days you don't use it and eliminates the big up-front fee of a monthly permit.
- Free vanpool parking and premium carpool parking save you money and grant you access to on-site parking.

**Bicycle Benefits**

- On-site Bike Service Center – full-service bike shop offering discounts on bicycles, gear and accessories.
- Two free annual bicycle tune-ups – makes bike commuting convenient and safe while reducing the cost of a gym membership.
- Company Bike program – free use of a bike when you commit to biking to work twice a week.
- Free bike classes, lockers, showers, towel service and secure parking.

Want more details? Have questions? Visit Commute Tools on CHILD or email [transportation@seattlechildrens.org](mailto:transportation@seattlechildrens.org).  
\*Use of on-campus Zipcars for members only. Visit [www.zipcar.com](http://www.zipcar.com) for info.

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- Free bike tune-ups
- Full-service bike shop
- Vanpool fare subsidy and free vanpool parking
- Premium carpool parking
- Free emergency rides

### Public transit

Seattle Children's worked with community partners and engaged with transit agencies and the Seattle Department of Transportation to improve access and safety for people walking and biking, increase transit service, and make traffic flow more efficiently. In addition to providing highly-subsidized transit passes to its workforce, Seattle Children's purchases supplementary transit service from one of the local transit agencies.

The hospital also developed its own shuttle program with the use of 20 shuttles (all with bike racks), seating 24 passenger each. These shuttles transport employees between worksites, to and from offsite parking lots, and between transit hubs and worksites, moving more than 350,000 passengers each year.

### Organizational benefits

- Avoided construction of a \$20 million parking garage.
- The hospital's transportation program has been recognized with awards such as the governor's Commute Smart Award, the EPA's Commuter Choice Leadership Award, Commuter Challenge's Diamond Award, the League of American Bicyclist's platinum-level Bike Friendly Business Award, and Zipcar's 2010 Wheel of Change Awards.

### Challenges and lessons learned

A 30 percent SOV rate goal is ambitious. While Seattle Children's has made significant progress, the last 8 percent reduction in the drive alone rate is going to be the toughest. Seattle Children's is going to need to continue to innovate and really push the envelope to motivate employees out of their cars. Fortunately, the commitment to reducing SOV trips has been embraced at all levels of the organization. Employees understand how they get to work directly impacts the hospital's ability to meet its mission, and leaders understand the importance of investing in leading-edge, comprehensive transportation programs. Transportation is considered in new building development, as part of workforce well-being initiatives, and as an integral part of the Seattle Children's employee experience.



Seattle Children's intranet featured an article on alternative commuting, which included photos of the CEO showing his bus pass and the chief medical officer riding his bike to work. "We have full leadership support," says Jamie Cheney, the hospital's director of transportation. "That is the foundation for real policy change."