

Attachment A. Employee Commute Survey Summary

Background

In September 2018, a survey was sent to all County employees via email. The survey asked employees about their commuting patterns and to provide feedback on the current slate of commuter benefits.

The survey was created and coordinated by Santa Barbara County Association of Government's Traffic Solutions in partnership with the Sustainability Division. The survey was also sent to City of Santa Barbara employees, which enables comparisons with County results.

The survey included complete responses from 926 employees from across the County, which represents a 24% response rate (3890 total County employees).

The survey questions attempted to learn more about:

- a) [*How Are Employees Getting to Work?*](#)
- b) [*What Influences How Employees Commute?*](#)
- c) [*What Commuter Benefits Do Employees Want?*](#)

The survey found that the location where employees work is the best indicator of whether an employee will drive to work alone or use sustainable transportation. These rates further varied when looking at the length of employee commutes and starting locations. Employee schedules had little impact on the choice to drive less, but alternative work week schedules can still eliminate trips.

The survey also found that the choice to drive alone is influenced by the need to reach family and loved ones in the event of an emergency, having a car to run errands, and arranging children's trips to school or other activities. For active transportation (e.g., walking, biking) and transit users, economic factors, location, convenience, and reduced stress were major considerations.

Based on input from Traffic Solutions and the County Sustainability Committee, several potential commuter benefit updates were included in the survey to determine which ones would be most useful in encouraging sustainable transportation while supporting commuters.

The most popular updates to the County's commuter benefits included: a) increasing the transportation demand management (TDM) vacation benefit, b) providing laptops for telework eligible employees, c) establishing flex hours outside the traditional 9-5 work schedule to facilitate transit use and reduce time spent in traffic, d) offering reduced cost transit passes, and e) scaling the TDM vacation benefit.

How Are Employees Getting to Work?

When asked their primary mode of transportation used to travel to and from work, most County employees (74%) indicated they drive to work alone. Carpooling (14%) and taking local or commuter buses (9%) were the next most popular options. Figure 1 shows all 926 responses.

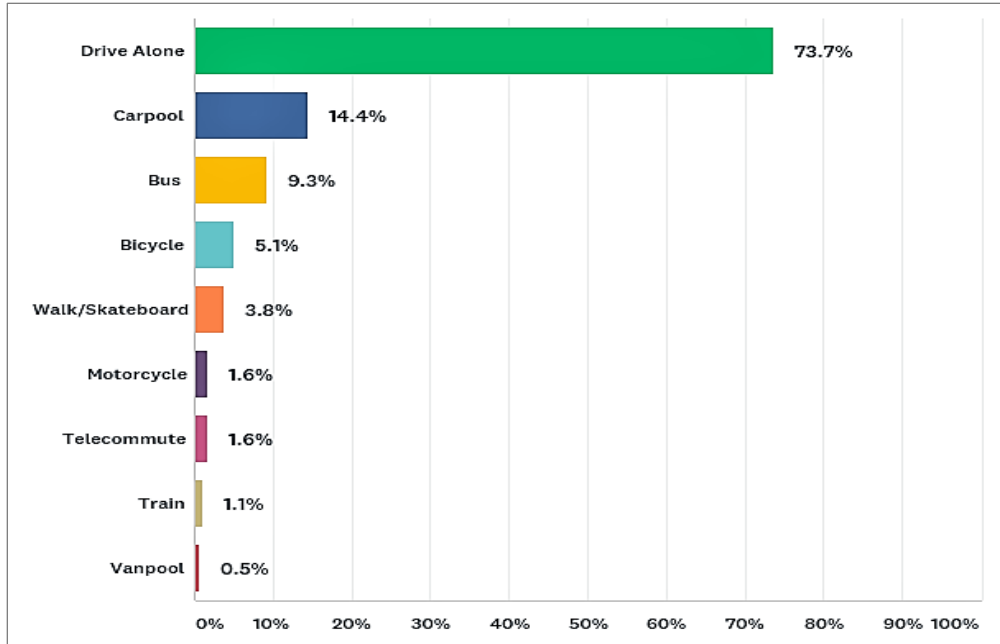


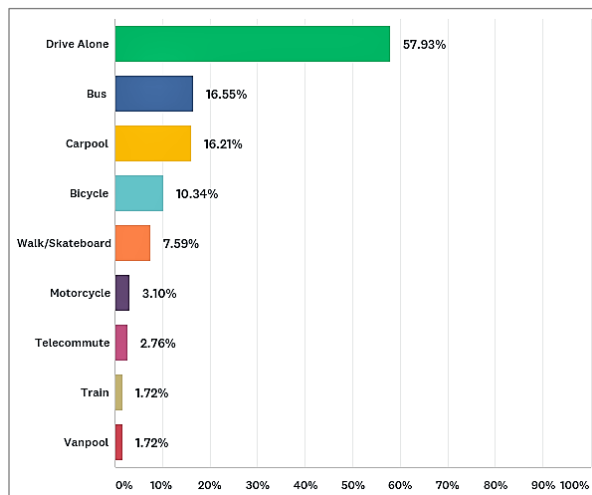
Figure 1. Primary Commute Mode, All Work Locations

Primary Commute Mode by Work Location

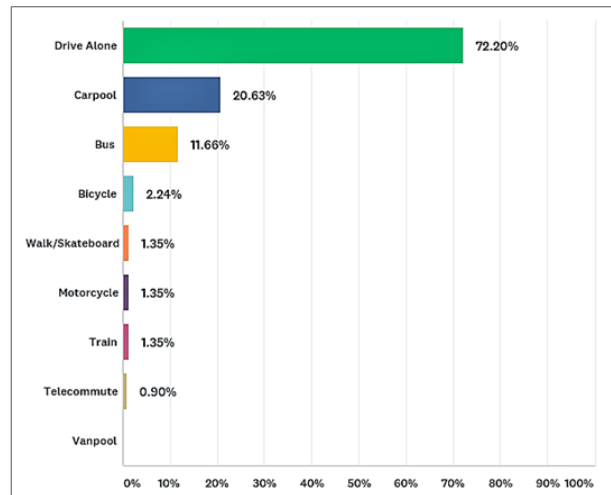
The survey found that commute mode varies by work location. Factors such as parking availability, transit service connectivity, and proximity to other services can influence whether people choose to drive alone or utilize other transportation options. For example, it is likely that drive alone rates are lower in downtown Santa Barbara due to limited availability and expense of parking, combined with more transit options and more supportive active transportation conditions (e.g., walkable streets, bike lanes). In Santa Maria, on the other hand, driving rates are near 90%, likely due to greater parking availability and limited non-driving options.

Downtown Santa Barbara (93101):

Calle Real Campus (93110):

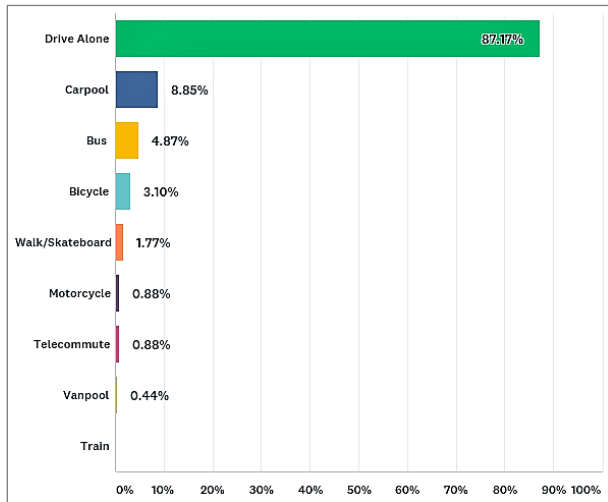


290 Responses



223 Responses

Betteravia, Foster Rd, Orcutt (93455):



226 Responses

These variations in commute type indicate the opportunity for site-specific resources to incentivize employees to try other transportation options. For example, at the Calle Real campus, where drive alone rates are high, there may be an opportunity to make taking the bus or train easier or connect more employees with other carpoolers. In Santa Maria, since transit and active transportation seem to be limited, helping people carpool may be an effective strategy.

Commute Mode by Work Schedule

As shown in Figure 5, around 47% of employees work a traditional work week schedule with five eight-hour days per week, while 35% use an alternative work week schedule (e.g., 9/80s or 4/10s). Nearly 8% of employees take advantage of flexible schedules, allowing them to work outside the traditional 9 am to 5 pm work hours.

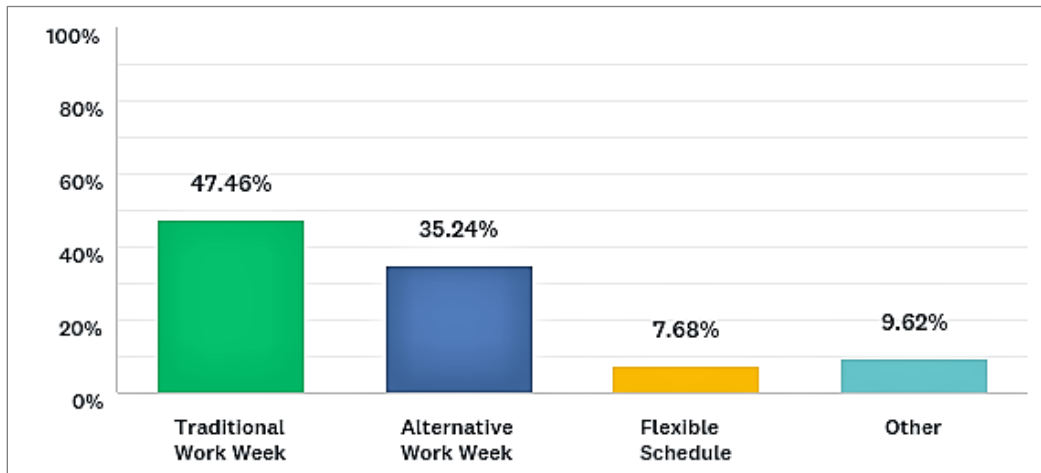


Figure 5. Employee Work Schedules

With the exception of higher carpooling rates for employees working an alternative schedule (18%) versus a traditional schedule (12%), the survey did not find significant differences in

commute mode by work schedule. Regardless of commute type, alternative schedules eliminate a trip to and from work every week (4/10) or every two weeks (9/80). Although it didn't stand out from the survey results, fixed eight-hour workdays may be more conducive to utilizing regular transit and vanpool schedules; whereas, alternative schedules may present greater challenges due to the longer daily hours.

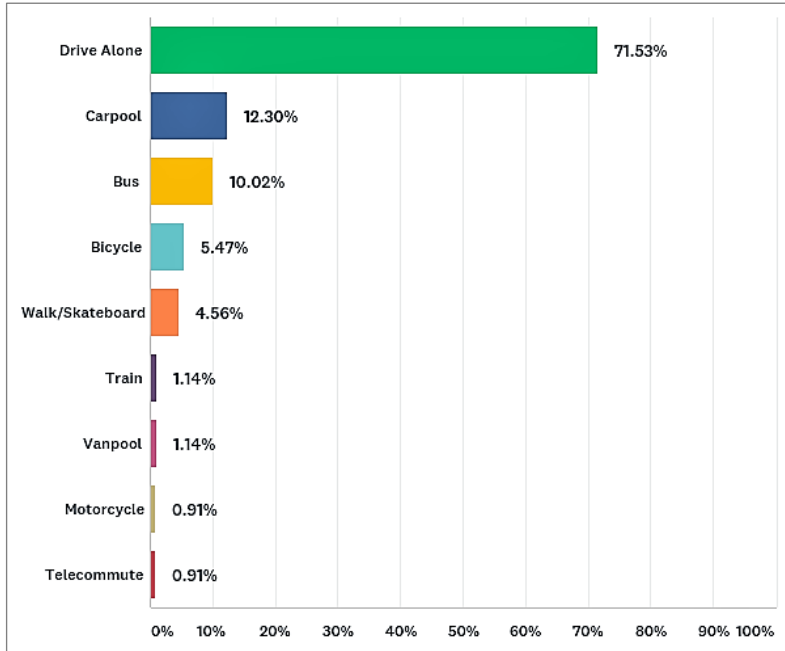


Figure 6. Primary Commute Mode, Traditional Work Week Schedule

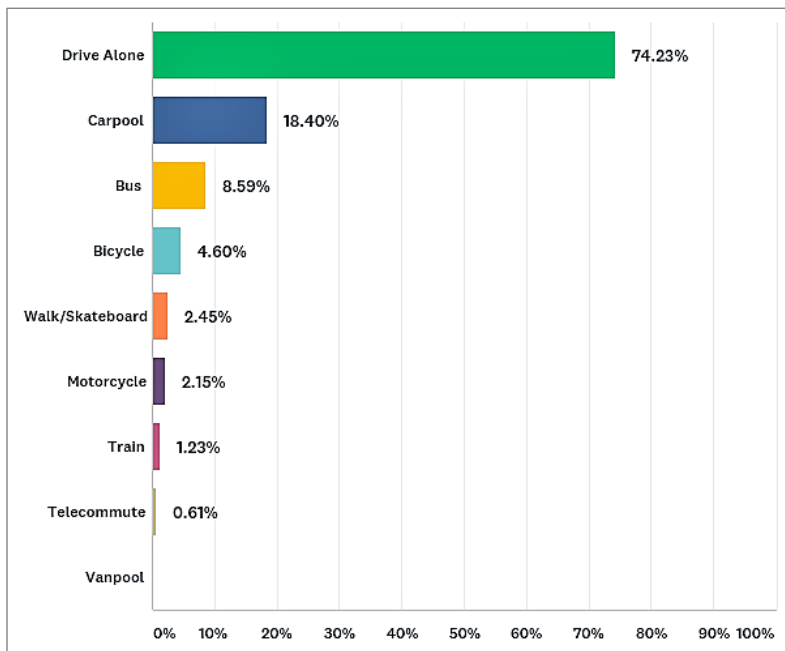


Figure 7. Primary Commute Mode, Alternative Work Week Schedule

Commute Mode by Travel Distance

In early 2018, the Human Resources Department compiled the most frequent home-work locations and distances from 1,778 employees, shown in Figures 8 and 9 below. Figure 8

provides data for employees commuting from North County and San Luis Obispo County to work locations south. Figure 9 shows data for employees commuting from South County and Ventura County to work locations north. Information was collected from the County’s Human Resources database. The most common home and work locations were matched with distances determined from the general distance between each city. Door-to-door information was not used to maintain privacy.

Overall, there are more southbound than northbound commuters:

- 811 employees (46%) commute from San Luis Obispo County and Mid and South County to Santa Barbara.
- 304 employees (17%) commute from Ventura County to Santa Barbara.
- 136 (8%) employees commute from Mid County (Buellton, Solvang, Lompoc) and South County to Santa Maria.

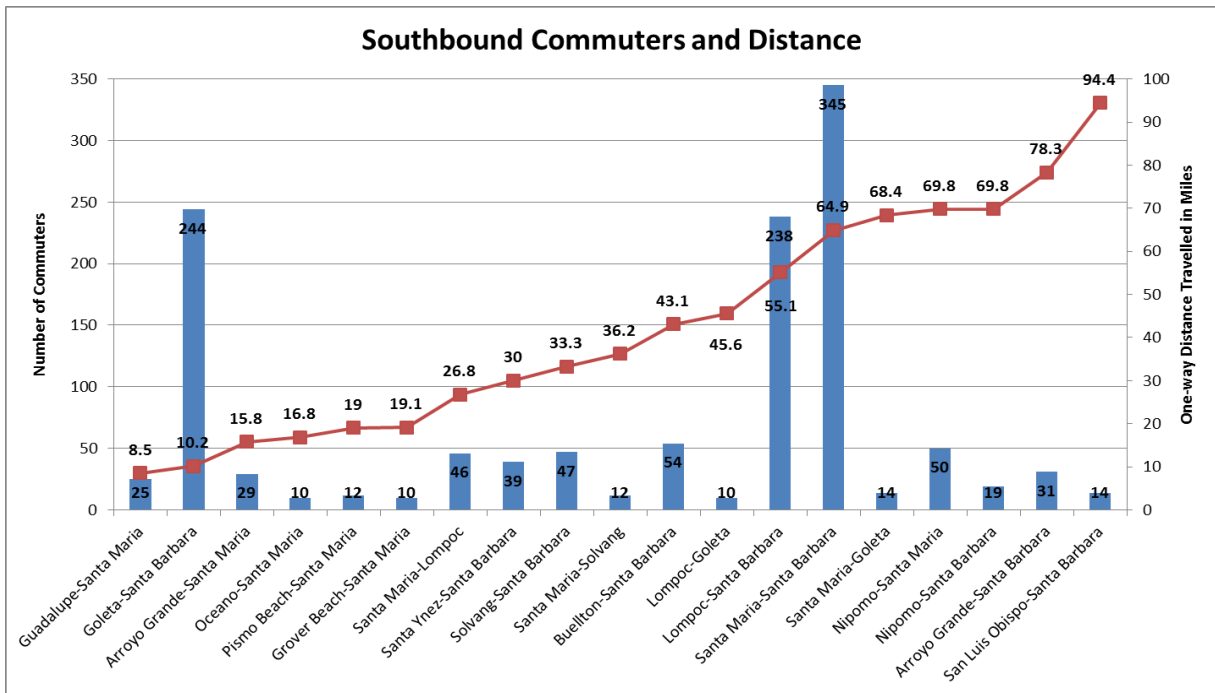


Figure 8. Southbound Commute Distances

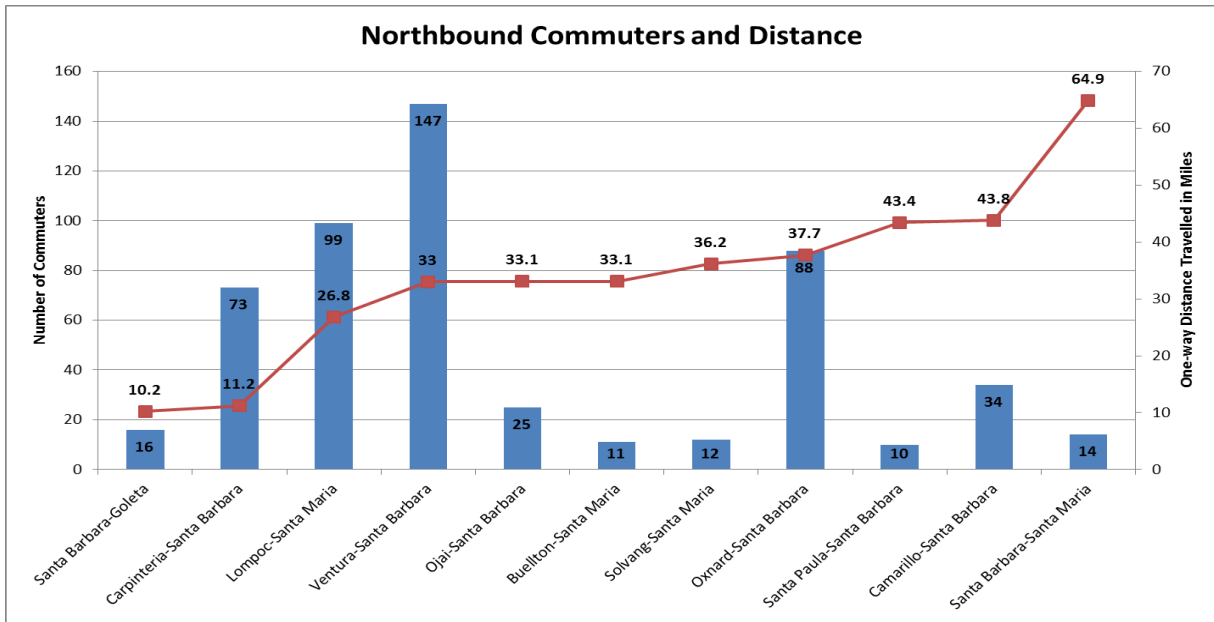


Figure 9. Northbound Commute Distances

The survey found differences in commute mode based on commute distance, as shown in Figures 10 through 18. Understanding where employees come from and how far they travel is key to recommending services, resources, and commuter benefits that can help ease commute stress and encourage sustainable transportation.

Long-distance commuters are generally employees coming from Ventura County and North County to worksites in Santa Barbara (Downtown, Calle Real, Goleta), from Santa Barbara to areas in North County, or from Mid County (Solvang, Buellton, Lompoc) to areas on the South Coast or North County.

Short-distance commuters live in or nearby the cities where their worksites are located, such as an employee living in Goleta and working in Santa Barbara, or an employee living in Orcutt and working in Santa Maria.

Long-distance commuters from zip codes in Ventura County or Lompoc are more likely to use bus, train services, or carpool. Short distance commuters were more likely to drive alone to their respective worksites. These findings are consistent with those reported by Traffic Solutions, suggesting that long-distance commuters may be motivated to try options other than driving alone to save on fuel costs and reduce the stress of navigating traffic.

Long Distance Commuters:

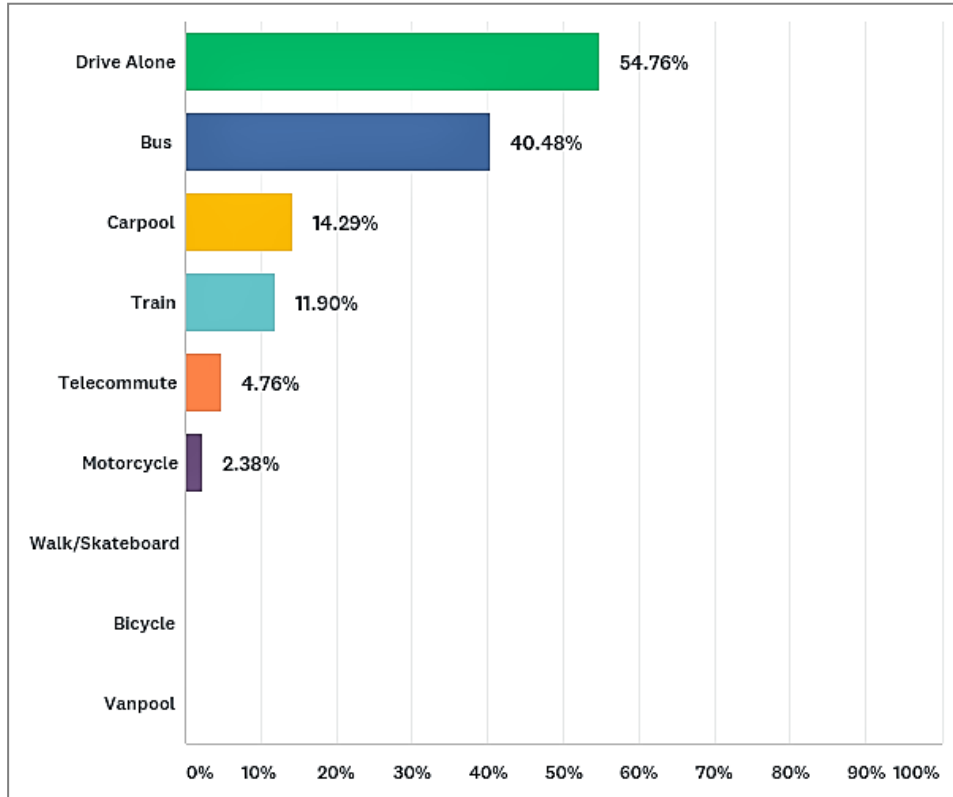


Figure 10.
Primary Commute Mode,
Ventura County to Downtown Santa Barbara (93101)
42 Responses

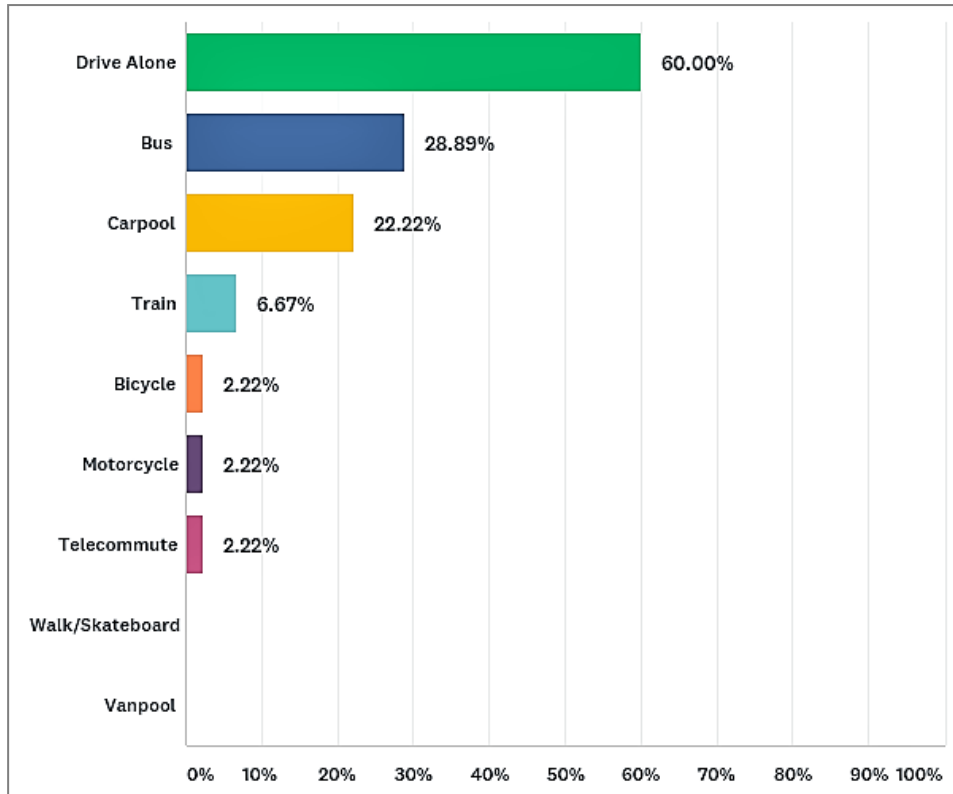


Figure 11.
Primary Commute Mode,
Ventura County to Calle Real Campus (93110)
45 Responses

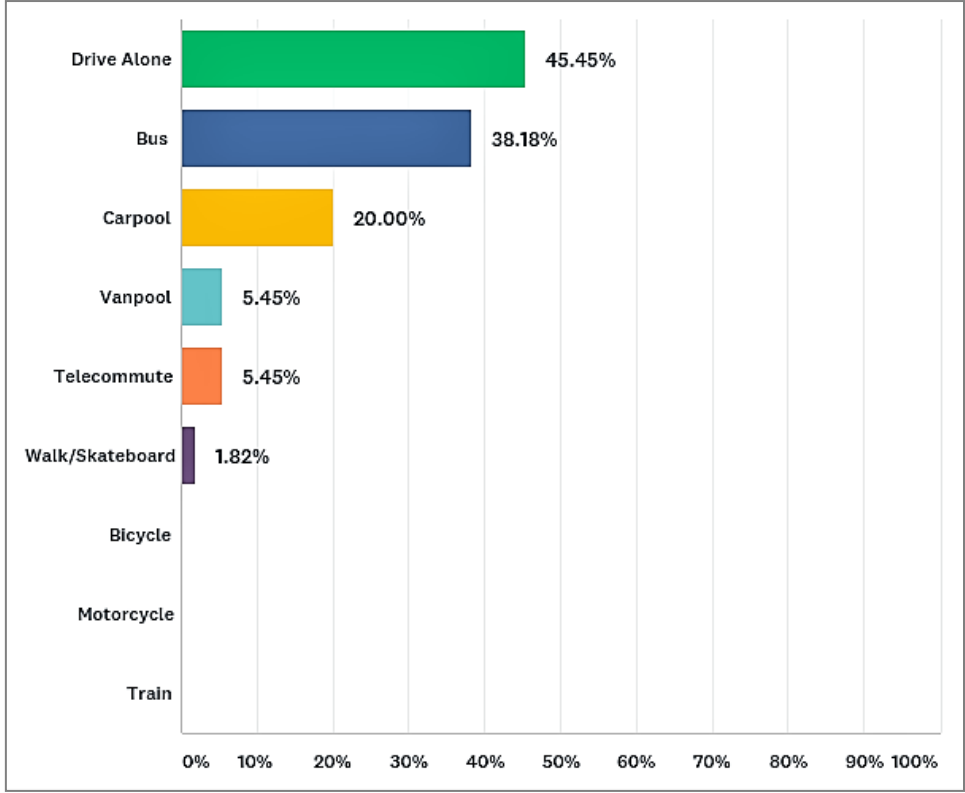


Figure 12.
Primary Commute Mode,
North County to Downtown Santa Barbara (93101)
 55 Responses

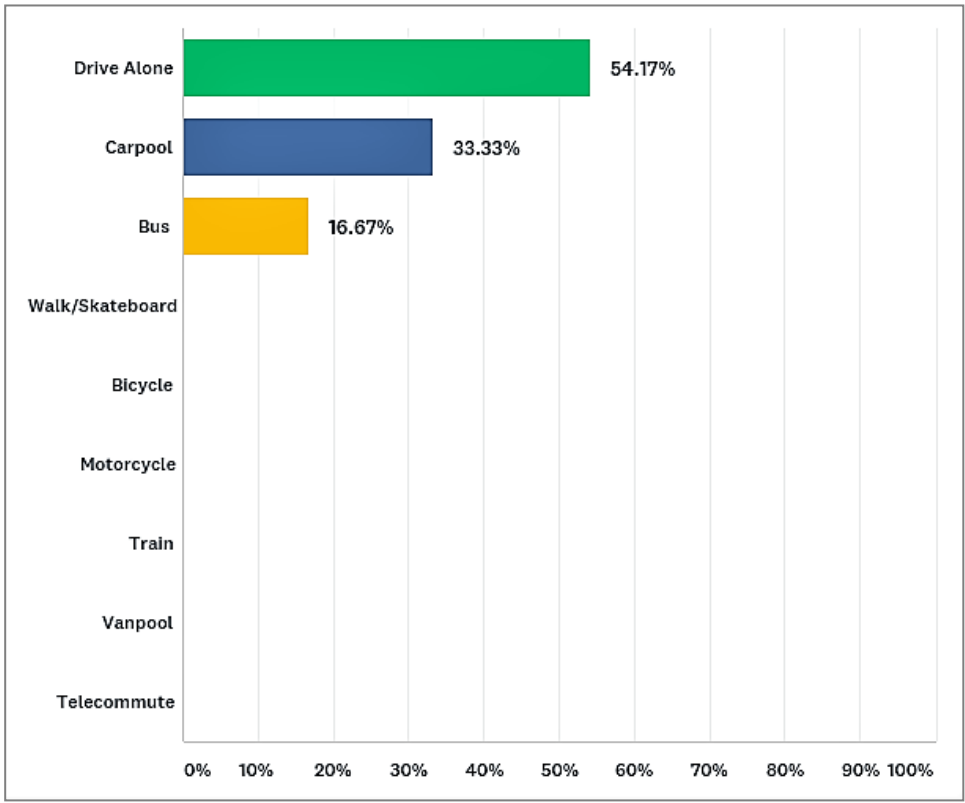


Figure 13.
Primary Commute Mode,
North County to Calle Real Campus (93110)
 48 Responses

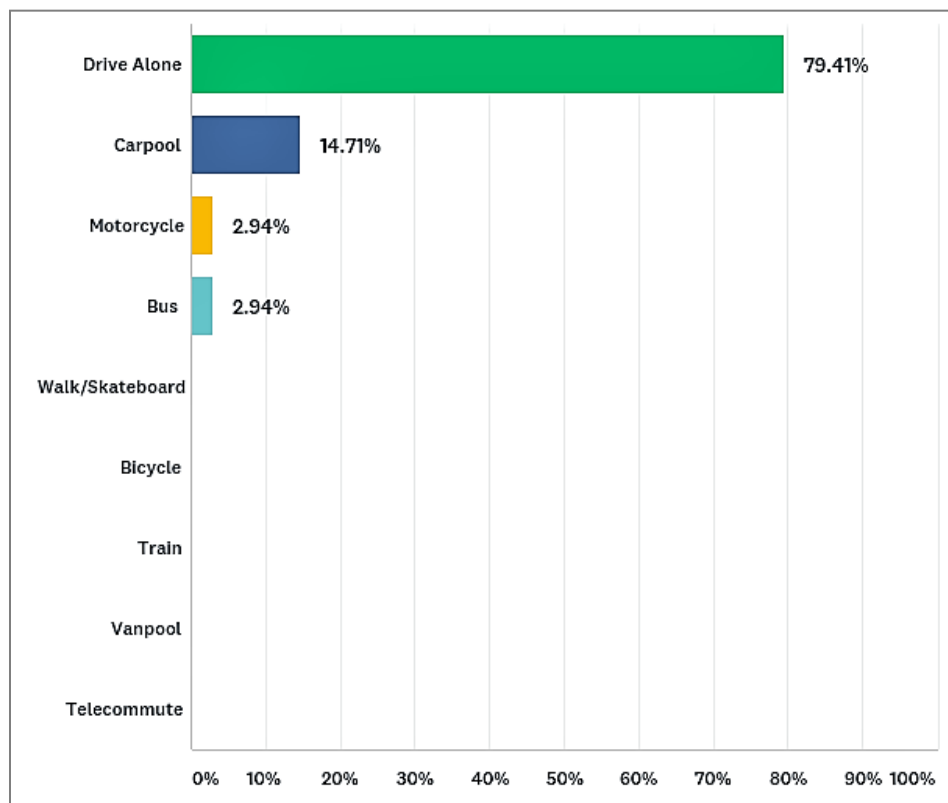


Figure 14.
Primary Commute Mode,
Mid County to Betteravia, Foster Rd, Orcutt Campus (93455)
 34 Responses

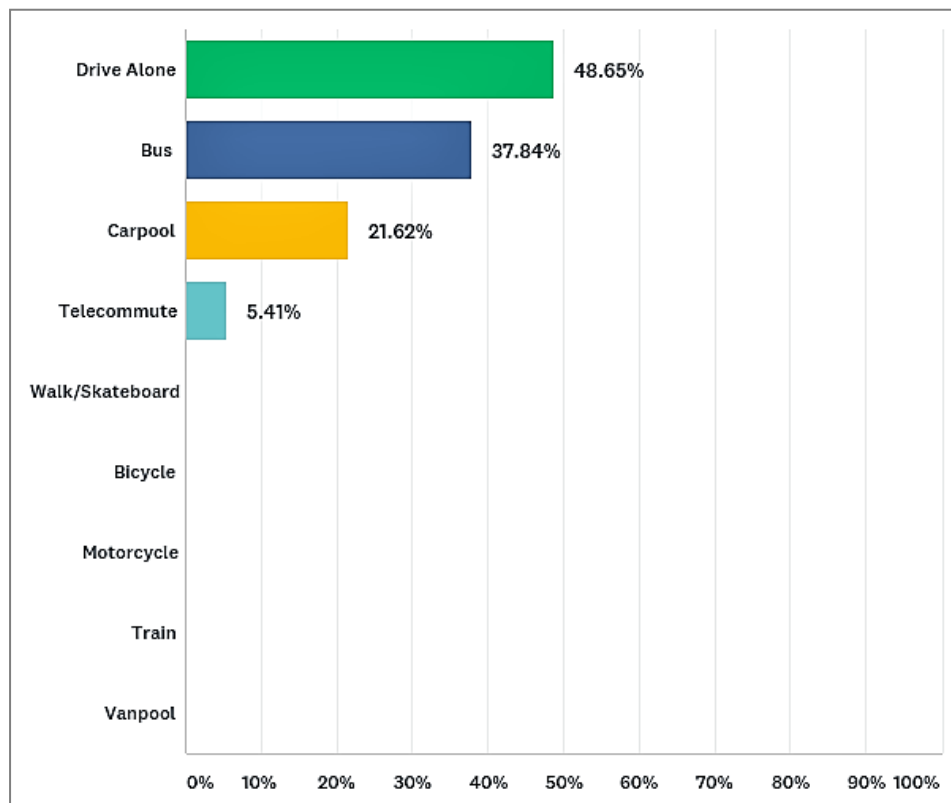


Figure 15.
Primary Commute Mode,
Mid County to Downtown Santa Barbara (93101)
 37 Responses

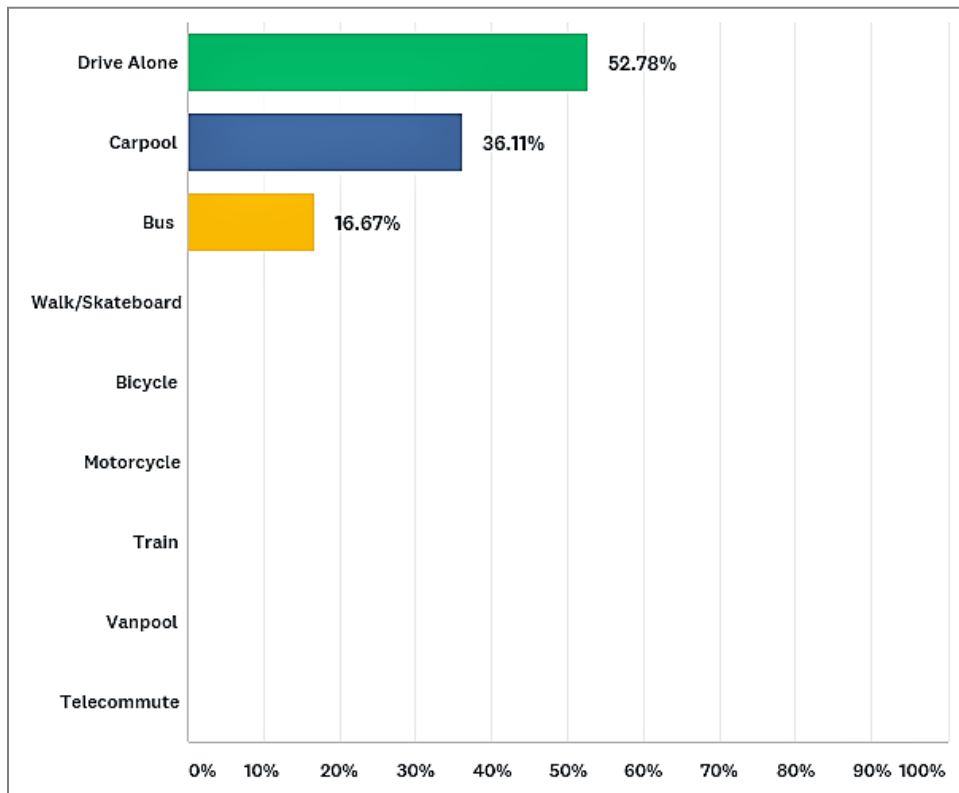


Figure 16.
Primary Commute Mode,
Mid County to Calle Real Campus (93110)
 36 Responses

Short Distance Commuters:

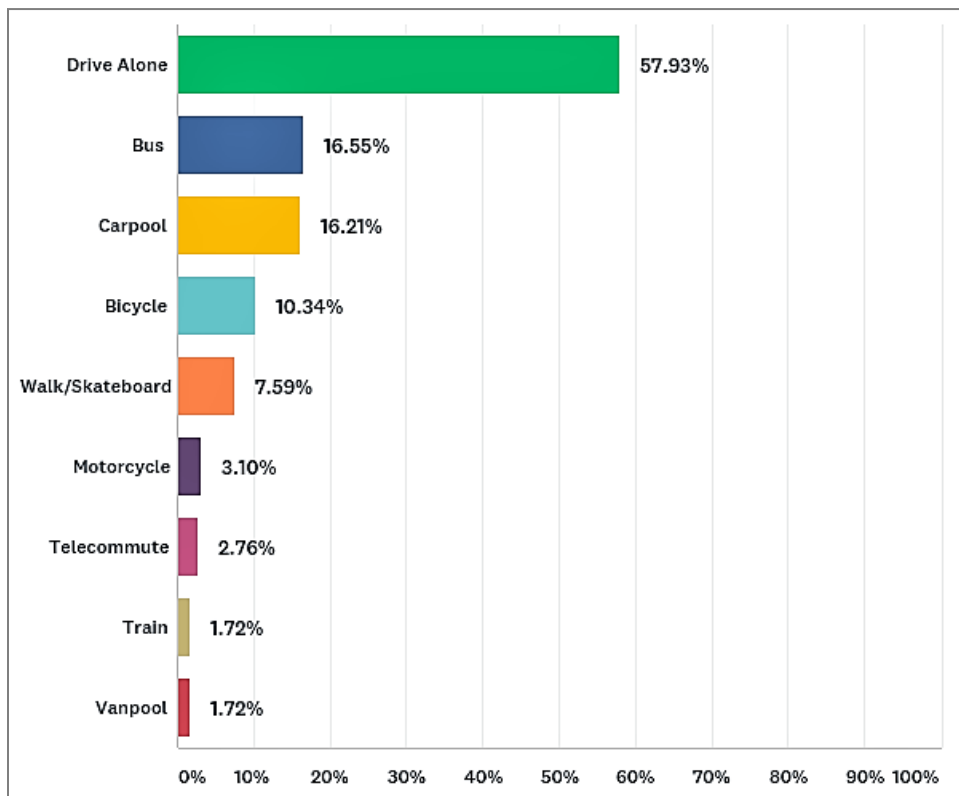


Figure 17.
Primary Commute Mode,
South Coast Cities to Downtown Santa Barbara (93101)
 290 Responses

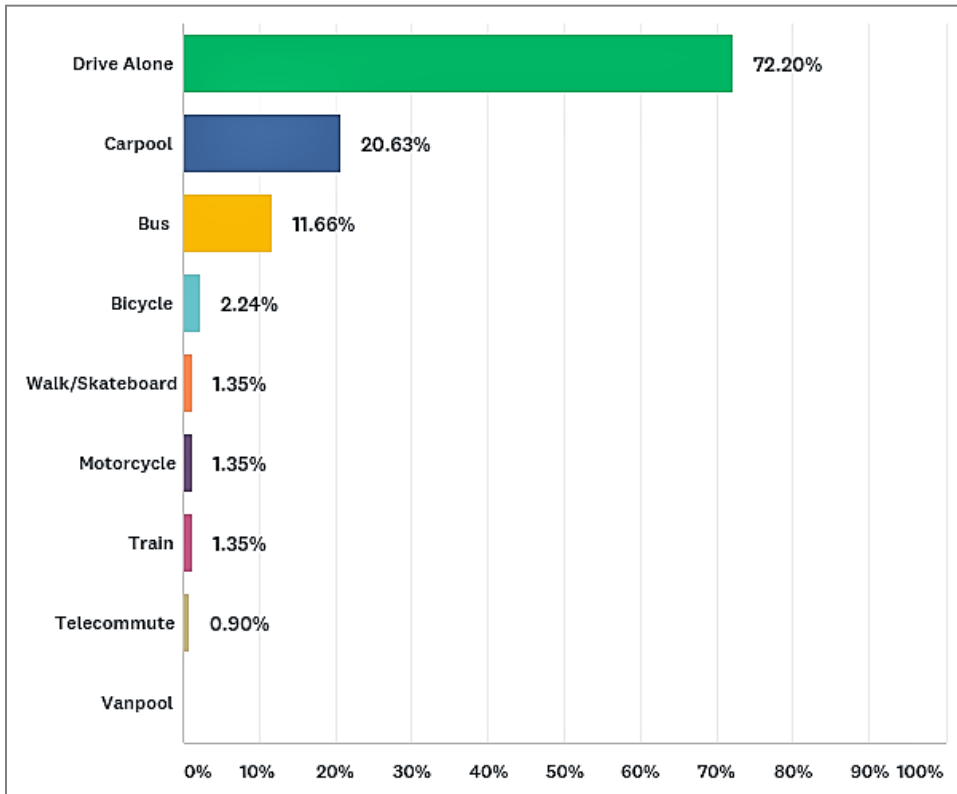


Figure 18.
Primary Commute Mode,
South Coast Cities to Calle Real Campus (93110)
 223 Responses

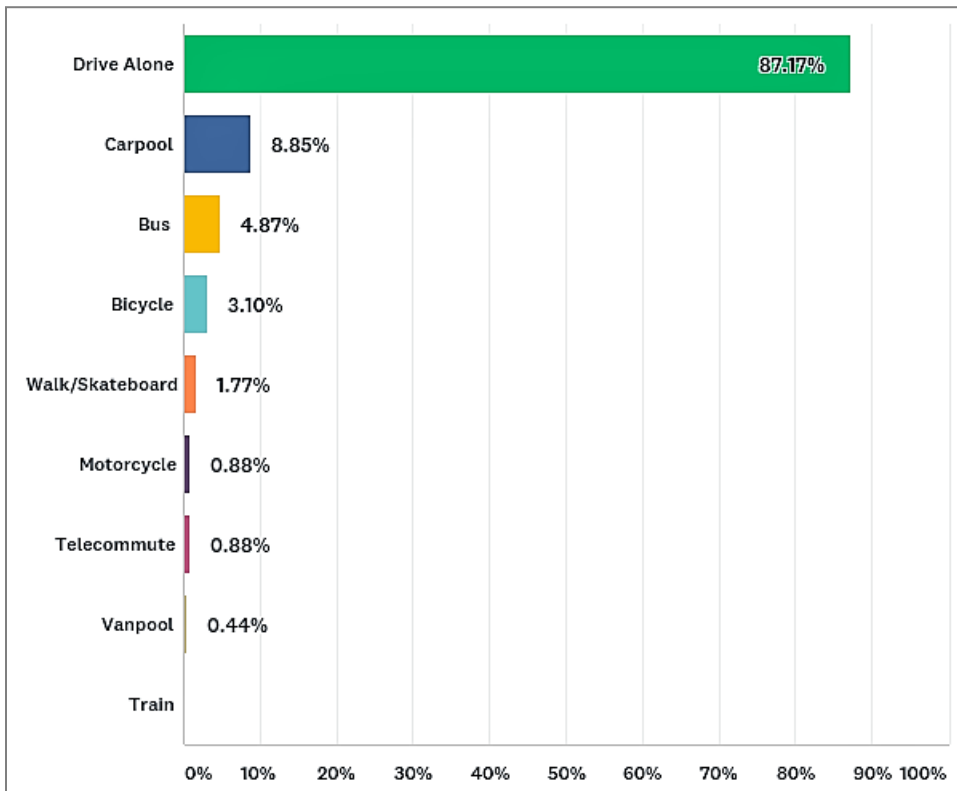


Figure 19.
Primary Commute Mode,
Santa Maria/Orcutt to Betteravia, Foster Rd, Orcutt Campus (93455)
 226 Responses

What Influences How Employees Commute?

The survey asked respondents to select factors that influence their current commute. The survey found that employees value having their car at work as a source of freedom and security. Employees have multiple responsibilities they must coordinate within their day. Most important to drivers was having their vehicle available in the event of an emergency. Additionally, running errands and coordinating their children's transportation are important considerations in the choice to drive to work. Addressing these concerns is a necessary part of having commuters feel comfortable enough to try other forms of transportation.

For employees who choose to use other modes of transportation to get to work, economic factors including saving on gas, parking, and automobile wear and tear is the foremost consideration. Other important factors include location or proximity to work, convenience, and reduced stress from driving/parking.

More detailed results are presented by commute mode below.

Driving Alone

Respondents were asked to select all applicable options that were very or moderately important considerations when choosing to drive:

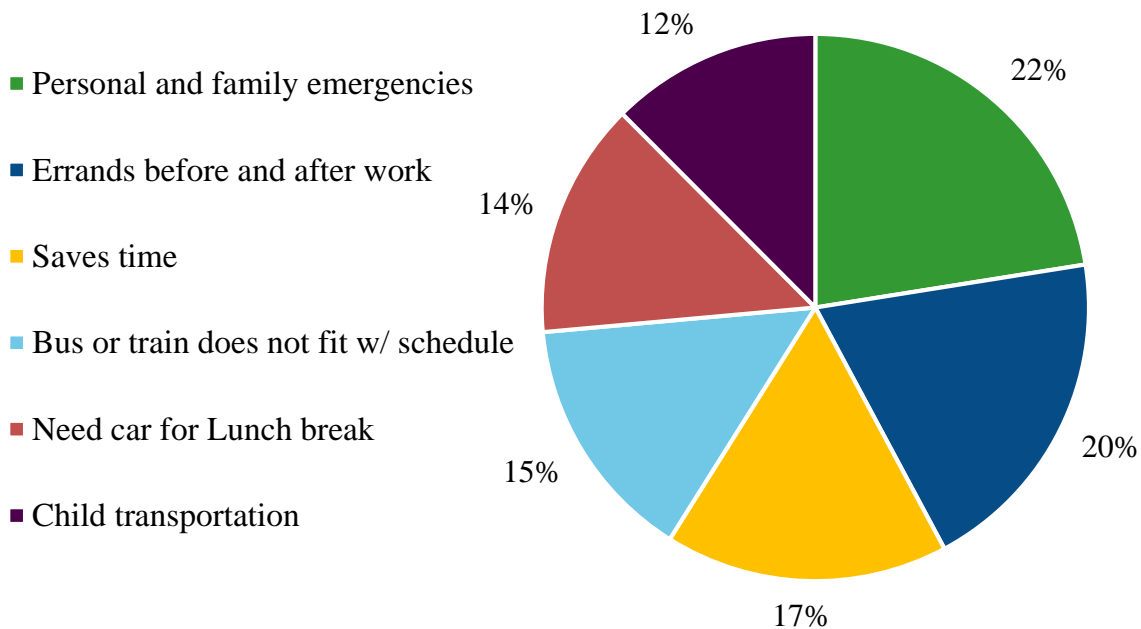


Figure 20. Important considerations when County employees choose to drive to work alone.

Walk, Bike, Carpool, and Vanpool

Respondents were asked to select all applicable reasons why they use active transportation and ridesharing:

- Save on on gas/auto expenses
- Proximity to work location
- Reduce environmental footprint
- Save money on parking
- Health, Ease of use, TDM
- Save time
- Avoid stress of driving
- Other
- Subsidized by employer

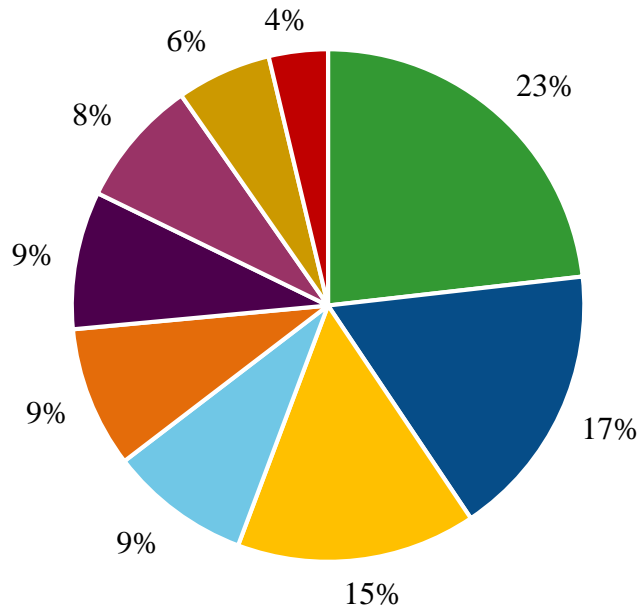


Figure 21. Considerations when County employees choose active or ridesharing modes to get to work.

Transit (Bus or Train Service)

Respondents were asked to select all applicable reasons why they use transit:

- Save on gas/auto expenses
- Avoid the stress of driving
- Convenience
- Reduce environmental footprint
- Live or work close to transit
- Save money on parking
- Fare is subsidized by employer
- Using commute productively
- Other

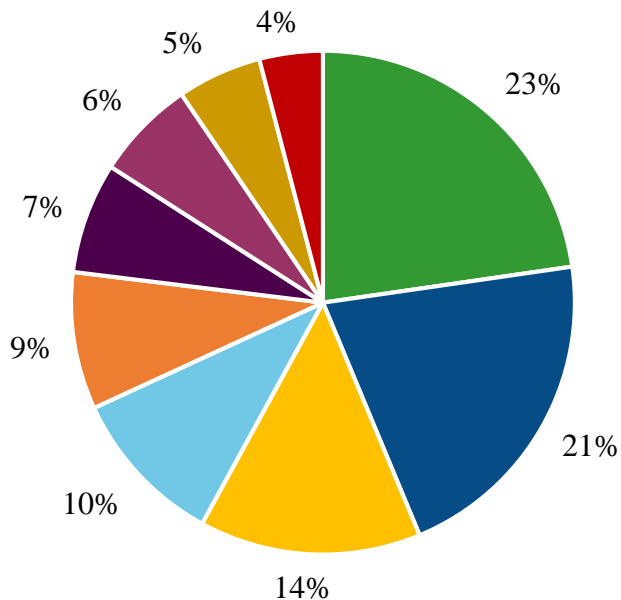


Figure 22. Considerations when County employees choose transit to get to work.

What Commuter Benefits Do Employees Want?

The survey gauged employee awareness of current commuter benefits and what commuter benefits might entice them to use more sustainable forms of transportation. Figure 22 presents the most popular responses that employees indicated definitely would or maybe would convince them to try sustainable commute options more often. The top answers focused on modifications to the current TDM vacation benefit and reducing barriers to transit usage.

Note: In these questions, respondents were asked to check multiple answers if they applied. As a result, the total number of answer choices selected for a question can be greater than the total number of respondents that answered the question. This results in percentages exceeding 100%.

Figure 23. Would the following options be effective in encouraging you to try sustainable transportation more often?

Yes Percent of responses:

Increase TDM vacation bonus from 2 to 3 days a year	58%
Assign laptops for telework-eligible employees	57%
Establish “Core Work Hours” (e.g. 9 am - 3 pm) to facilitate flex hours, train/bus ridership, biking and walking	44%
More direct transit service	43%
Free or reduced cost bus passes	42%
Scale TDM vacation bonus accrual proportionally for green commuters who can’t commit to 80% of days within a pay period	40%
Expand TDM vacation bonus to include electric and alternatively fueled vehicles	39%

Maybe: Percent of responses:

Scale TDM vacation bonus accrual proportionally for green commuters who can’t commit to 80% of days within a pay period	32%
Green commute concierge to answer questions and help me try a new way to commute	28%
Establish “Core Work Hours” (e.g. 9 am - 3 pm) to facilitate flex hours, train/bus ridership, biking and walking	26%
Expand TDM vacation bonus to include electric and alternatively fueled vehicles	26%
Help finding possible carpoolers	25%
Have a transit supporter to answer questions and show how to purchase and use passes and transit	24%
Increase TDM vacation bonus from 2 to 3 days a year	24%