

2016

STATE OF THE COMMUTE

"At-a-Glance" Survey Section



From the Metropolitan Washington DC Region

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

This is a "At-a-Glance" section from the 2016 State of the Commute (SOC) Report showing key figures and tables on regional attitudes towards transportation options in the Washington, DC region. To view the full report, go to www.commuterconnections.org.

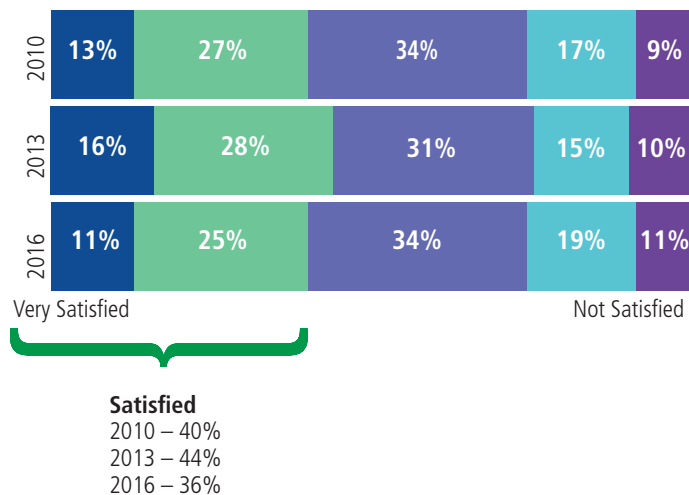
The 2016 SOC survey included a series of questions to explore residents' impressions of the role transportation plays in creating a livable area, and their opinions on transportation needs in the Washington region.

Transportation Satisfaction

The survey asked commuters to rate their satisfaction with the transportation network in the Washington metro region. Only 36% of respondents reported being satisfied, indicated by a rating of 4 or 5 (Very Satisfied). Three in ten said they were dissatisfied (rating of 1-not at all satisfied or 2). Commuters also appeared to be slightly less satisfied than they were in either 2013 or in 2010.

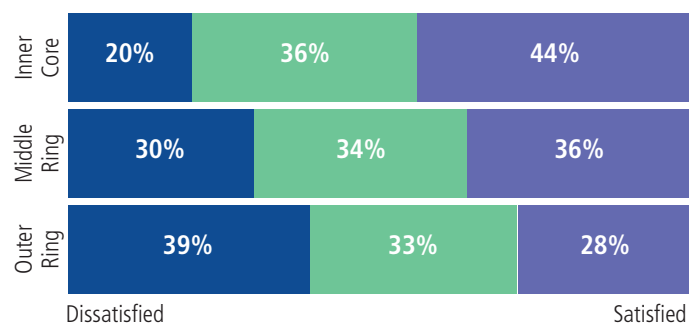
Ratings for Transportation Satisfaction Rating of 4 or 5

(2010 n = 6,420, 2013 n = 5,486, 2016 n = 5,093)



Ratings for Satisfaction with Regional Transportation By Home Area

(Inner Core n = 1,449, Middle Ring n = 1,460, Outer Ring n = 2,184)



Transportation Satisfaction by Home Location

Respondents who lived in the Inner Core gave a higher rating for transportation satisfaction than did respondents in either the Middle Ring or Outer Ring. Forty-four percent of Inner Core respondents rated their satisfaction with transportation as a 4 or 5, compared with 36% of Middle Ring respondents and 28% of Outer Ring respondents.

Transportation Satisfaction by Travel Characteristics

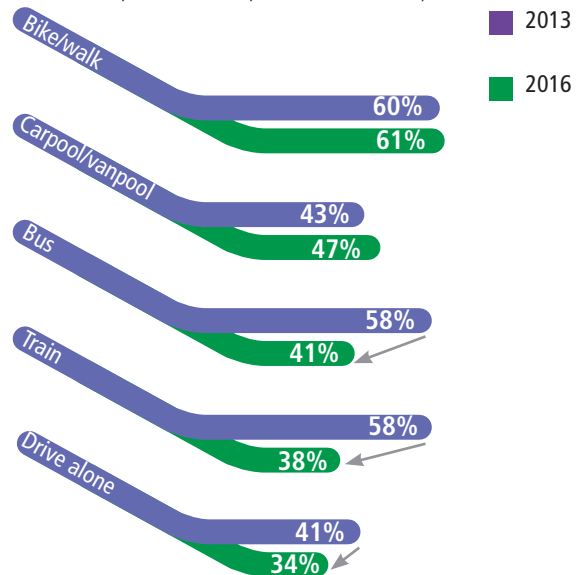
Transportation Satisfaction by Commute Mode – In 2016, respondents who drove alone gave the lowest ratings for transportation satisfaction; only 34% of drive alone commuters were satisfied. Transit riders also gave relatively low ratings; about four of ten train and bus riders were satisfied. Just under half (47%) of carpoolers/vanpoolers rated the transportation system as a 4 or 5. Commuters who biked or walked to work gave the highest rating, with about six in ten respondents in this mode group being satisfied.

Carpool/vanpool and bike/walk commuters were as satisfied in 2016 as in 2013. Drive alone commuters were less satisfied in 2016, although the drop was not dramatic. But train and bus riders were substantially less satisfied. The drop in satisfaction also was notable for bus riders.

Ratings for Transportation Satisfaction by Primary Commute Mode

Percentage Rating Satisfaction as a 4 or 5 (Very satisfied)

(Drive alone n = 3,439, Carpool/vanpool n = 282, Bus n = 283, Train n = 687, Bike/walk n = 176)



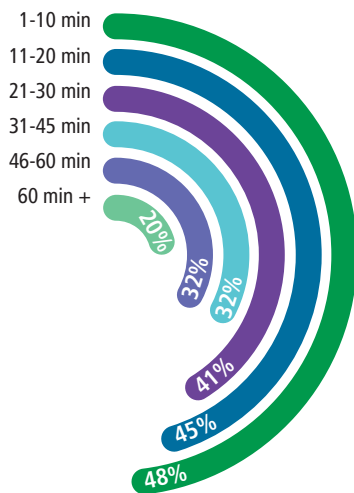
Transportation Satisfaction by Commute Travel Time

– There was a clear pattern between increasing commute travel time and declining transportation satisfaction. Satisfaction fell as the length of the commute increased, from a high of 48% satisfaction for respondents who had very short commutes of 10 minutes or less, to 32% for respondents who traveled between 31 and 60 minutes, and to 20% for respondents who traveled more than an hour to work.

Ratings for Transportation Satisfaction by Commute Travel Time (minutes)

Percentage Rating Satisfaction as a 4 or 5 (Very satisfied)

(1-10 min n = 491, 11-20 min n = 930, 21-30 min n = 875, 31-45 min n = 1,089, 46-60 min n = 749, More than 60 min n = 748)



Transportation Satisfaction by Proximity to Transit –

Transportation satisfaction also appeared related to a respondent’s proximity to bus and train stops. In general, respondents who lived closer to transit gave higher marks for transportation satisfaction than did respondents who lived farther away.

Transportation Satisfaction by Commute Satisfaction

About 58% of respondents region-wide said they were satisfied with their commute. But only 36% were satisfied with the regional transportation system.

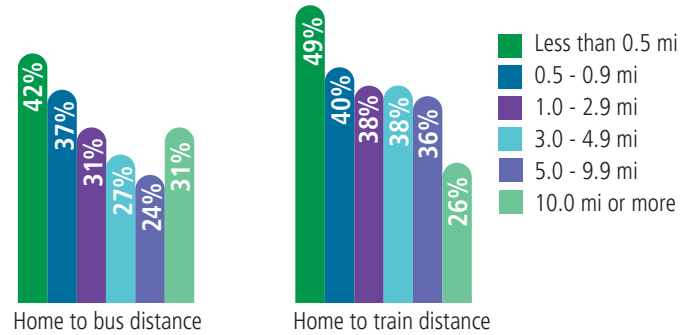
This implies that most commuters had found an acceptable commute option, but that many still felt the regional transportation was lacking, perhaps because they were considering both work and non-work travel in making their transportation satisfaction ratings.

However, respondents’ satisfaction with their commute certainly appears related to their satisfaction with transportation in the region.

Ratings for Transportation Satisfaction by Distance from Home to Bus Stop and Train Station (miles)

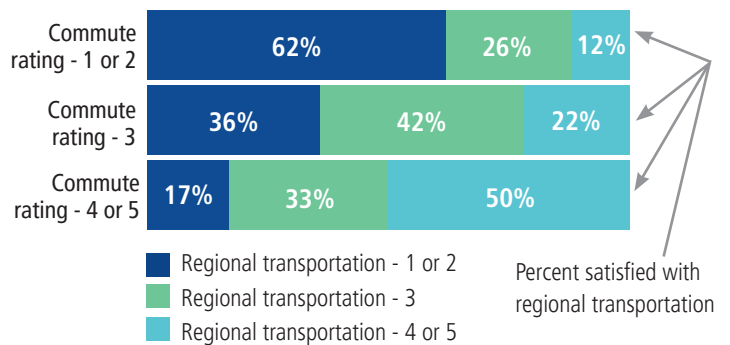
Percentage Rating Satisfaction as a 4 or 5 (Very satisfied)

(Bus stop Distance – Less than 0.5 mi n = 2,167, 0.5-0.9 mi n = 642, 1.0-2.9 mi n = 726, 3.0-4.9 mi n = 302, 5.0-9.9 mi n = 380, 10.0 mi or more n = 339) (Train station Distance – Less than 0.5 mi n = 307, 0.5-0.9 mi n = 484, 1.0-2.9 mi n = 1,063, 3.0-4.9 mi n = 502, 5.0-9.9 mi n = 665, 10.0 mi or more n = 1,490)



Satisfaction with Regional Transportation by Commute Satisfaction

(Commute Rating 1 or 2 n = 1,063, Commute Rating 3 n = 1,116, Commute Rating 4 or 5 n = 2,905)



Benefits of Ridesharing

Questions were included in the 2016 SOC survey to assess commuters’ opinions about the benefits generated by commuters’ use of alternative modes.

Societal Benefits of Alternative Mode Use

When asked what benefits a region or community receives from use of alternative modes, 80% of respondents named at least one benefit. Nearly six in ten (59%) respondents said that use of alternative modes could reduce traffic congestion and 36% said it could reduce pollution or help the environment.

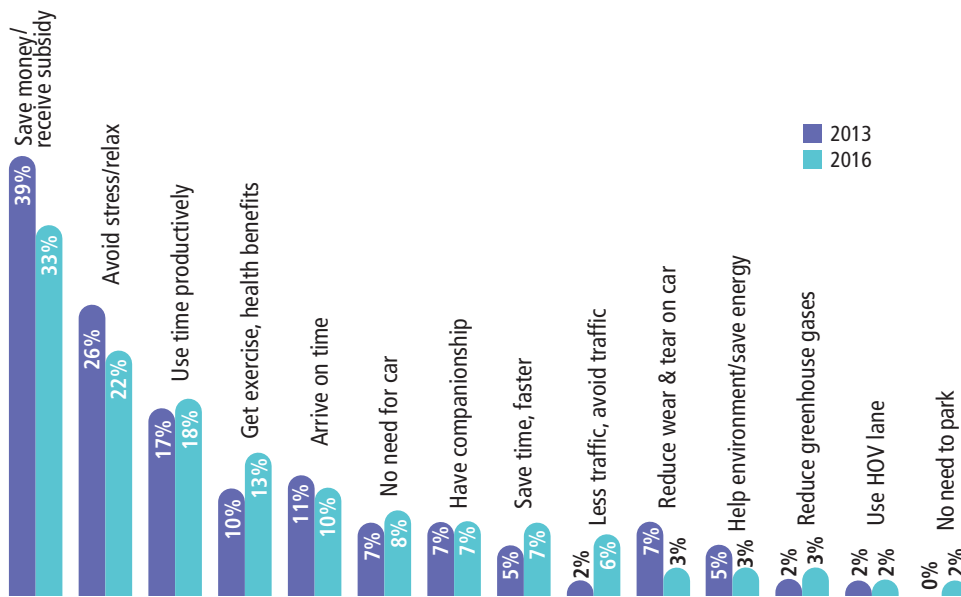
Personal Benefits of Alternative Mode Use

When respondents who used alternative modes for their commute were asked what personal benefits they received from using these modes, 89% named at least one benefit. Saving money or receiving a financial incentive that reduced their transportation cost topped the list of personal benefits; 33% of alternative mode users mentioned this benefit. Respondents mentioned two other benefits that have a financial implication: No need for a car (8%) and reduced wear and tear on car (3%).

Respondents also cited benefits that have a connection to quality of life. Two in ten (22%) respondents said use of alternative modes helped them avoid stress or relax while commuting and 6% said they could avoid traffic. Two in ten (18%) said they could use their travel time productively when they used an alternative mode. About one in ten said they got exercise or health benefits (13%), arrived at work on time (10%), or had companionship on their commute (7%).

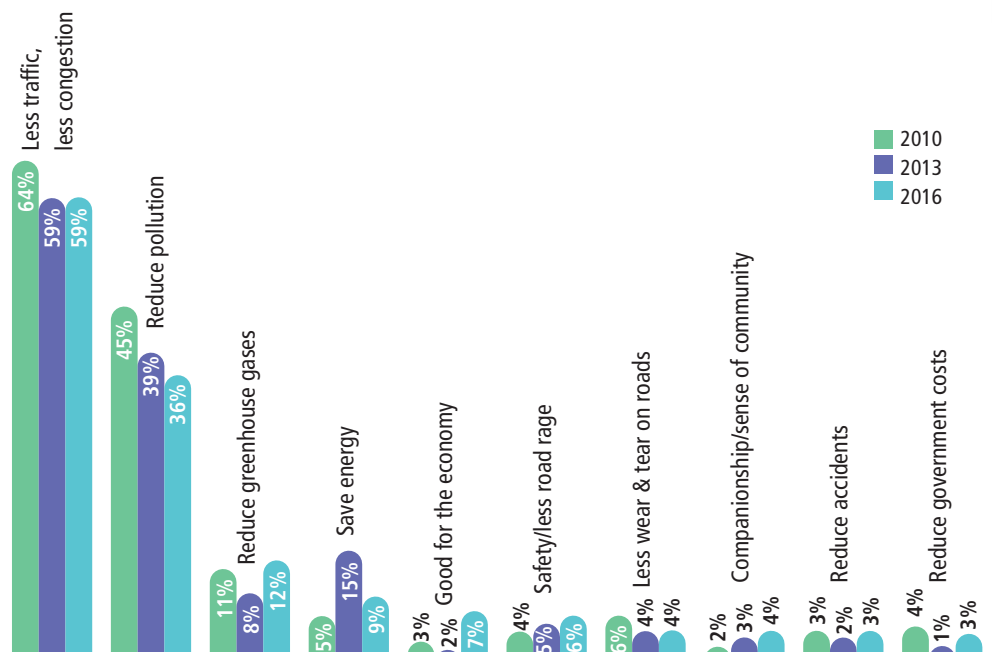
Personal Benefits of Alternative Mode Use – 2013 and 2016

Asked Only of Alternative Mode Users



Regional/Community Benefits of Alternative Mode Use – 2010, 2013, 2016

Asked of All Commuters (2010 n = 6,050, 2013 n = 5,718, 2016 n = 5,239)



Differences in Personal Benefits by Alternative

Mode – Saving money was a common personal benefit named by all alternative mode users, but particularly so for commuters who carpooled/vanpooled, rode a bus, or biked/walked; about four in ten respondents in these mode groups named saving money as a benefit. Avoiding stress and using travel time productively also were common benefits across mode categories, but with bus and train riders noting these benefits at a higher rate than did respondents who carpooled/vanpooled or bike/walked to work.

Personal Benefits of Alternative Mode Use by Primary Alternative Mode

(Carpool/Vanpool n = 283, Bus n = 288, Train n = 692, Bike/Walk n = 180)

(Bolded percentages indicate statistically higher values)

	Carpool/ Vanpool	Bus	Train	Bike/Walk
Save money	40%	36%	24%	41%
Have companionship during commute	23%	5%	3%	0%
Avoid stress, relax	15%	22%	27%	17%
Use travel time productively	13%	23%	18%	13%
Save time, travel faster	13%	3%	5%	13%
Arrive at work on time	9%	6%	12%	7%
Save gas, save energy	7%	7%	7%	7%
Less wear and tear on car	6%	2%	4%	1%
No need for a car	2%	7%	11%	3%
Get exercise	1%	3%	6%	73%
Help environment, reduce greenhouse gases	1%	2%	9%	9%

* Each response in the "Other" category mentioned by less than one percent of respondents.

Productive Use of Personal Travel Time

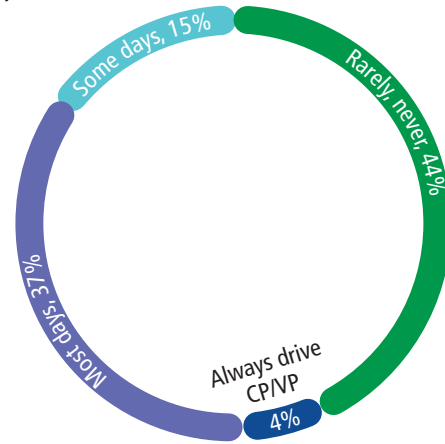
Another question in this series about travel benefits explored the idea that commuters who use alternative modes can make productive use of their travel time. Commuters who carpooled, vanpooled, or rode transit to work were asked how often they read or wrote work-related material or checked work messages on the way to work.

Ease of Commute

Respondents who commuted at least one day per week were asked if their commute time was easier, more difficult, or about the same as it was a year prior.

Frequency of Work-Related Tasks During Commute Time

Asked Only of Alternative Mode Users (n = 1,349)



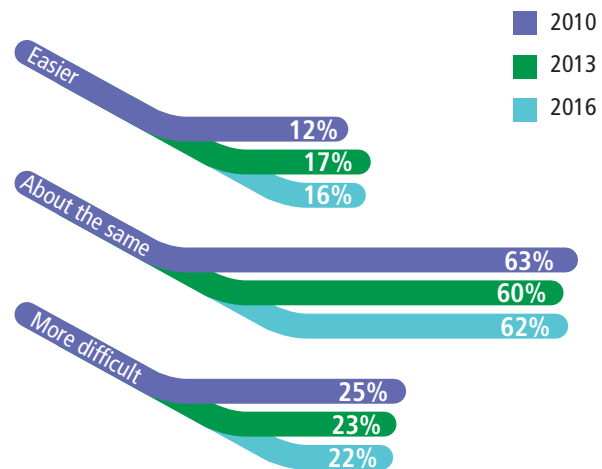
Change in Commute Ease by Travel Time

Among commuters who had very short commutes – 10 minutes or less – more than seven in ten said their commute was about the same as it was a year ago and 22% said it was easier; only 5% said it was more difficult. The share of commuters who reported an easier commute or the same commute declined as commute time increased and the share who said they had a more difficult commute increased steadily.

Commute Easier, More Difficult, or

About the Same as Last Year – 2010, 2013, and 2016

(2010 n = 6,049, 2013 n = 5,717, 2016 n = 5,142)

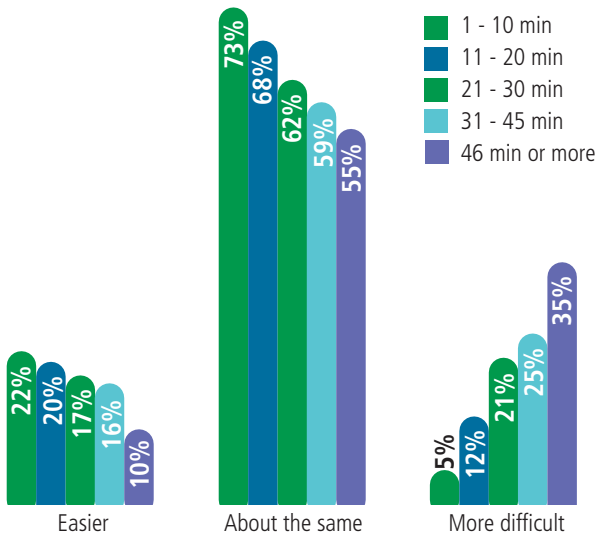


Influence of Changes in Residence or Work Location on Commute Ease

Because it was expected that a commute might have become easier or more difficult because the origin and/or destination of the commute changed, all respondents were asked if they had made a change in their work location and/or home location in the past year.

Commute Easier, More Difficult, or About the Same as Last Year – By Commute Length (minutes)

(1 to 10 min n = 512, 11 to 20 min n = 960, 21 to 30 min n = 909, 31 to 45 min = 1,118, 46 min or more n = 1,531)



About 22% made a change and 78% made no change. Most (86%) said they moved within the Washington metropolitan region, but 14% moved from a location outside the Washington area. Because those who moved from outside the region could not provide a before-the-move comparison, they were excluded from the base.

Commute Compared to Last Year by Made a Change in Home or Work Location

Type of move	Commute Change			
	(n = 1,462)	Easier	About the Same	More Difficult
No change	4,361	10%	69%	21%
Any change	862	38%	35%	27%
Changed only home	204	31%	41%	28%
Changed only work	512	40%	33%	27%
Changed home and work	146	40%	32%	29%

These results suggest the ease or difficulty of the commute was related to moves for at least some of the respondents. The majority (69%) of respondents who did not move said their commutes were about the same. Ten percent said their commutes had improved and 21% said it had gotten more difficult.

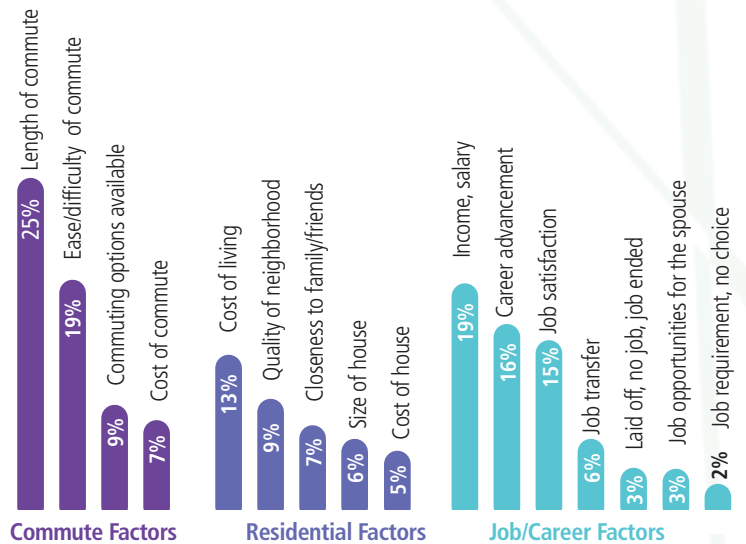
Over one-quarter (27%) of respondents who moved said they had a more difficult commute. But a larger percentage (38%) said their commute had improved. This percentage also was much higher than the 10% of respondents whose commute was easier without a move.

Move as Factor in Shortening Commute Distance or Time

Respondents who had moved were asked if the residential or job location change had shortened either the distance or time they traveled between home and work. One-third (32%) said the move had shortened both the distance and time. For 9%, the move shortened only the distance and 8% said it had shortened the time, but not the distance. The remaining 51% said the move had not affected either the distance or time.

Factors Considered in Home or Work Location Changes

Respondents who Made a Change in Work or Residence Location (Note: Scale extends only to 30% to highlight difference in responses) (n = 863, multiple responses permitted)



Commuting as a Factor in Location Change Decisions

– Anecdotal reports suggest that some commuters might move their residences and/or seek new jobs at least in part to make their commute easier or less costly. Respondents who said they made a change were asked what factors they considered in making the change and how important to their decision the ease of the trip to work had been compared with other factors they considered.

More than one-third (35%) of respondents cited a commute-related concern as a factor they considered in the moving decision. Half of respondents noted a job or career concern as a factor in their decision.

Respondents who moved were asked how important commute factors had been to their decisions, relative to other factors they considered as shown in the next table.

Importance of Commute Ease Relative to Other Factors Considered in Home or Work Location Changes

Respondents who Made a Change in Work or Residence Location (2016 n=789, 2013 n=850, 2010 n=887, 2007 n=981)

Importance of Commute Ease	2016 SOC	2013 SOC	2010 SOC	2007 SOC
Commute ease was the only factor	13%	—	—	—
More important than other factors	26%	28%	29%	30%
About the same importance as other factors	42%	46%	38%	44%
Less important than other factors	19%	26%	33%	27%

Importance of Commute Factors and Length of Commute – Respondents who said that commuting was an important factor were more likely to have a shorter commute after making the move than were respondents who said commuting was not as important to their decision.

Importance of Commute Factors by If Move Shortened Distance or Time from Home to Work

(Commute factors were: Only factor n = 84, More important n = 150, Same importance n = 317, Less important n = 220)

Only factor	84%	16%
More important	64%	36%
Same importance	44%	56%
Less importance	32%	68%

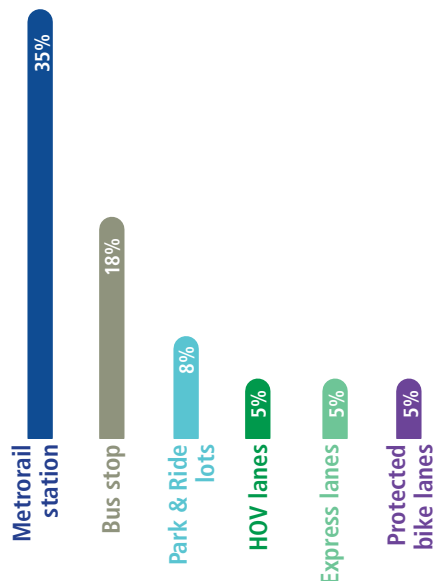
■ Shortened time or distance ■ Didn't shorten time or distance

More than eight in ten (84%) respondents who said commuting was the only factor they considered in making the move, and 64% of respondents who said commuting was more important than other factors, said they had a shorter commute after making the move. This suggests respondents who were particularly concerned with commuting ease, length, or cost chose work and/or home locations that improved their commutes. By contrast, only 44% of those who said commute factors had been about the same importance as other factors and 32% who said commute factors were less important than were job, home, or personal factors had shortened their commutes.

Transportation Services Considered When Making Home or Work Move – Respondents who made a residential location change were asked if, when they were considering making this change, they had considered how close their new location would be to any of six transportation services: Park & Ride lots, HOV lanes, express lanes, protected bike lanes, Metrorail stations, or bus stops.

Access to Transportation Services Considered when Making Home or Work Move

(n = 862, multiple responses permitted)



More than four in ten (43%) respondents said they considered their access to at least one of these services. One-third (35%) considered how close they would be to a Metrorail station and 18% considered their access to a bus stop. About one in ten (8%) thought about the availability of a Park & Ride lot and 5% considered their access to HOV lanes, Express lanes, and protected bike lanes.

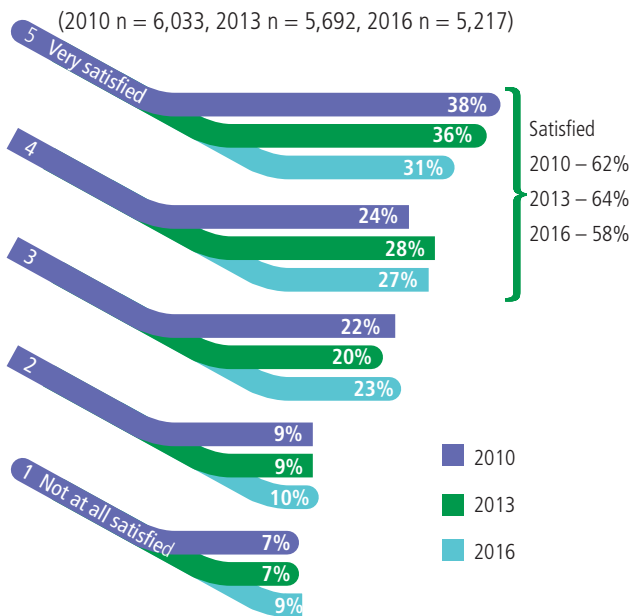
Commute Satisfaction

The 2016 survey included a question about how satisfied commuters were with their trip to work. As shown in the next figure. In 2016, 58% rated their commute satisfaction as a “4” or “5” on a 5-point scale, where “5” meant “very satisfied.” Twenty-three percent gave a rating of 3 and about two in ten rated their satisfaction as either a “1 – not at all satisfied” (9%) or 2 (10%).

Commute Satisfaction by Ease of Commute Compared with a Year Ago

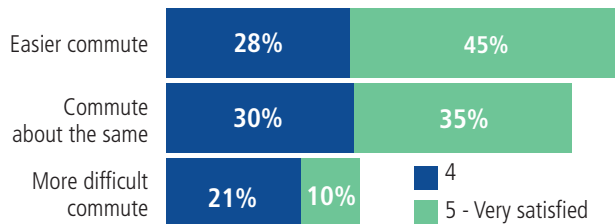
Respondents’ level of satisfaction with their commute was influenced by the ease of their commutes. More than seven in ten (73%) respondents who said they had an easier commute than last year and 65% who said their commute had not changed were satisfied with their commute, compared to only 31% who said their commute had become more difficult.

Satisfaction with Commute



Satisfaction with Commute by Ease of Commute

Percent Rating Commute a 4 or 5
(Easier commute n = 620, Commute about the same n = 3,239, More difficult commute n = 1,283)



Commute Satisfaction by Commute Mode

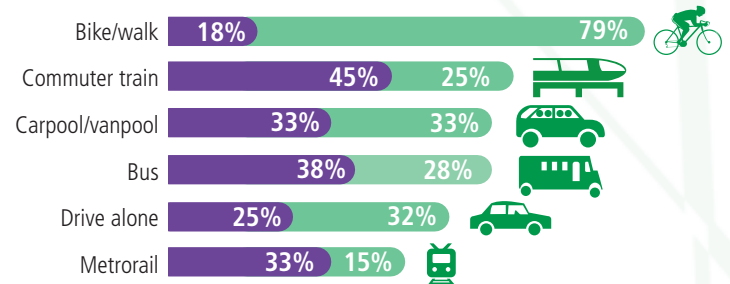
As shown in the next figure, 97% of bikers/walkers reported high commute satisfaction. Commuter train riders, carpoolers/vanpoolers, and bus commuters were about equally satisfied, with about two-thirds rating their commute as a 4 or 5. Drive alone commuters and Metrorail riders reported the lowest satisfaction; 57% of commuters who drove alone and 48% who rode Metrorail said they were satisfied.

Commute satisfaction by mode was generally similar in 2016 as in 2013, with one notable exception – train riders were much less satisfied in 2016 than in 2013. In 2016, 48% of Metrorail riders gave a 4 or 5 rating for their commute, 19 percentage points lower than the 67% who were satisfied in 2013. And 70% of commuter rail riders were satisfied in 2016, a drop of 18 percentage points from the 88% who were satisfied in 2013.



Satisfaction with Commute by Primary Commute Mode

Percent Rating Commute a 4 or 5
(Bike/walk n = 180, Commuter train n = 62, Carpool/Vanpool n = 283, Bus n = 284, Drive alone n = 3,552, Metrorail n = 634)



Commute Satisfaction by Travel Time

Commute satisfaction declined steadily and significantly as the amount of time a commuter traveled increased. Nearly all (97%) commuters who had commutes of 10 minutes or less gave a 4 or 5 rating for commute satisfaction.

Satisfaction with Commute by Length of Commute (minutes)

Percent Rating Commute a 4 or 5
(1-10 min n = 507, 11-20 min n = 957, 21-30 min n = 901, 31-45 min n = 1,113, 46-60 min n = 765, More than 60 min n = 753)

