

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS®
A SMARTER WAY TO WORK

2019

STATE OF THE COMMUTE

“AT-A-GLANCE” SURVEY SECTION

FROM THE
WASHINGTON DC
METROPOLITAN REGION

National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments



TRANSPORTATION OPTION ATTITUDES AND AWARENESS

 National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

 Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments



This is a “At-a-Glance” section from the 2019 State of the Commute (SOC) Report showing key figures and tables on regional attitudes and awareness towards transportation options in the Washington, DC region. To view the full report, go to www.commuterconnections.org.

Transportation Option Attitudes and Awareness

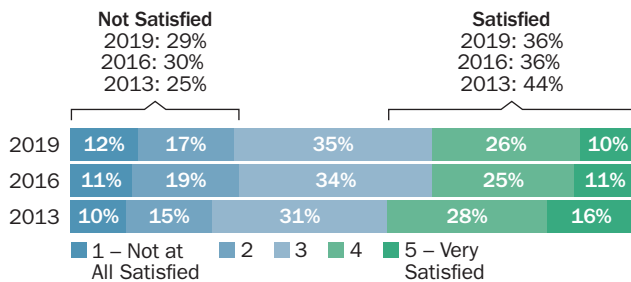
The 2019 SOC survey included a series of questions to explore residents’ impressions of the role transportation plays in creating a livable area, and their opinions on transportation needs in the Washington metropolitan region.

Transportation Satisfaction

When asked 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 (29%) said they were not satisfied (rating of 1-not at all satisfied or 2). The 36% satisfaction rating in 2019 was the same as the rating in 2016 (36%), but commuters appear less satisfied than they were in 2013, when 44% of commuters were satisfied.

Ratings for Transportation Satisfaction – 2013 to 2019

(2013 n = 5,486, 2016 n = 5,093, 2019 n = 7,358)

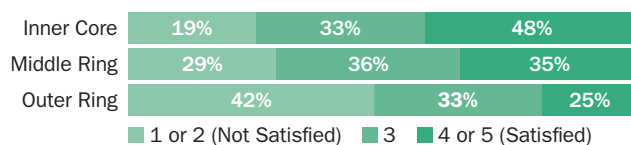


TRANSPORTATION SATISFACTION BY HOME LOCATION

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. Nearly half (48%) of Inner Core respondents rated their satisfaction with transportation as a 4 or 5, compared with 35% of Middle Ring respondents and 25% of Outer Ring respondents. Satisfaction ratings were stable in each of the three home areas.

Ratings for Satisfaction with Regional Transportation By Home Area

(Inner Core n = 2,127, Middle Ring n = 2,231, Outer Ring n = 3,000)



TRANSPORTATION SATISFACTION BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The analysis of transportation satisfaction examined the results for all regional commuters, but also for various sub-segments of the commuting population. Results of these inquiries are presented below for:

- Demographic characteristics – age, income, sex, race/ethnicity, and employment status
- Travel characteristics – commute mode, commute travel time, and home proximity to transit

Age – Satisfaction with regional transportation was highest among the youngest respondents (18 to 24 years) and oldest respondents (65 years and older). Respondents who were between 45 and 54 reported the lowest satisfaction.

Ratings for Transportation Satisfaction by Age

Percentage Rating Satisfaction as a 4 or 5 (Very satisfied)
(18 to 24 n = 191, 25 to 34 n = 1,410, 35 to 44 n = 1,648, 45 to 54 n = 1,817, 55 to 64 n = 1,667, 65 and older n = 542)



Sex, Race/Ethnicity, and Household Income – The Table presents transportation satisfaction results by three demographic characteristics: sex, race/ethnicity, and annual household income. Male and female respondents rated transportation satisfaction equally, but Non-Hispanic Black respondents (42% satisfied) were more satisfied than were either Hispanic (34%) or Non-Hispanic White respondents (35%). Satisfaction also varied by respondents’ income, but the pattern was not definitive.

Ratings for Transportation Satisfaction by Sex, Race/Ethnicity, and Income

Percentage Rating Satisfaction as a 4 or 5 (Very satisfied)
(Shaded percentages indicate statistically higher values)

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	PERCENTAGE SATISFIED
SEX	
Female (n = 3,404)	37%
Male (n = 3,554)	37%
RACE/ETHNICITY	
Hispanic (n = 444)	34%
Non-Hispanic White (n = 4,969)	35%
Non-Hispanic Black (n = 1,229)	42%
INCOME	
Less than \$40,000 (n = 189)	48%
\$40,000 to \$99,999 (n = 1,458)	40%
\$100,000 to \$139,999 (n = 1,152)	34%
\$140,000 to \$199,999 (n = 1,278)	39%
\$200,000 or more (n = 1,104)	36%

TRANSPORTATION SATISFACTION BY TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS

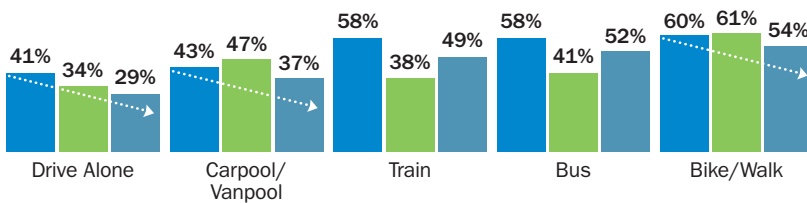
Transportation Satisfaction by Commute Mode – In 2019, respondents who drove alone gave the lowest ratings for transportation satisfaction; only 29% of drive alone commuters were satisfied. Carpool/vanpool commuters also gave relatively low ratings; about four in ten (37%) were satisfied. Transit riders reported higher satisfaction; 49% of train riders and 52% of bus riders rated the transportation system as a 4 or 5. Commuters who biked or walked to work also gave generally good ratings, with 54% of respondents in this mode group being satisfied. The figure below also presents satisfaction ratings by mode from the 2013 and 2016 SOC surveys.

Ratings for Transportation Satisfaction by Primary Commute Mode

Percentage Rating Satisfaction as a 4 or 5 (Very satisfied)
(2013: Drive alone n = 3,873, Carpool/vanpool n = 352, Bus n = 296, Train n = 674, Bike/walk n = 148)

(2016: Drive alone n = 3,439, Carpool/vanpool n = 282, Bus n = 283, Train n = 687, Bike/walk n = 176)

(2019: Drive alone n = 4,532, Carpool/vanpool n = 362, Bus n = 583, Train n = 1,317, Bike/walk n = 300)

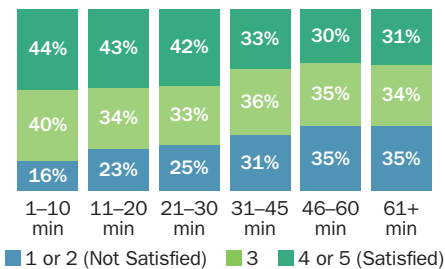


Transportation Satisfaction by Commute Travel Time –

There was a clear pattern between increasing commute travel time and declining transportation satisfaction. Satisfaction fell as the length of the commute increased. Thirty minutes appeared to be a break point for travel time; about four in ten respondents who traveled 30 minutes or less gave a satisfaction rating of 4 or 5, while only about three in ten respondents who traveled longer than 30 minutes were satisfied.

Ratings for Transportation Satisfaction (1 to 5 Scale) By Commute Travel Time (minutes)

(1-10 min n = 328, 11-20 min n = 1,089, 21-30 min n = 1,249, 31-45 min n = 1,795, 46-60 min n = 1,352, More than 60 min n = 1,440)



Transportation Satisfaction by Proximity to Transit –

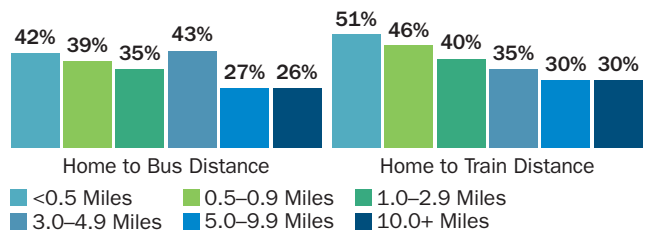
Transportation satisfaction also appeared to relate to a respondent's proximity to bus and train stops. Respondents who lived closer to transit gave higher marks for transportation satisfaction than did respondents who lived farther away.

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 = 2,533, 0.5-0.9 mi n = 571, 1.0-2.9 mi n = 1,187, 3.0-4.9 mi n = 360, 5.0-9.9 mi n = 465, 10.0 mi or more n = 343)

(Train station Distance –
Less than 0.5 mi n = 586, 0.5-0.9 mi n = 613, 1.0-2.9 mi n = 1,480, 3.0-4.9 mi n = 683, 5.0-9.9 mi n = 859, 10.0 mi or more n = 1,389)



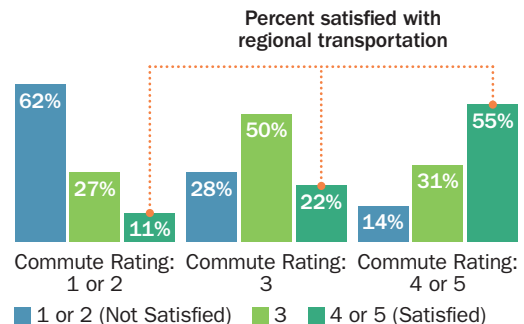
TRANSPORTATION SATISFACTION BY COMMUTE SATISFACTION

About 50% 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, as illustrated in the figure below, respondents' satisfaction with their commute certainly appears related to their satisfaction with transportation in the region.

Satisfaction with Regional Transportation by Commute Satisfaction

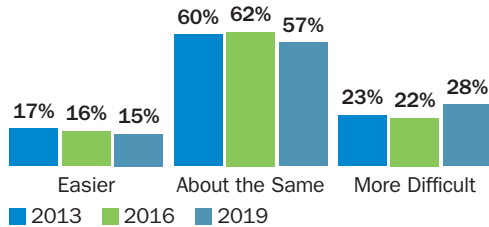
(Commute Rating 1 or 2 n = 2,002, Commute Rating 3 n = 1,846, Commute Rating 4 or 5 n = 3,484)



Ease of Commute

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

Commute Easier, More Difficult, or About the Same as Last Year – 2013 to 2019
(2013 n = 5,717, 2016 n = 5,142, 2019 n = 7,787)

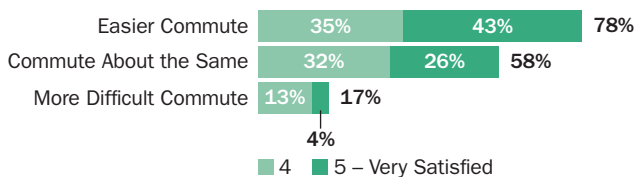


The percentage of respondents who said they had an easier commute in 2019 was very similar to the results from the previous two surveys. But the 28% share of commuters who said they had a more difficult commute in 2019 was notably higher than the 22% of commuters who reported a more difficult commute in 2016. Given the consistency of the easier commute percentage, this suggests that commutes are getting worse overall.

COMMUTE SATISFACTION BY EASE OF COMMUTE COMPARED WITH A YEAR AGO

The decline in commute satisfaction likely was related to commutes becoming more difficult over recent years. Nearly eight in ten (78%) respondents who said they had an easier commute than last year and 58% who said their commute had not changed were satisfied with their commute, compared to only 17% who said their commute had become more difficult.

Satisfaction with Commute by Change in Ease of Commute
Percent Rating Commute a 4 or 5
(Easier commute n = 943, Commute about the same n = 4,367, More difficult commute n = 2,437)



Benefits of Ridesharing

Questions were included in the 2019 SOC survey to assess commuters' opinions about the benefits generated by commuters' use of alternative modes.

SOCIETAL BENEFITS OF ALTERNATIVE MODE USE

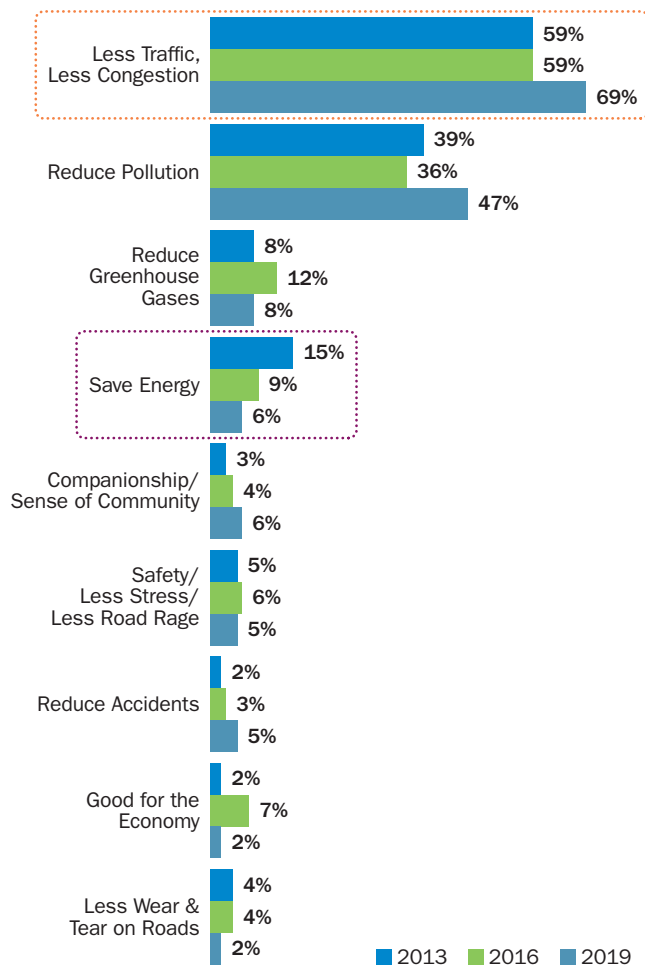
When asked what benefits a **region or community** receives from use of alternative modes, 76% of respondents named at least one benefit, about the same as the 80% of respondents who cited one or more benefits in the 2016 SOC survey. In 2019, nearly seven in ten (69%) respondents said that use of alternative modes could reduce traffic congestion and 47% 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, the same percentage as in 2016. Saving money or receiving a financial incentive that reduced their transportation cost topped the list of personal benefit; 32% of alternative mode users mentioned this benefit.

Regional/Community Benefits of Alternative Mode Use – 2013 to 2019

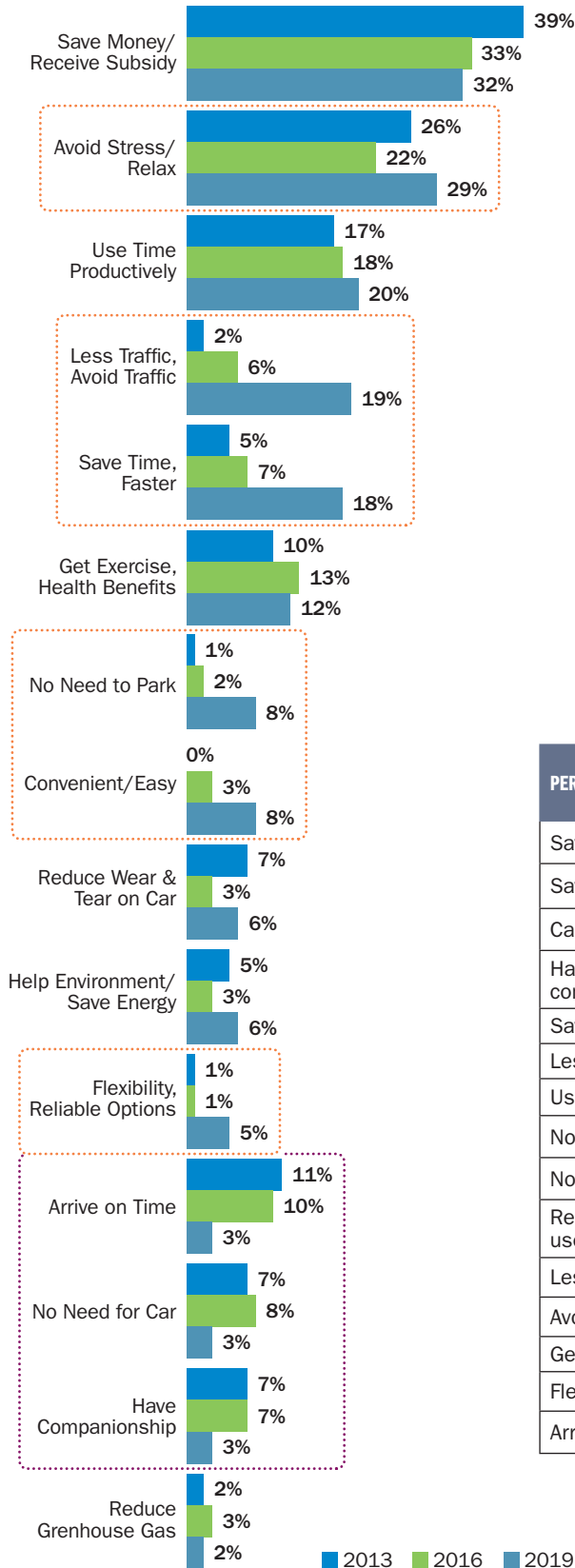
Asked of All Commuters
(2013 n = 5,718, 2016 n = 5,239, 2019 n = 6,445)



Personal Benefits of Alternative Mode Use – 2013 to 2019

Asked Only of Alternative Mode Users
(2013 n = 1,575, 2016 n = 1,555, 2019 n = 2,610)

(Scale extends only to 60% to highlight differences between years)



Differences in Personal Benefits by Alternative Mode –

Saving money was a common personal benefit named by all alternative mode users, but especially by those choosing carpool/vanpool and those riding a bus: nearly four in ten in these groups named saving money. Saving time was another popular choice, but carpoolers/vanpoolers reported it at a very high rate, probably due to their ability to access HOV and/or Express Lanes. Respondents who primarily carpooled/vanpooled additionally reported having companionship during the commute, saving on gas, and less wear and tear of personal vehicles; transit users also mentioned this less wear and tear benefit.

Further, transit riders mentioned several benefits at higher rates than other mode groups. Using travel time productively was significantly reported by transit users but by few carpool/vanpool or walk/bike commuters who would more frequently need to give attention to their travel. Other benefits significantly reported by transit users included: not needing a car, not needing to find parking, receiving a financial benefit, avoiding traffic; relax and avoid stress during the commute. Bicycling or walking commuters also mentioned avoiding stress to the same degree as transit users. Biking/walking commuters overwhelmingly reported the benefit of getting exercise (80%) and a standout mention of the “always available” option for travel flexibility.

Personal Benefits of Alternative Mode Use by Primary Alternative Mode

(Shaded percentages indicate statistically higher values for benefits)

PERSONAL BENEFIT	CARPOOL/ VANPOOL (n = 342)	BUS (n = 534)	TRAIN (n = 1,237)	BIKE/WALK (n = 292)
Save money	39%	35%	21%	23%
Save time, travel faster	38%	9%	15%	20%
Can use HOV lane	7%	0%	0%	0%
Have companionship during commute	9%	4%	1%	2%
Save gas, save energy	10%	5%	2%	1%
Less wear and tear on car	7%	6%	6%	1%
Use travel time productively	6%	17%	27%	3%
No need for a car	1%	3%	3%	1%
No need to park/look for parking	2%	10%	10%	2%
Receive financial benefit for mode use	1%	8%	8%	2%
Less traffic/congestion	8%	13%	26%	6%
Avoid stress, relax	13%	30%	31%	32%
Get exercise	0%	3%	6%	80%
Flexibility/always available	5%	4%	4%	11%
Arrive at work on time	3%	3%	2%	4%

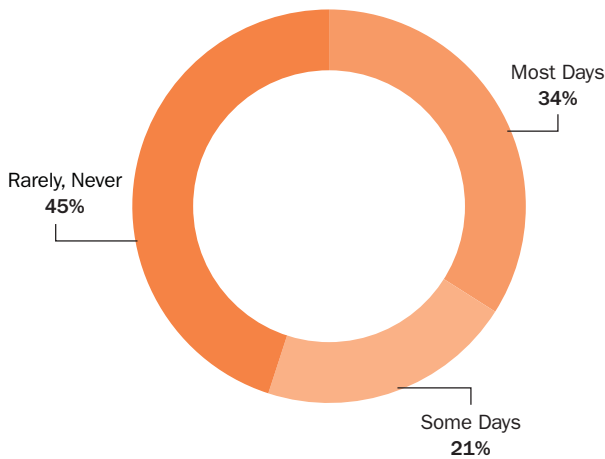


PRODUCTIVE USE OF PERSONAL TRAVEL TIME

The third 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**. Having time to catch up on work tasks could make their time at the worksite more productive and less stressful. More than half of these commuters performed work-related tasks during the commute; 34% performed work-related tasks “most days” and 21% performed work-related tasks “some days”.

Frequency of Work-Related Tasks During Commute Time

Asked Only of Alternative Mode Users
(n = 2,483)

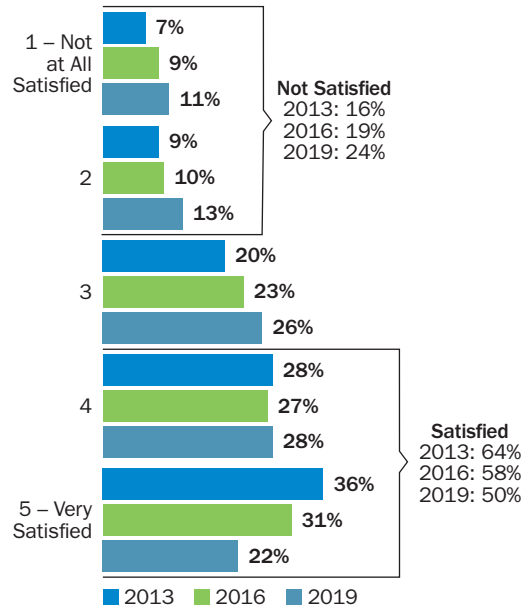


Commute Satisfaction

The 2019 survey included a question that had been asked in several previous SOC surveys: how satisfied commuters were with their trip to work. In 2019, 50% rated their commute satisfaction as a “4” or “5” on a 5-point scale, where “5” meant “very satisfied”. One-quarter (26%) gave a rating of 3 and one-quarter rated their satisfaction as either a “1 – not at all satisfied” (11%) or 2 (13%). Commute satisfaction has declined since 2013, when nearly two-thirds (64%) of SOC respondents said they were satisfied with their commute.

Satisfaction with Commute – 2013 to 2019

(2013 n = 5,692, 2016 n = 5,217, 2019 n = 7,911)

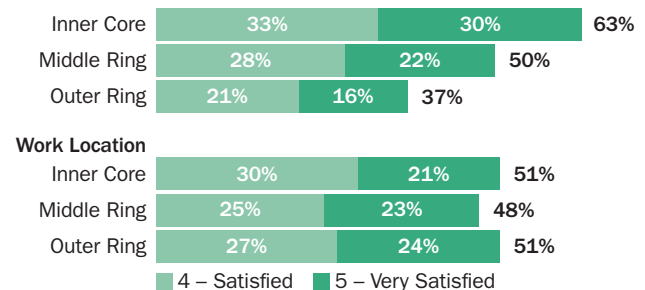


COMMUTE SATISFACTION BY HOME AND WORK LOCATION

Respondents who lived in the Inner Core were notably more satisfied with their commute than were respondents who lived farther out in the region.

Satisfaction with Commute by Home and Work Area

Percent Rating Commute a 4 or 5
(Home Area – Inner Core n = 2,160, Middle Ring n = 2,360, Outer Ring n = 3,391) (Work Area – Inner Core n = 3,785, Middle Ring n = 2,760, Outer Ring n = 1,308)



COMMUTE SATISFACTION BY COMMUTE MODE

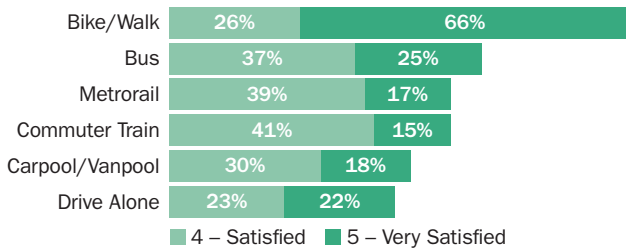
Commuter satisfaction appeared much more related to commute mode than to demographics. More than nine in ten (92%) commuters who walked or biked to work reported high commute satisfaction.

Satisfaction with Commute by Primary Commute Mode

Percent Rating Commute a 4 or 5

(Bike/walk n = 302, Bus n = 588, Metrorail n = 1,177,

Commuter train n = 144, Carpool/Vanpool n = 378, Drive alone n = 5,042)



Satisfaction by Mode from 2013 to 2019 – Commuter satisfaction has been stable for bike/walk commuters and bus riders since 2013, but has varied substantially for other mode users.

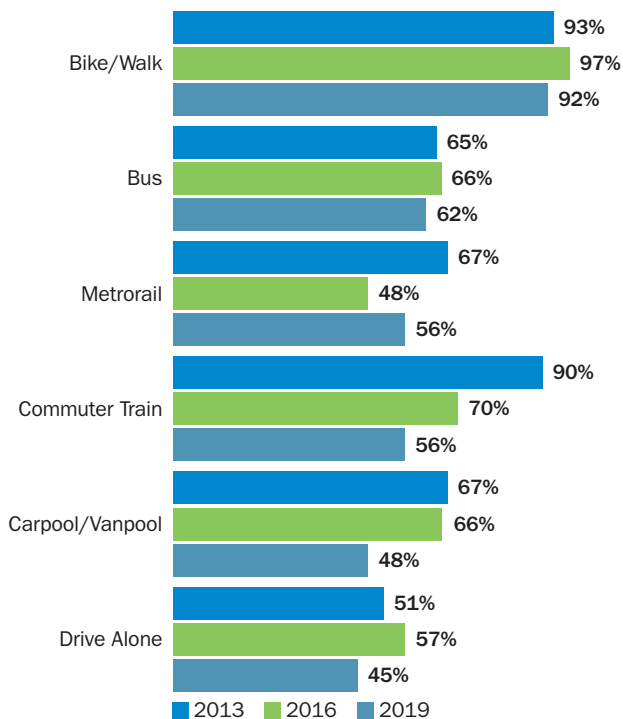
Satisfaction with Commute by Primary Commute Mode – 2013 to 2019

Percent Rating Commute Satisfaction as 4 or 5

(2013: Bike/walk n=150, Bus n=298, Metrorail n=615, Commuter train n=64, Carpool/Vanpool n=363, Drive alone n=4,080)

(2016: Bike/walk n=180, Bus n=284, Metrorail n=634, Commuter train n=62, Carpool/Vanpool n=283, Drive alone n=3,552)

(2019: Bike/walk n=302, Bus n=588, Metrorail n=1,177, Commuter train n=144, Carpool/Vanpool n=378, Drive alone n=5,042)



Note the opposing time changes here, depending on Express Lane user: ridesharers might experience time *increases* due to the higher traffic volume compared to strict HOV lanes, while drive alone (car, light truck and motorcycle) experience time savings by gaining access to the Express Lane service.

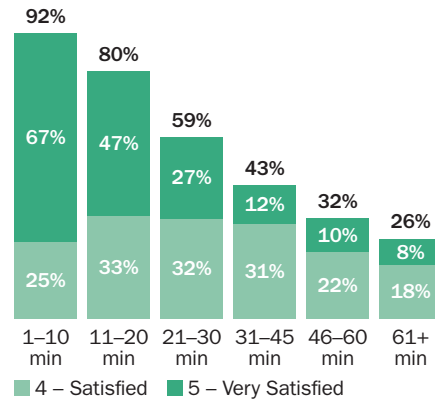
COMMUTE SATISFACTION BY TRAVEL TIME

Commuter satisfaction declined steadily and significantly as the amount of time a commuter traveled increased.

Satisfaction with Commute by Length of Commute (minutes)

Percent Rating Commute a 4 or 5

(1-10 min n = 371, 11-20 min n = 1,194, 21-30 min n = 1,340, 31-45 min n = 1,905, 46-60 min n = 1,453, 61+ min n = 1,537)





National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET NE, SUITE 300
WASHINGTON, DC 20002 – 4290
WWW.MWCOG.ORG