

# Expedia Group Case Study

How a phased commute program led to longstanding behavior change



**N** NELSON  
NYGAARD

**e** expedia  
group

**luum**  
by HealthEquity



**The Expedia Group story shows how flexibility and variety of commute options are key to achieving lasting commute program success.**

## PREFACE

The global pandemic has fundamentally changed employee commute patterns and the ways in which organizations do work. Work from home policies that sat undefined in the wings for decades have been forced centerstage practically overnight. While this is a time of uncertainty for organizations large and small, it is also an ideal time to plan for the future.

The policies discussed in this case study are widely applicable to organizations as they navigate returning to work and weigh the policy decisions that influence work culture, infrastructure challenges, and institutional goals like employee experience, equity, climate, and financial sustainability.

## PROJECT PARTNERS



**Expedia Group** builds great products and facilitates connections between travelers and our partners that truly bring good into the world.

Learn more at [ExpediaGroup.com](https://ExpediaGroup.com)



**Nelson\Nygaard** is a multimodal transportation planning firm committed to developing transportation systems that promote vibrant, sustainable, and accessible communities. They help corporate clients build robust and lasting commute programs that offer flexible transportation options to reduce drive-alone rates; help meet organizational challenges; and contribute to community goals related to mobility, equity, economic development, and healthy living.

Learn more at [NelsonNygaard.com](https://NelsonNygaard.com)



**Luum** is a commute management platform that streamlines benefits administration, parking management, and employee engagement. Luum was founded in Seattle, WA, and partners with large employers across the country to offer robust and flexible commuter benefits.

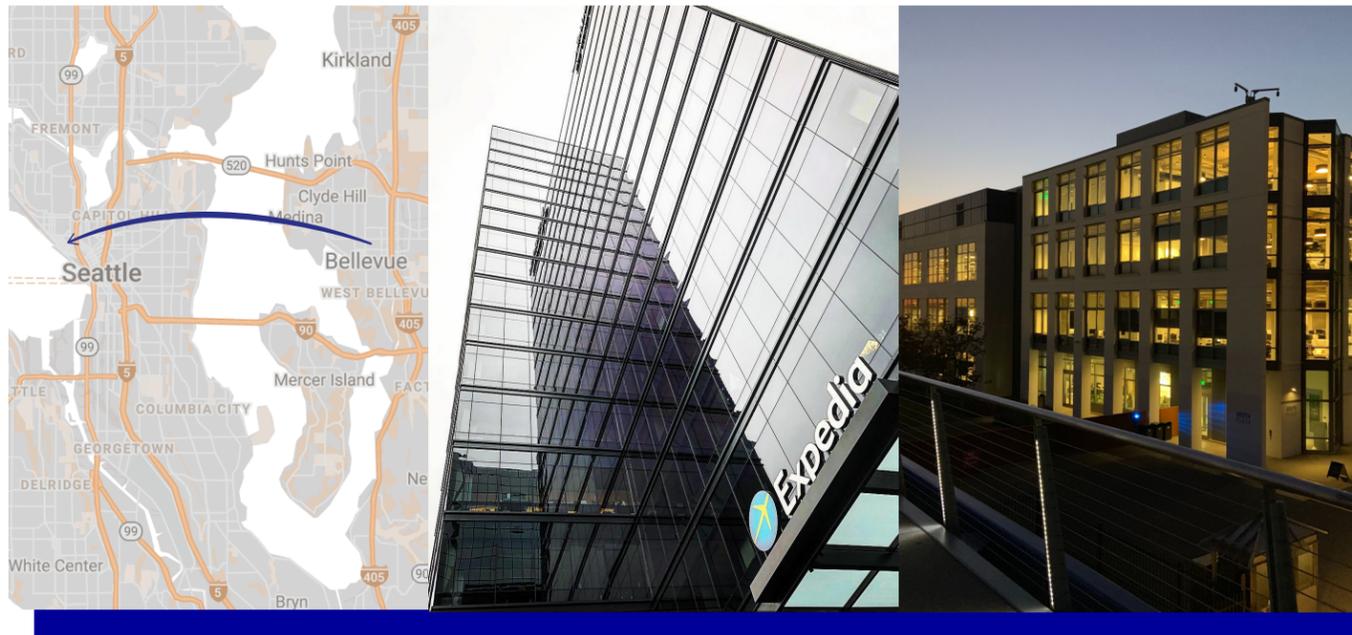
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# Setting the stage

Relocation is more than *just* a move.

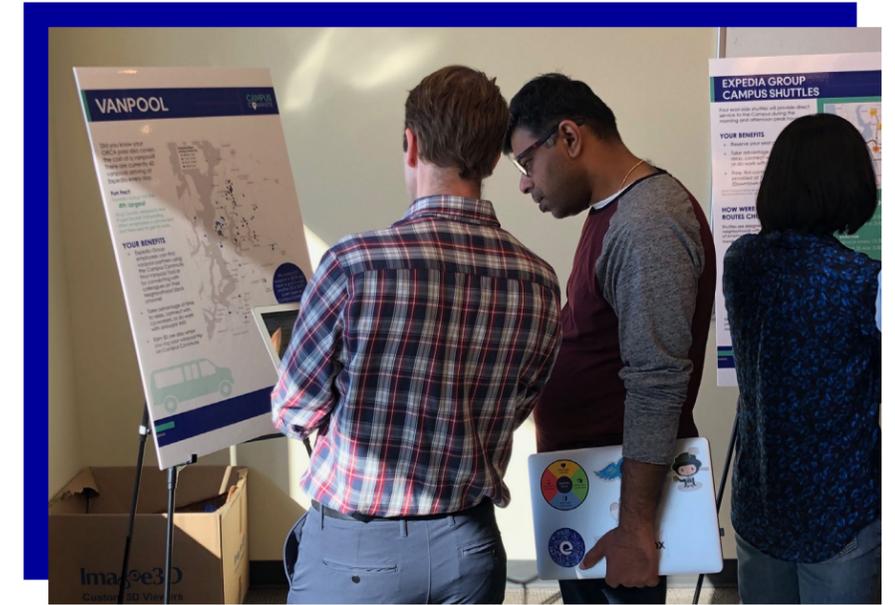
In 2014 Expedia Group (EG) announced plans to relocate its headquarters from Bellevue, WA, to Seattle's Interbay neighborhood in 2019. The relocation 10 miles west would be a considerable change for EG employees, a majority of whom had set their roots in and around Bellevue since EG arrived there in 1996. The Bellevue headquarters was located adjacent to a regional transit hub, major freeways, and a walkable downtown, allowing easy access for employees throughout the region. By comparison, the new Seattle campus is set on the shores of Elliott Bay, three miles northwest of major transit hubs in downtown Seattle.

The move to Seattle demanded a new focus on “the commute.” Many employees would no longer have direct transit access, and drivers would face the added hurdle of battling Seattle's rush hour. In addition, EG's Transportation Management Program, required by the City of Seattle, set aggressive goals to limit the number of employees driving alone. Ensuring a good employee experience and meeting the City's requirements put commute top of mind for EG leadership.



The 10-mile move across the Puget Sound would be significant for EG employees since more than two-thirds live outside of Seattle.

The move to  
Seattle demanded  
a new focus on  
“the commute.”



Commute program staff held frequent employee engagement events.

## A solid foundation

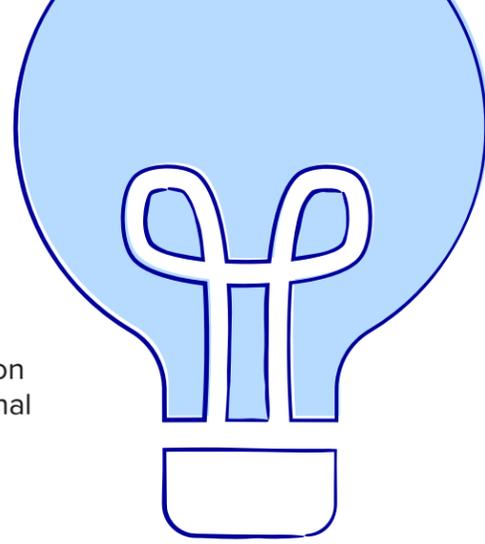
The EG Campus Commute program was four years in the making leading up to the 2019 relocation. A robust employee education and outreach strategy, a program that championed flexibility, and a phased approach to policy implementation were key to success.

- ▶ **High-touch employee engagement** – Nelson\Nygaard was hired to advise on multimodal campus design and launch an embedded Campus Commute team tasked with building an employee culture around smart commuting. In the years prior to the relocation, the Campus Commute team provided a high-touch employee engagement strategy.
- ▶ **Flexible commute options** – Commute policies were redesigned to maximize employee choice. EG provided employees with fully subsidized transit passes as well as access to on-site parking.
- ▶ **Phased parking rate increases** – Incremental parking rate increases in Bellevue prepared employees for the pricier market-rate parking required at the Seattle campus.
- ▶ **Transition to daily parking** – Monthly parking permits can encourage employees to drive because they want to get the “most” from their parking investment. EG shifted from monthly parking permits to parking charges only for days used—an essential component of the flexible commute program.
- ▶ **Luum implementation** – Luum was brought on as EG's commute management software to capture more comprehensive commute data, streamline program administration, and bring flexible commute policies, such as daily parking, to life.
- ▶ **Cross departmental collaboration** – The commute program changes implemented at EG were developed through close collaboration with the Real Estate, Human Resources, Facilities, Finance, and Communications teams.

# The commute program philosophy

A robust commute program is foundational to employee satisfaction and retention. Commuting can often be a contentious and emotional topic. Taking the time to engage in conversations about getting to work builds trusted relationships with employees during a time of significant organizational change. EG's commute program was designed to:

- ▶ Promote commute options that are flexible and encourage employees to travel based on their daily needs
- ▶ Use data to inform program design
- ▶ Prioritize cost effectiveness



**“Expedia Group’s commitment and thoughtfulness to reducing driving—now and for the future—is a model for all large Seattle employers.”**

—Olivia Holden, Senior Program Manager at Commute Seattle

## SEATTLE CAMPUS GOALS

- 1 Meet City of Seattle requirements** – Expedia Group’s Transportation Management Program (TMP) requires EG to meet a drive-alone mode split of 49% in the first year. The drive-alone requirement decreases by 2% every two years until 2031.
- 2 Be a good neighbor** – By moving into a new community—one with unique congestion concerns—EG wanted to mitigate the negative impacts associated with the move and improve the public waterfront trail adjacent to campus.
- 3 Provide a seamless transition for employees** – EG’s relocation called for a restructuring of commute services that would complement the shifting travel needs of employees. The Campus Commute program was design, to support the unique contexts across the region and ensure employees felt confident and comfortable with their options.

# A high-touch education and awareness program

Three Nelson\Nygaard staff are embedded at Expedia Group to manage the Campus Commute program and provide ongoing engagement and personalized commute solutions for employees.

- 1 Personalized commute plans** – Step-by-step personalized commute plans are available to employees.
- 2 Commute brand & website** – Branded materials help improve program awareness and understanding. The internal website is powered by Luum and is the go-to for all things commute.
- 3 Neighborhood resources** – Neighborhood materials highlight the 3-5 best commute options, illustrated with travel time and cost tradeoffs. Neighborhood Slack channels are also available for employees to connect, learn about commute options, and find rideshare opportunities.
- 4 Transportation fairs** – Transportation fairs with transit agencies, mobility vendors, and local nonprofits are offered regularly to give employees direct access to the subject matter experts.
- 5 New employee onboarding** – All new employees are provided with Campus Commute program materials prior to their first day at EG. On day one, new hires attend a commute resources presentation to help establish non-drive-alone habits early.
- 6 Drop-in sessions** – Drop-in sessions allow employees to stop by to ask commute-related questions in an informal setting. This casual format allows employees to engage at their convenience and interact with the commute team frequently.



**How to form or join a vanpool**

**Kirkland Shuttle**

**CAMPUS COMMUTE** New Employee Resources

We want to ensure that you have a flexible and convenient commute to work at Expedia Group's Seattle campus. Below, you can read an overview of Expedia Group's commute programs. Read the full details on the [Campus Commute](#) site.

- ▶ All Expedia employees are eligible for a free ORCA pass.
- ▶ Visit Expedia Group's on-site Commute Coordinators for personalized commute guidance, or contact them at [campuscommute@expediagroup.com](mailto:campuscommute@expediagroup.com) for commute planning assistance. We'll even help you [get to work](#) on your first day!
- ▶ Join the [#SeattleCampusCommute](#) Slack channel, and connect with your neighbors on the more than [35 local neighborhood channels](#).
- ▶ New hires are eligible for free parking on their first day. Park on-campus and visit Expedia Group's reception to receive validation.

**Commute Options**

COMMUTE PROGRAM	DETAILS	COST TO EMPLOYEE
ORCA Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free to all Expeditors</li> <li>Covers all transit fares on: Metro, Sound, Everett, Pierce, Community, and Klappan Transit systems</li> <li>Select transit agency vanpool and vanshare fees covered by annual ORCA Pass</li> </ul>	FREE

**Drop-off Policies**

Expeditors must register their vehicle(s) that will park at the K-and-rides, and weekend parking.

Expeditors will not be responsible for stolen items on the vehicle.

**Drop-off Locations**

Enter from 132nd Ave NE

**Churchhome 125 Stalls**

9551 132nd Ave NE, Kirkland, WA

Travel time to campus: Estimated 40-50 minutes. Expeditors must park in stalls marked with a white dot at stall entrance.

**Vanpooling is a great option for just about anyone—especially those employees who don't have an easy transit ride or access to an Expedia Group Voyager shuttle.**

**Find an existing vanpool**

▶ [Campus Commute](#) and click on a tab: "vanpool."

▶ Search criteria including your location, and morning and afternoon times.

▶ "to" to receive results.

▶ "van" click details to learn more about route and pickup / dropoff.

▶ "van" that matches your needs? "Yoursell" to the Vanpool Interest List" and anytime a new van starts.

Branded outreach materials provide clear information about all things commute.

# Commute program philosophy in action

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It's all in the details.

Expedia Group's Campus Commute program expands opportunities for employees to rethink how they travel to work. These programs were instrumental in achieving a flexible and effective commute program.

## Park when you need to



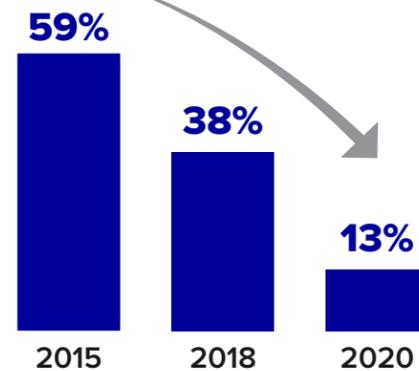
The changes to the parking program laid the foundation for Expedia Group's flexible commute program.

- ▶ **Increasing parking rates** – The cost of monthly permits gradually increased to prepare employees for the reality of higher parking rates in Seattle and nudge them toward trying other modes.
- ▶ **Move to daily parking** – In 2018, EG began shifting some of their Bellevue parking lots from monthly to daily parking. This transition relieved employees of the implied commitment to driving alone every day with a new, flexible approach to parking.
- ▶ **Market rate daily parking** – Employees who drive alone are charged market-rate parking at the Seattle campus. This shift incentivizes employees to try other modes, and the parking revenue funds other transportation programs. Market rate pricing is in line with City of Seattle



### TRACKING PARKING IN LUUM

The Commute Calendar enables employees to manage their daily parking visits, log carpool trips, and visualize their parking costs. Luum also simplifies the administration by handling vehicle registration, lot terms and conditions, and garage access devices.



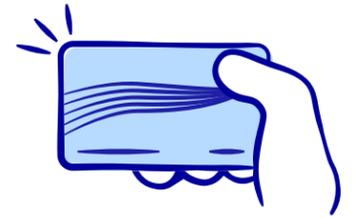
**59% of employees drove alone to work in 2015, 38% by 2019, dropping to 13% in pre-COVID 2020.**

## Take transit



Expedia Group has maintained a high transit mode share by removing barriers to transit access and expanding employee resources.

- ▶ **Fully subsidized ORCA passes** – Starting in 2015, access to a fully subsidized transit pass was opened up for all employees. By 2019 every new employee was given a transit pass on their first day of work, encouraging employees to commute via transit.
- ▶ **First/last mile** – To make transit more viable, EG launched a series of circulator shuttles and a rideshare program to connect employees from major Seattle transit hubs to campus.
- ▶ **Additional transit stops** – In partnership with King County Metro, EG facilitated the addition of stops for three existing bus lines outside of the Seattle campus, providing easier transit access to employees living in neighborhoods along those routes.
- ▶ **Transit resources** – Transit apps, an interactive map of nearby transit stops, and more are available on the internal Campus Commute website.



**26%**  
of employees took transit to work in pre-COVID 2020, up from 22% in 2015 when Expedia began fully subsidizing transit passes.



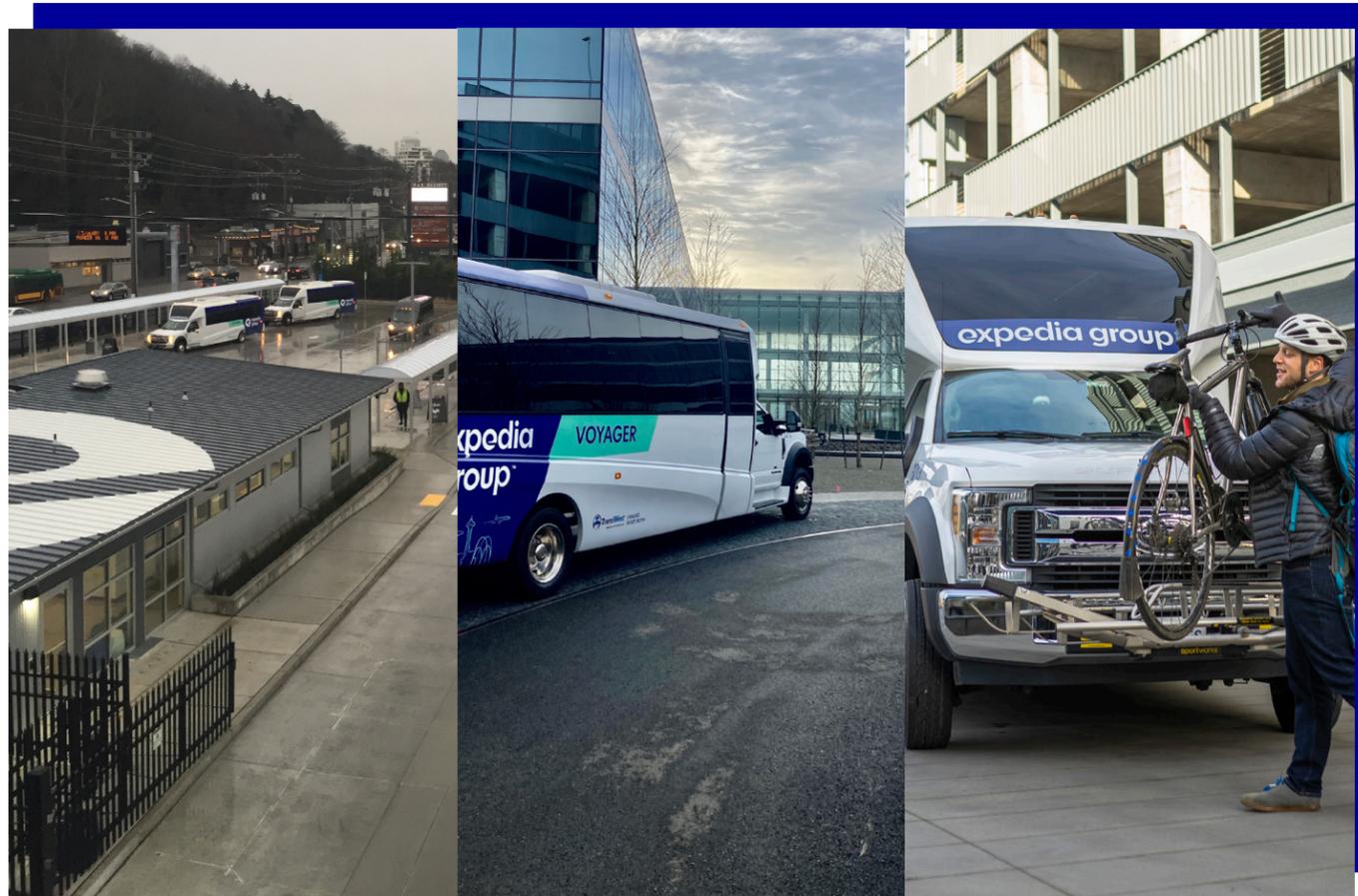
Employees participating in a challenge took selfies on their transit commute into work.

## Hop on a shuttle

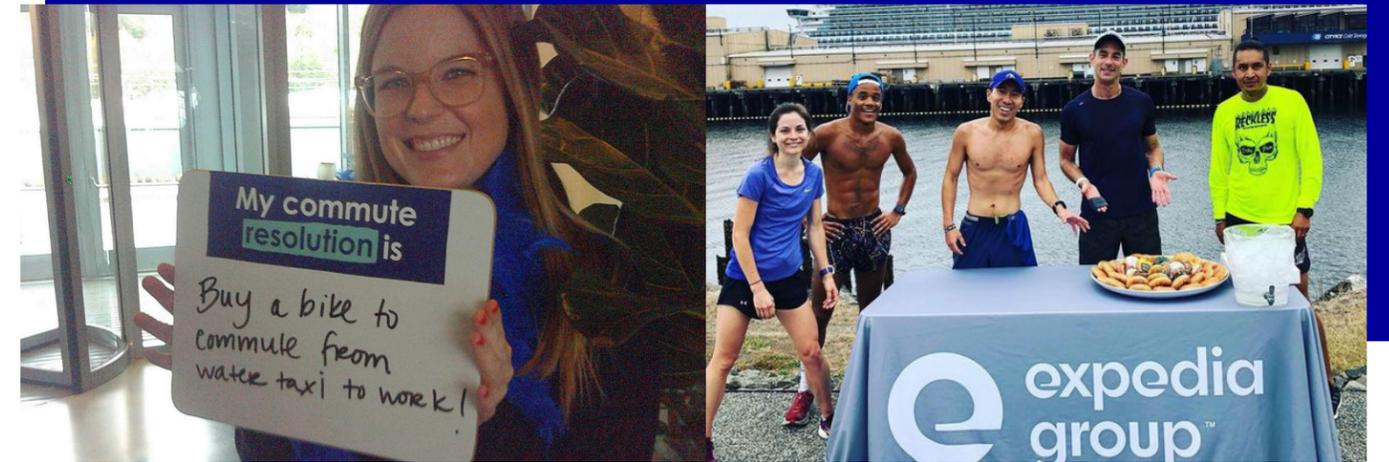
The commuter shuttle program launched in 2019 when Expedia Group relocated to the Seattle campus. Shuttle routes are designed to serve employees who do not have good access to transit.

- ▶ **EG Voyager shuttle** – Commuter shuttles connect employees from six suburban neighborhoods directly to campus. The program provides a comfortable, frequent commute option with on-board Wi-Fi.
- ▶ **Circulator shuttle** – An all-day circulator shuttle between downtown Seattle and campus enables many employees to take advantage of express buses and commuter rail from around the region.
- ▶ **Shuttle Hub** – The Shuttle Hub acts as a designated pickup and dropoff area adjacent to the Seattle campus. The Hub provides a safe outdoor and indoor waiting area for employees with Wi-Fi, restrooms, and a break room for shuttle drivers.

**25%**  
of employees  
got to work  
by shuttle in  
pre-COVID 2020.



The EG Voyager shuttles are fitted with bike racks (right) to enable multimodal commutes to the new campus and Shuttle Hub (left).



Employees set commute resolutions to bike (left) and run at the Elliott Bay Trail opening (right).

## Bike and walk

The Campus Commute team built a culture of bike commuting through events, on-site bike maintenance, and rewards.

- ▶ **Bike loan program** – In 2017, Expedia Group acquired a fleet of custom-branded bikes to support a day-use bike loan program. This program later expanded into a long-term bike loan program, where employees could sign up to borrow a standard bike or e-bike for a two-month period.
- ▶ **Campus facilities** – EG's Seattle campus has a well-equipped bike storage room, including more than 400 racks, accessible power outlets for e-bike charging, a tool stand, bike washer, and day-use lockers. Employees also have access to commuter locker rooms with showers and racks for drying clothes and gear.
- ▶ **Elliott Bay waterfront trail** – EG made significant investments to the public Elliott Bay waterfront trail in front of campus, creating separate paths for people walking and biking, improving the sidewalks, and enhancing overall safety. This trail provides an important link for the region's bicyclists traveling between downtown and points north.

**The share of employees who walked or biked to work nearly doubled—from 4% in 2015 to 7% during pre-COVID 2020.**

- ▶ **Bike tune-up services** – Beginning in 2018, EG contracted a bike maintenance service to provide on-site bike tune-ups free of charge to employees.
- ▶ **Bike campaigns** – The Campus Commute team celebrates the bike community with events and rewards. Bike-to-Work Month paired with workshops, classes, and year-long competitions have shaped a culture of biking to work at EG.

## Share a ride

Carpooling and vanpooling are attractive options for employees who want to save on parking costs and maintain the schedule flexibility that a car provides.

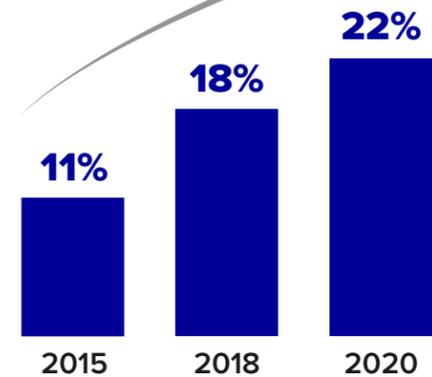
- ▶ **Free rideshare parking** – EG offers free parking for registered vanpools and carpools.
- ▶ **Fully subsidized vans** – In 2016, EG started fully subsidizing vanpool fares through the ORCA transit program. Vans are an incredibly popular option for people who aren't well served by transit or shuttle options.
- ▶ **Vanpool outreach** – Vanpool breakfast socials, matching events, competitions, and clear registration instructions have resulted in growing excitement among employees about vanpool.
- ▶ **Rideshare matching** – The Luum platform allows employees to find coworkers they can ride with to work. Neighborhood Slack channels also provide venues for employees to find dynamic rideshare opportunities.
- ▶ **Wi-Fi hotspots** – Wi-Fi hotspots are provided on each van so passengers are able to work or stay connected while commuting.

### EXPEDIA VANPOOL PROGRAM: 3RD LARGEST IN THE PUGET SOUND

Expedia Group's vanpool enrollment nearly doubled from 60 to 115 vans between 2018 and 2019 and is now the third largest vanpool program in the Puget Sound.



An Expedia Group vanpool travels 80 miles every day (above).



**22% of employees vanpooled or carpooled to work in pre-COVID 2020—double the share in 2015.**

## Get rewarded

A robust rewards program provides incentives for employees not to drive. A daily commute cash incentive paired with the daily parking rate helps monetize the daily decision to drive or not to drive.

- ▶ **Commute challenges** – Luum tracks employee commute trips and hosts reward challenges and giveaways. Rewards are set up by mode and in support of broader promotions (Bike-to-Work Month, transportation fairs, New Year's resolutions, etc.).
- ▶ **Commute cash** – The commute bonus program launched when the Seattle campus opened, rewarding employees who walk, bike, vanpool, or take transit to work with \$5 per day automatically applied to their paycheck.
- ▶ **Guaranteed ride home** – Employees who don't drive alone to work may need to leave the office, either unexpectedly or later than planned. Luum enables Expedia Group to offer employees access to no-cost Lyft rides if they need to get home unexpectedly.

**93% of employees report their commute trips in Luum and participate in the commute program.**

# 70%

Over 70% of employees have earned commute cash since the program launched in 2019.

# 100

EG held more than 100 commute challenges during 2019, with greater than 45% of all employees participating.

# \$55

On average, employees earned \$55 each month in commute cash.



Campus Commute team hosts a Bike-To-Work Month table along the Elliott Bay Trail.

# Tracking the benefits

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We're on the right track.

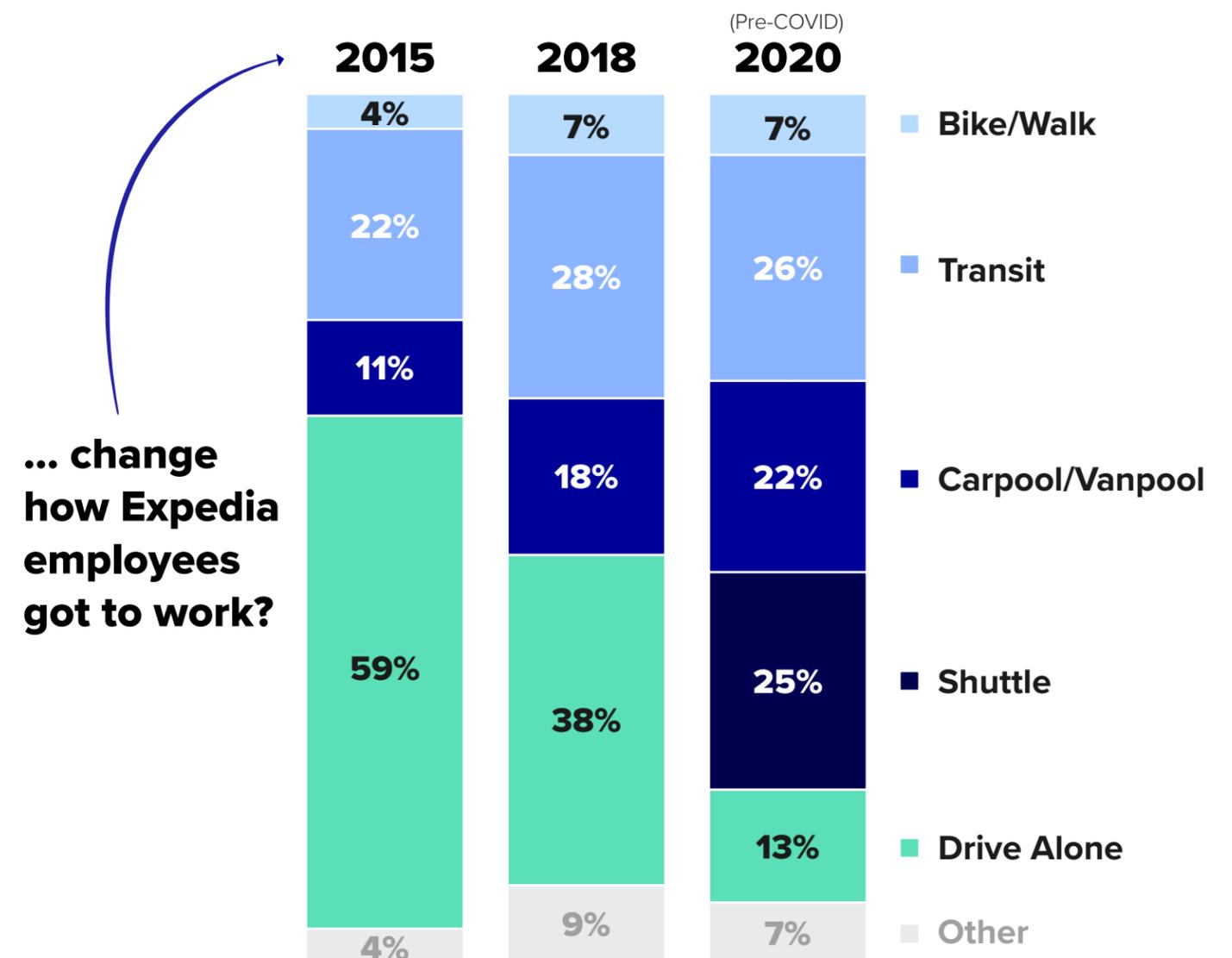
The commute program success was achieved thanks to leadership buy-in, long-term policy planning, strategically targeted communications, and a company-wide initiative to improve the employee commute experience. Tracking this approach over five years shows the benefits and value of a robust commute program.

## How did our commute program actions ...



“Through partnership with Nelson\Nygaard and the Luum software, we’ve taken a holistic approach to commute program implementation. We’ve seen meaningful return on investment, including fiscal stewardship and increased employee satisfaction. We look forward to the continued evolution of the commute program.”

—Josh Khanna, Expedia Group Director, Global Real Estate



# Return on investment

Expedia Group’s Campus Commute program provides many benefits to the organization’s bottom line, employee experience, and the larger community. The return on investment for EG includes happier employees with increased productivity, lower turnover, better recruitment tools, and lower parking infrastructure costs.



**lbs of CO2 avoided**  
by Expedia employees choosing sustainable transportation modes during January and February (January: 558,071; February: 512,610)

## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Expedia Group has reduced its drive-alone rate significantly over the years. In the first two months of 2020, EG employees’ sustainable commute behaviors avoided over one million pounds of CO2 emissions. The massive reduction in cars on the road also has positive impacts on congestion and air quality—improving the overall livability of the Seattle area for all residents.

## ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCIES

Luum’s transit pass and parking management systems have transformed Expedia Group’s ability to monitor commute benefits. The integration of commute programs saves the Campus Commute team hours of administrative work that it would take to organize manually. The data output from Luum also provides critical information to inform program priorities and provide reports to EG leadership and employees.

**“The Luum admin portal enables efficient record keeping of employee commute assets in a centralized location. Luum does the leg work of organizing transit passes, parking management, vanpool groups, and more, giving our team greater bandwidth to have meaningful interactions with individual employees.”**

—Melanie Truhn, Expedia Group Commute Program Manager

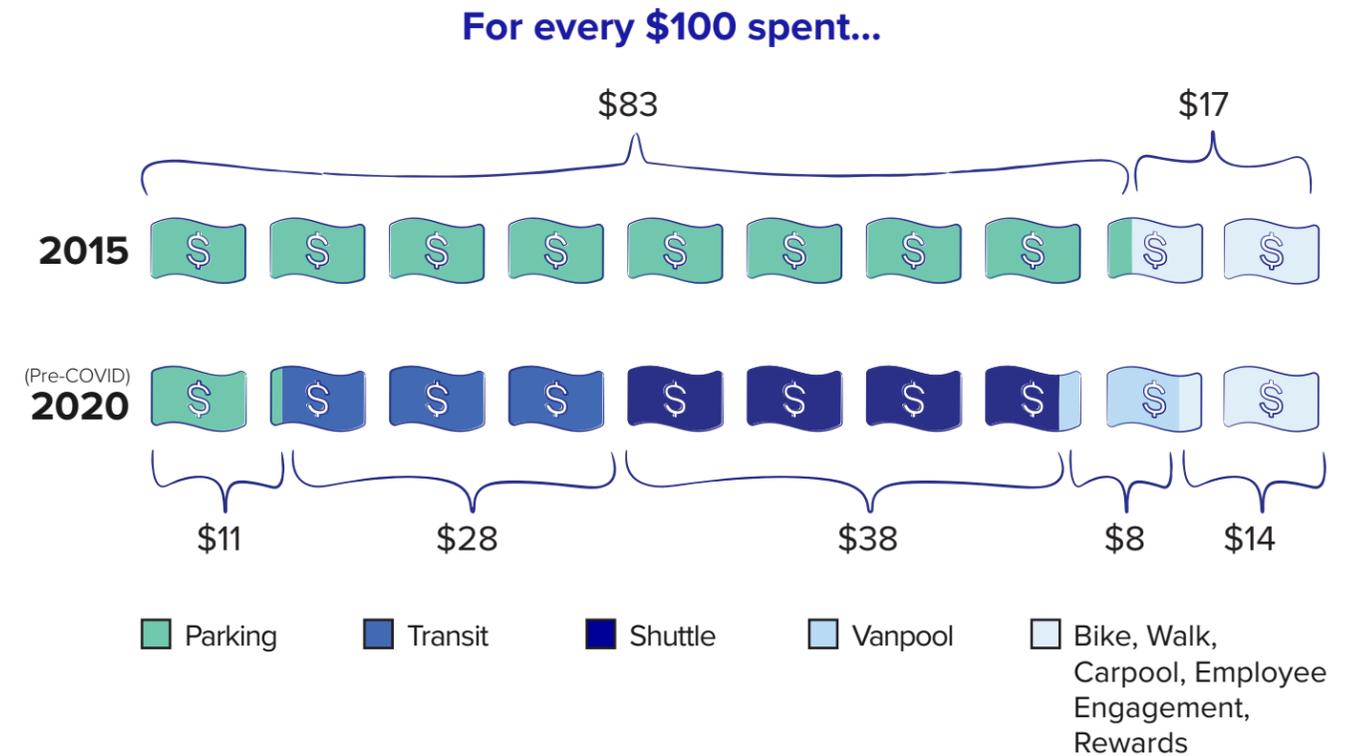
## EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Since 2016, Campus Commute program satisfaction has increased among employees, translating to higher retention rates, increased productivity, and reduced stress levels. The depth of the Campus Commute team programming and engagement gives employees the ability to consult directly with experts, get fast and detailed information, and focus on their jobs rather than solving their commute challenges.



## FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

In 2015, EG subsidized employees’ driving trips. Over the years, the commute program budget has been redirected to invest in the programs that meet EG’s goals. EG saves big by investing in transit, shuttles, and other commute options. These investments are a savings to EG compared to the cost to build more parking.



# Looking ahead

The transition to the new Expedia Group campus wrapped up in 2020, but the work continues for the Nelson\Nygaard team. When employees return to campus after a prolonged work-from-home period due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, an emphasis will be placed on reestablishing connections with employees and articulating the safest, most convenient commute options. Using Luum's data-driven tools to understand how employees are reengaging with their commute enables effective outreach and decision-making by the Nelson\Nygaard team and EG leadership.

- ▶ **Understand employee sentiments** – How have employees' relationships with their commutes evolved, and what are their top considerations in thinking about a return to the office? Employee surveying and outreach will be used to learn how employees want to be supported.
- ▶ **Coordinate internally** – Collaborate across the Expedia Group organization to align commute strategy with teams that are orchestrating the company transition into life after COVID-19.
- ▶ **Plan for the unknown** – Develop scenarios to understand the implications of different on-site rates, mode splits, and subsequent program costs.
- ▶ **Embrace change** – Use the opportunity of a clean slate to restructure commute program offerings to further support employee lifestyles and influence flexible commute habits.

## Transform your commute with us



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