



Transit Use for Work Trips in the Municipal Systems

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The 2001 Census included a question on how Canadians usually travelled to work. This question was also asked in the 1996 Census. Because it is standardized across Canada, the Census provides a good opportunity to compare the Municipal Systems with each other and with similar communities in other provinces. It is now also possible to begin looking at trends over time by comparing the 1996 and 2001 data. It is important to remember that this data represents work trips only, and does not include other markets such as school or shopping trips.

Transit work trips in Canada and the U.S. are concentrated in large urban centres

Overall in Canada, there were 1.4 million daily transit work trips in 2001, representing 10.5% of all commuters. However, transit use tends to be much more prevalent in larger urban areas, which typically have much higher population and employment densities that support higher transit service levels, and where there are more disincentives to driving, such as congestion and high parking costs. Thus metropolitan areas with populations over 150,000, which make up 62% of Canada's population, accounted for over 95% of all transit work trips. While transit was used for 15.2% of work trips within these metropolitan areas, only 1.4% of work trips in non-metropolitan areas were by transit.

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In the United States, according to the 2000 Census, only 4.9% of work trips were by transit. As in Canada, transit trips were concentrated in larger urban areas: 6.1% of work trips were by transit in metropolitan areas with populations over 150,000, while only 0.6% of work trips in non-metropolitan areas were by transit. Table 1 summarizes these differences.

Table 1: Transit Mode Split

% of work trips by transit	Canada (2001)	U.S. (2000)
Overall	10.5%	4.9%
Metropolitan (>150,000 pop.)	15.2%	6.1%
Non-metropolitan (<150,000 pop.)	1.4%	0.6%

Transit work trips in the Municipal Systems are concentrated in Tier 1 Communities

In British Columbia, transit accounted for 1.6% of all work trips outside of the Vancouver and Victoria metropolitan areas. While this mode split is small, it is slightly above the Canadian national average for non-metropolitan areas of 1.4%, and well above the U.S. non-metropolitan average of 0.6%. As shown in Table 2, the transit mode split was even higher among the six Tier 1 communities (those with service area populations between 50 and 150 thousand), averaging 2.5%.

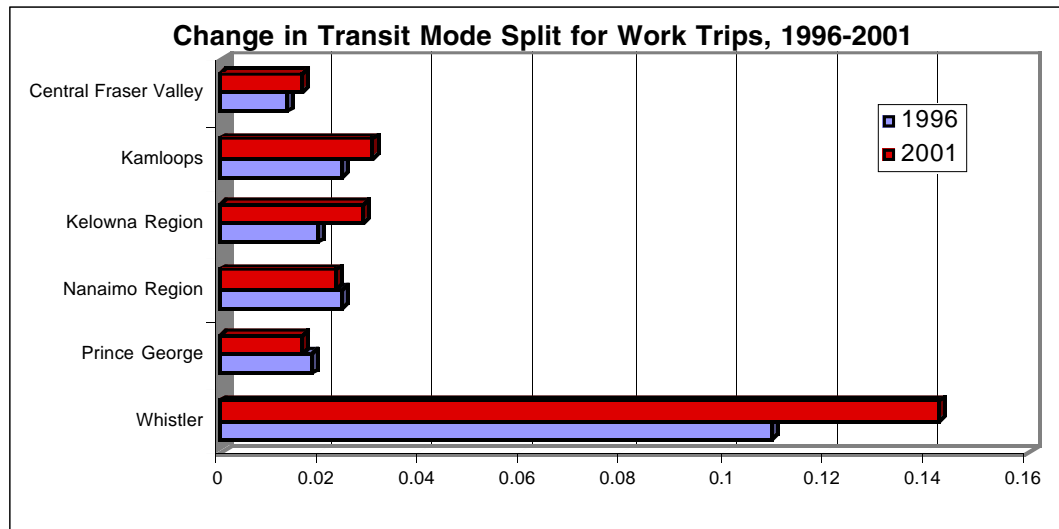
Table 2: Percent Mode Split for Work Trips, 2001

	Auto driver	Passenger	Transit	Walk	Cycle	Other
Central Fraser Valley	84.4%	8.7%	1.6%	3.6%	0.9%	0.8%
Kamloops	82.2%	7.0%	3.0%	5.5%	1.3%	1.1%
Kelowna Region	83.3%	5.9%	2.8%	4.5%	2.1%	1.4%
Nanaimo Region	81.7%	6.4%	2.3%	6.3%	1.9%	1.5%
Prince George	83.0%	7.9%	1.6%	4.9%	1.2%	1.5%
Whistler	61.3%	5.2%	14.2%	12.4%	4.6%	2.4%
Tier 1 Total	82.5%	7.2%	2.5%	5.0%	1.5%	1.3%
Non-metropolitan B.C.	80.4%	7.6%	1.6%	7.2%	1.7%	1.6%
Non-metropolitan Canada	80.3%	7.5%	1.4%	8.2%	1.1%	1.6%
Non-metropolitan U.S.	83.1%	8.0%	0.6%	0.3%	3.3%	4.7%

As the table shows, the car still dominates work trip travel in the Tier 1 communities: with the exception of Whistler, between 80 and 85% of work trips were made by automobile drivers, similar to the percentages in non-metropolitan regions of Canada and the U.S. The next most common modes in the Tier 1 communities were automobile passenger (7.2%) and walking (5.0%).

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Whistler had by far the highest transit mode split among the Municipal Systems, and one of the highest in Canada, at 14.2%. This was also a significant improvement from 10.9% in 1996. Kamloops (3.0%) and the Kelowna Region (2.8%) also had relatively high transit mode splits, and in both cases the transit share was up significantly from 1996. The chart below illustrates some of these changes.

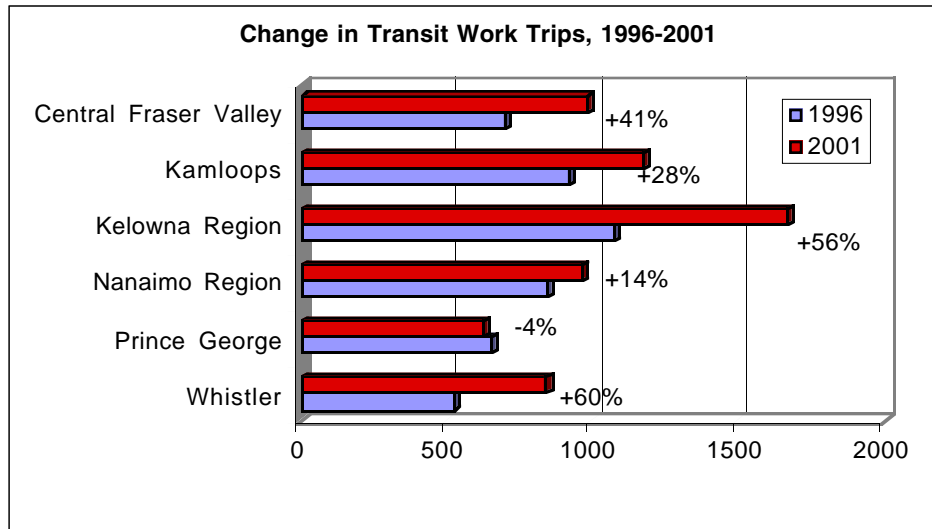


In absolute numbers, there were about 10,500 daily work trips by transit in B.C. outside of the Vancouver and Victoria metropolitan areas, with the Tier 1 communities accounting for 60% of these. Table 3 compares mode of transportation to work for the Tier 1 communities.

Table 3: Mode of Transportation to Work, 2001

	Total employed	Auto driver	Passenger	Transit	Walk	Cycle	Other
Central Fraser Valley	61,880	52,210	5,410	980	2,225	550	505
Kamloops	38,420	31,565	2,680	1,170	2,095	505	405
Kelowna Region	60,320	50,240	3,585	1,670	2,725	1,260	840
Nanaimo Region	41,850	34,180	2,660	960	2,650	785	615
Prince George	39,780	33,030	3,125	625	1,930	470	600
Whistler	5,910	3,620	310	840	730	270	140
Tier 1 Total	248,160	204,845	17,770	6,245	12,355	3,840	3,105

The largest number of transit work commuters was in the Kelowna Region with 1,670, which is up 56% from 1996. The next largest number was in Kamloops, with 1,170 transit work commuters. Overall, transit work trips in the Tier 1 communities increased 33% from 1996 to 2001. The highest percentage increase was in Whistler (+60%). The chart below illustrates some of these changes.



Tier 1 communities compare favourably with Canadian Industry Leaders

BC Transit has identified several communities from across Canada in the same population range as the Tier 1 communities that can be considered industry leaders based on the overall performance of the transit systems. Table 4 shows the work trip transit mode split for these communities. With the exception of Sherbrooke (5.6%), the industry leaders have work trip transit mode splits in the 2.5% to 3.5% range. Among the Tier 1 communities, Whistler's mode split greatly exceeds any of the industry leaders, while Kamloops, the Kelowna Region, and the Nanaimo Region are all within the same range as the industry leaders.

Table 4: Transit Mode Split in the Industry Leaders
% of work trips by transit, 2001

Sherbrooke, QU	5.6%
Kingston, ON	3.5%
Peterborough, ON	2.7%
Lethbridge, AB	2.4%
St John's, NF	2.8%

Tier 2 & 3 communities with significant transit use for work trips

While transit work trips were concentrated among Tier 1 communities, there were some other communities with relatively strong transit use for work trips. Although the average transit mode split among Tier 2 communities was 1.3%, Sunshine Coast (4.2%) and Campbell River (2.8%) significantly exceeded this level, indicating considerable work commuter markets. Tier 3 communities with relatively high transit use for work trips included Prince Rupert (2.9%) and Kitimat (2.6%).

Female commuters were significantly more likely to take transit to work

The census data also shows some interesting differences between male and female work commuters. Females were more likely to use transit, and they accounted for 59% of transit work trip commuters in the Tier 1 communities. While the overall transit mode split for the Tier 1 communities was 2.5%, the rate for females (3.2%) was significantly higher than that for males (1.9%). In some communities this difference was even greater: the transit mode split for female work commuters was twice as high as that for males in Kamloops, the Kelowna Region and the Nanaimo Region.