

Chapter 2: Multimodal Transportation Planning

Complete Networks Policies

Individual web pages explain Bellingham's [Complete Networks Program and Transportation Modal Hierarchy](#), see Figure 2.1 below, which are adopted in the [Multimodal Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan](#).

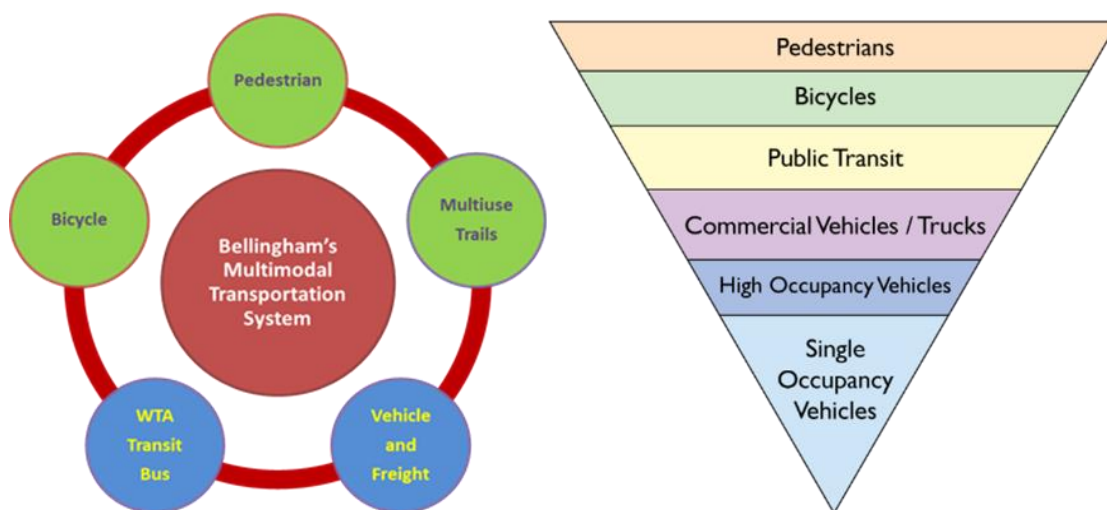


Figure 2.1. - Bellingham's Complete Networks and Transportation Modal Hierarchy

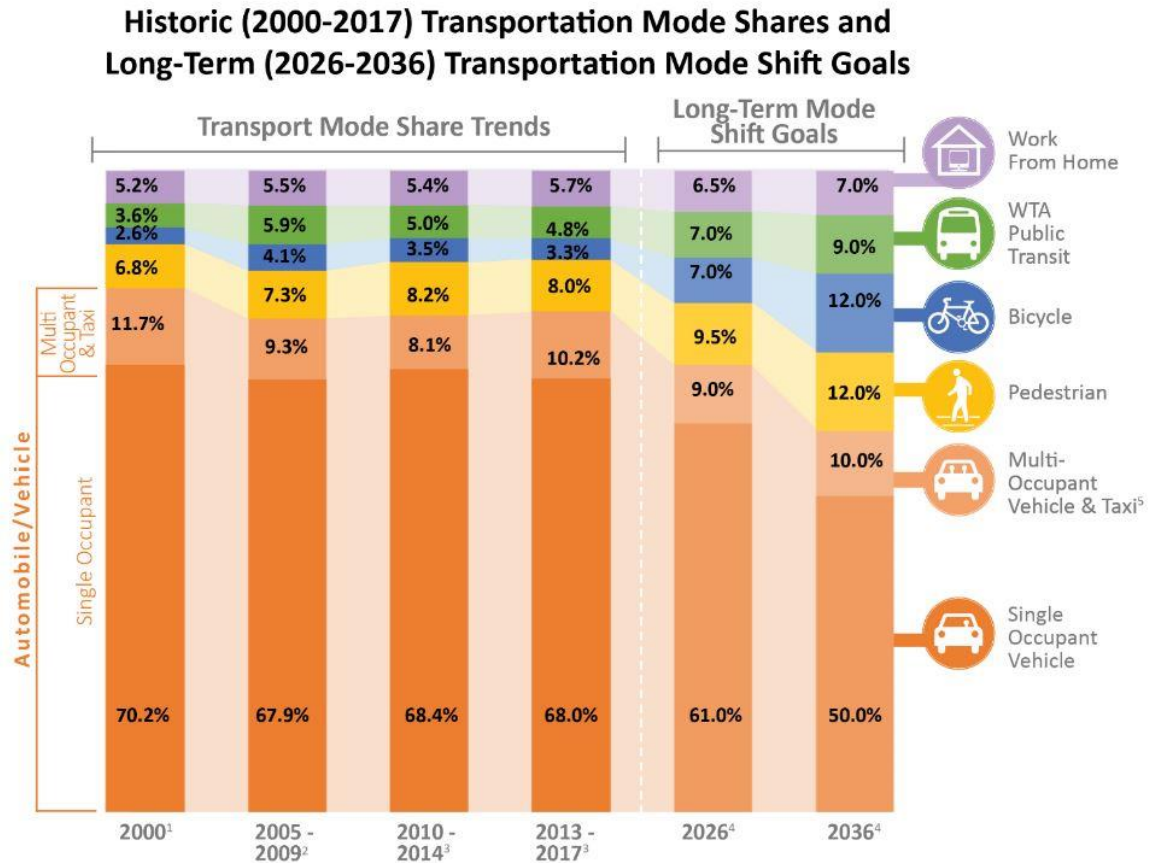
Transportation Mode Share Trends and Mode Shift Goals

In 2006, Bellingham worked with WTA to adopt long-term transportation mode shift goals, which were readopted in the 2016 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan. These transportation mode shift goals are consistent with [City Council Legacies and Strategic Commitments](#) and aspire to increase mode shares for people walking, biking, riding transit, and sharing rides to work, while decreasing the number of people driving single occupant vehicles (SOVs).

Figure 2.2 (next page) illustrates transportation mode share trends for work trips from 2000 through 2017 (pre-COVID) based on American Community Survey data published by the U.S. Census Bureau. These long-term trends established Bellingham's baseline and the aspirational targets are goals to aim for in the future. However, many factors that affect individual transportation mode choice are beyond the control of City of Bellingham policies and some of the aspirational goals may not be achievable without significant changes to regional land use and economic realities that currently make vehicle travel the dominant transportation mode choice.

Advancements in technology allow an increase in the number of people working from home, which can reduce single occupant vehicle trips to work. The ACS data in Table 2.1, below, shows that **more people than ever (10%) are working from home**. Bellingham expects walking and bicycling for short, local, and non-work trips to increase in tandem with sidewalk and bicycle network completeness as well as increases in land use density citywide. The ACS data in Table 2.1 also shows that **more people than ever (4.6%) are bicycling to work**.

Figure 2.2.



Notes:

1.) Table P030: 2000 U.S. Census Summary; Means of Transportation to Work.

2.) Table B08301: 2005-2009 Average from American Community Survey (U.S. Census)

3.) Table S0801: 2010-2014 & 2013-2017 Average from American Community Survey (U.S. Census)

4.) 2016 baseline and long-term mode shift goals [Monitor annually in TRAM; update goals in 2026 Comp Plan]

5.) Taxi includes ridesharing organizations, such as "Uber" and "Lyft"

The U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) data is reported as a rolling 5-year average, which allows consideration of data trends from a standardized source, rather than isolated point-in-time data collected in a variety of methods and contexts. **The ACS 5-year average data is "work/commute-oriented" and does not account for non-work trips by various modes. However, this is the same data source used by the League of American Bicyclists and People for Bikes because it is standardized and provides an apples-to-apples comparison of all communities.**

Table 2.1 and Figure 2.3 provide a closer look at the rolling 5-year averages 2017-2021, which show that:

- Overall vehicle mode share **decreased** (-1.5%) to **75.8%**
- Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) mode share **decreased** (-1.4%) to **67.8%**
- Multi-Occupant Vehicle (MOV) mode share **decreased** (-0.9%) to a historic low of **8.0%**
- WTA Public Transit mode share **decreased** (+1.4%) to a historic low of **3.7%** [COVID-19 impacts]
- Bicycle mode share **increased** (+0.7%) to a **historic high of 4.6%**
- Pedestrian mode share **decreased** (-1.0%) to a historic low of **5.5%**, and
- Work at home mode shares **increased** (+0.9%) to a **historic high of 10%**.

Table 2.1. Transport Mode Share Trends 2005 - 2021 and Long-Term Mode Shift Goals (2026 & 2036)															
Transport Mode to Work	2005 to 2009	2006 to 2010	2007 to 2011	2008 to 2012	2009 to 2013	2010 to 2014	2011 to 2015	2012 to 2016	2013 to 2017	2014 to 2018	2015 to 2019	2016 to 2020	2017 to 2021	2026 Goal	2036 Goal
Pedestrian	7.3%	7.4%	8.2%	8.2%	8.3%	8.2%	8.3%	8.3%	8.0%	7.1%	6.5%	n/a	5.5%	9.5%	12.0%
Bicycle	4.1%	4.2%	4.3%	4.0%	3.4%	3.5%	3.7%	3.3%	3.3%	3.6%	3.9%	n/a	4.6%	7.0%	12.0%
WTA Public Transit	5.9%	5.6%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.0%	5.2%	5.5%	4.8%	4.8%	5.1%	n/a	3.7%	7.0%	9.0%
Automobile/Vehicle	76.9%	76.8%	75.6%	75.9%	75.7%	74.7%	74.9%	75.3%	75.9%	79.0%	77.3%	n/a	75.8%	70.0%	60.0%
Single Occupant	67.6%	69.1%	67.6%	68.6%	68.7%	69.8%	67.1%	66.9%	68.0%	70.1%	69.2%	n/a	67.8%	61.0%	50.0%
Multi-Occupant + Taxi	10.0%	9.1%	9.2%	8.3%	8.5%	8.1%	9.0%	9.8%	10.1%	8.9%	8.9%	n/a	8.0%	9.0%	10.0%
Work Home or Remote	5.0%	4.6%	4.9%	5.0%	5.3%	5.4%	6.7%	6.1%	5.7%	5.5%	6.4%	n/a	10.0%	6.5%	7.0%
Bellingham + UGA Total Population	90,741	91,251	91,403	91,715	92,661	93,092	95,015	96,952	98,816	100,500	101,058	99,436	103,508	109,726	124,107
Workers 16 Years +	39,326	39,090	40,585	39,549	39,726	40,660	41,568	41,865	43,049	44,493	45,003	n/a	48,114	~	~
NOTES ON DATA IN TABLE 2.1:															
1.) Years 2005-2019 = Table S0801 U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-Year Averages Means of Transportation to Work															
2.) Years 2016-2020 = Table S0801 Data unusable due to sample errors, reduced sample sizes, reduced response rates attributed to COVID-19 global pandemic															
3.) Years 2026 and 2036 = Adopted Long-Term <i>Aspirational</i> Mode Shift Goals [Monitor annually in TRAM; Update goals in 2026 Comp Plan]															
4.) "Multi-Occupant + Taxi includes ridesharing companies, such as "Uber" and "Lyft"															
5.) Average vehicle occupancy rate = 1.06 persons per vehicle															
6.) Source: Bellingham + UGA Total Population = Washington Office of Financial Management "Small Area Estimates															
7.) 2016-2020 decrease in population due to remote attendance for WWU students due to COVID-19 pandemic WA state protocols															
8.) Historic Mode Share High = Low =															

Figure 2.3. Transport Mode Share Trends 2000-2019 & Long-Term Mode Shift Goals

