

# More commuters now walk or bike to work than take public transit

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The roads are less congested since the onset of the pandemic and more people now walk or ride their bike to work than take public transit.

Fear of contracting the virus also weighed heavily on public transit riders past and present in a panel survey that Statistics Canada conducted in mid-June as part of the Canadian Perspectives Survey Series.

## More commuters now walk or bike to work than take public transit

Prior to the pandemic, 75% of workers commuted to work by private vehicle, 13% used public transit, 7% walked or cycled to work and about 1% used another mode of transportation. Fewer than 1 in 20 workers teleworked (4%).

Although private vehicles remain the most common mode of commuting since the onset of the pandemic, its share has declined from 75% to 67% in June. The decrease in the proportion of workers using public transit was even more pronounced, falling from 13% to 3% of workers—half the rate of those who walked or bicycled to work (6%). In June, 22% of Canadians were working from home and slightly less than 2% were using another mode of transportation.

One reason for the decline in private vehicle and public transit use may be attributable to the more than five-fold increase (from 4% to 22%) in Canadians working from home since the onset of the pandemic.

## One-third of public transit riders change the way they commute

Over four-fifths of commuters (84%) who drove to work prior to the pandemic still did so in June. Most of those who no longer drove to work had switched to teleworking, suggesting that the pandemic did not bring transformative changes to car commuting.

Conversely, nearly one-quarter (24%) of those who used public transit prior to the pandemic still did so in June, while just over one-third (34%) switched to another mode of transportation and 42% were teleworking. Of the public transit users who changed modes, approximately three-quarters switched to taking their car and one-fifth walked or bicycled to work.

The larger share of public transit riders switching to teleworking may be partly explained by where they work and what they do. Public transit users are more likely to live in larger census metropolitan areas like Toronto or Montréal, and to commute into the city core to service jobs where teleworking is a viable option.

## Most commuters are concerned about taking public transit when they return to work

Telework may not be a permanent option for all former commuters, and many Canadians will need to decide how to get to their workplace when it reopens. This is especially true for pre-pandemic public transit riders, given the higher risks of exposure to COVID-19 on a bus, train or subway.

The vast majority (94%) of commuters who used public transit before the pandemic and who were not comfortable going back to their usual place of work cited "fear of using public transit" as a concern when they return to their workplace.

Almost three-quarters of previous public transit users who felt safe returning to their physical workplace reported being "very" or "extremely" concerned about using public transit (74%).



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**Note to readers**

Data in this release are from the June 15 to 21 iteration of the Canadian Perspectives Survey Series, a panel of Canadians who have agreed to complete a number of short online surveys based on the Labour Force Survey and which is therefore representative of the general population.

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5311](#).**

The study "[Commuting to work during COVID-19](#)," published as part of the series *StatCan COVID-19: Data to Insights for a Better Canada* ([45280001](#)), is now available.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).