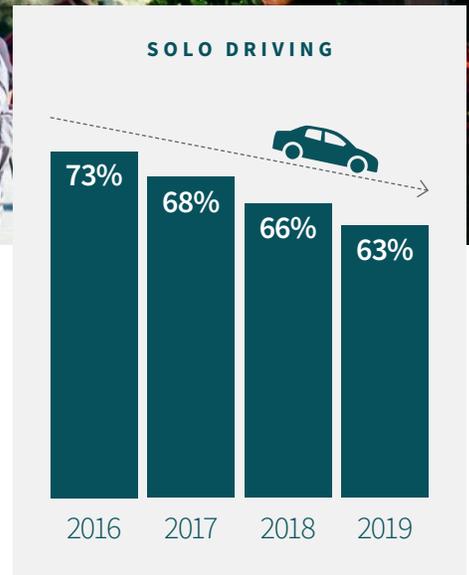


The Power of Partnerships at Stanford Research Park



Employers in Stanford Research Park have reduced solo driving by 10 percentage points, from 73% in 2016 to 63% in 2019, in only 3 years! One key to this success is the willingness of tenant companies to work together, under the leadership of Stanford University, to provide and promote commute options, including carpools, vanpools, last-mile shuttles, and commuter buses, for their employees.



Stanford Research Park is a 700-acre business park in Palo Alto, California and home to 140 companies and approximately 29,000 employees. The Stanford Research Park transportation program, known as SRPGO, launched in 2016. SRPGO was created in response to large tenant companies, including VMware, SAP, Tesla and HP Inc., requesting assistance with commuter transportation. Although these companies already had impressive in-house commuter transportation programs, they saw the potential to increase participation and efficiency through a park-wide commuter transportation program led by Stanford University.

Although SRPGO was born at the behest of large tenants, smaller companies and their employees may benefit even more. Many smaller companies do not have in-house commuter transportation programs, usually because they don't have the resources or workforce critical mass to start and sustain an effective program. Thanks to SRPGO, employees at dozens of smaller companies throughout the Research Park have access to the same network of carpools, vanpools, and shuttles as employees who work for large companies.

“We can't wait to see what great ideas you and the team come up with to make our employees' commutes easier, safer, and more affordable.

Jerry, VMware

Companies of all sizes share the desire to get their employees to work efficiently with minimal impact on the community and environment. Commuter programs have shown positive impacts on recruitment and retention by helping employees save money and time and reduce stress. Working together enables companies in Stanford Research Park to provide valuable commuter services to their employees that they could not practically or effectively provide on their own.

Research Park companies got excited about working with Stanford University on commuter transportation after one of the first successes: a bulk purchase of SmartPasses, annual transit passes from Valley Transportation Authority (VTA). Rather than companies purchasing SmartPasses individually from VTA, Stanford coordinated a group purchase at a lower rate that significantly increased employer participation. Over 40 Research Park companies signed up to provide SmartPasses to their employees in 2016 and have continued to participate in the program. During this time, transit use has almost doubled, increasing from 6% to 11% of trips to the Research Park.

TRANSIT USE



“I have been using SmartPass to commute on the express bus all year. Thank you; it has been a life-saver!

Desiree, Pillsbury Law

The partnership approach gained more steam when the largest Research Park tenant, VMware, requested assistance with a commuter bus from the west side of San Francisco. VMware wanted to support their San Francisco commuters who didn't live near Caltrain, but doubted they had enough potential riders to justify the cost of a dedicated commuter bus. Serendipitously, another Research Park tenant, Tesla, was already operating a similar service for their employees and needed additional capacity. The three partners – Stanford, VMware, and Tesla – rolled out a shared service that is now available to any individual who works in the Research Park, including those who work at smaller companies, which typically don't have access to “private” commuter buses.

Additionally, the willingness of Stanford Research Park companies to encourage their employees to share rides with employees from nearby companies has been crucial to the success of carpooling and vanpooling. The Research Park was an early adopter of Scoop, a flexible carpooling app, that is used for 20,000 trips to and from the Research Park each month. Using Scoop has reduced over 6 million pounds of carbon dioxide emissions to date, and provides commuters with a viable alternative to solo driving.

APP-BASED CARPOOLING



6 million

pounds of CO2 emissions reduced

“You guys are awesome with all that you do! Scoop is saving us from buying another car for the family – saving us thousands of dollars.

Ash, HP, Inc.

Similarly, the success of the SRPGO vanpool program is directly attributable to the scale of the Research Park and companies' enthusiasm for this park-wide effort. A prime example of this is that this collaboration provides the critical mass needed so that even employees who live in the distant East Bay town of Mountain House have access to a vanpool, which would have been unlikely if each company was working individually. In fact, this was one of the first SRPGO vans to get on the road, enabling companies to provide service together that they would not have been able to provide alone. Currently 24 SRPGO-sponsored vanpools provide an economical, low-stress option for Research Park commuters living throughout the Bay Area.

The partnership approach to commuter transportation at Stanford Research Park is a win-win-win. Companies can more efficiently offer programs to their employees, employees have more options available to them, and the Palo Alto community benefits from less traffic and pollution.



“This is a great program that significantly benefits the community and makes this area a desirable place to work.

Chris, PARC, a Xerox Company

The measurable success of SRPGO highlights the value of establishing mutually beneficial partnerships among neighboring companies. Whether you're just starting a commuter transportation program or want to take your program to the next level, reach out to your neighbors to identify resource sharing opportunities to achieve the scale that will increase the effectiveness of your efforts. In turn, your company, your employees, your community and the environment will benefit.