

City of Union Gap Commute Trip Reduction Four-Year Plan Update: 2025–2029

Washington State has adopted a State Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Law intended to reduce traffic congestion on the state's busiest commute routes. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is responsible for administering the statewide CTR program requirements. The state has adopted regulations and developed transportation demand management strategies for employers and jurisdictions to help meet local performance targets. The following report has been developed based on state requirements, review of local plans and policies, and discussions with local staff and CTR affected employers.

The Yakima Valley Council of Governments (YVCOG) oversees, administers the CTR plan, and manages the reporting requirements for local agencies within the Yakima Valley. Enforcement of CTR requirements for employers are addressed by the local jurisdictions consistent with requirements outlined in the local codes and regulations.

Benefits of CTR

1. Describe the local land use and transportation context and objectives.

a) Describe the setting in the jurisdiction as it is today or will be in the near future.

Union Gap is located in Yakima County, Washington, immediately south of Yakima. I-82 runs along the eastern perimeter of the City. Union Gap has grown over the years through a series of annexations to the north and west of the City. Union Gap commercial/retail development is concentrated in the northeast areas of the City including the Valley Mall. More rural and industrial land uses exist at the southwestern sides of the City. Many jobs in Union Gap and the Yakima Valley region are driven by agriculture.

Residential development has primarily been single family to date but is beginning to transition to more dense residential development with duplex and triplexes being constructed as well as apartments being constructed within the existing retail area.

Sidewalks are generally present along arterials within the City. Additionally, Union Gap requires frontage improvements to be constructed with new developments, including sidewalks as well as consideration for transit access (e.g. adding a bus shelter). The City also has access to the Yakima Greenway, known as Jewett Pathway or the Yakima River Trail located on the eastern side of the City, east of I-82. This offroad paved trail runs along the Yakima River from Union Gap to the northern edge of the Town of Naches through the cities of both Yakima and Selah. Union Gap has also identified several areas for sidewalk improvements, and bicycle lanes have been included on newly constructed portions of Valley Mall Boulevard as well as S. 3rd Avenue.

Union Gap Transit provides 2 fixed transit routes with connections with Yakima Transit, Selah Transit, and Pahto Public Passage at the Valley Mall as well with Yakima Transit along West Washington Avenue at 10th Avenue and 3rd Avenue. Although the People for People (PFP) Community Connector ("Work Express Route 202") does not currently connect to City of Union Gap, there should be future conversations about including a Union Gap stop in the future, as feasible.

b) Describe features of land use and transportation facilities and services that affect commuters.

Work in the Yakima Valley region is driven by agriculture. Most residents of Union Gap commute outside of the City for work with many commuting to the Lower Valley region and Yakima. Commute to/from Union Gap and the surrounding more rural region is affected by numerous factors.

- Availability and access to transit - Fixed route transit as identified above within the City limits is provided by Union Gap Transit. There are 3 stops that provide connections to additional transit service fixed routes (Yakima Transit, Selah Transit, and Pahto Public Passage); however, although there are connection locations, the routes and schedules between the transit providers are not coordinated. This can lead to challenges to users both in terms of coordinating using the route as well as time constraints in addition to general challenges with if their work is served by transit given the rural area.
- Non-motorized - Although there is non-motorized connectivity regionally via the beltway and greenway trails as well as locally with sidewalks, the distance required for commuters, as well as severe weather (e.g. hot summers and cold winters) provides for challenges to commuters.
- Vanpool - transit services within the vicinity do not provide vanpool services due to high costs to maintain and low utilization.
- Telecommuting - Given the agricultural focus, many jobs require employees to be in person such that telecommuting is not feasible.

c) Describe whether and how commuting patterns have changed in the past few years.

Commuting patterns have been relatively consistent given the agricultural nature of employees and limitations to alternative modes of travel as described above. Open to opportunities to better coordinate services between Yakima Transit and Union Gap Transit, especially between western Union Gap and south/southwestern Yakima as residential/commercial/industrial growth continues.

d) List the most important land use and transportation objectives from your city or county's plans that commute trip reduction most directly affects.

Increase housing density require frontage improvements with development including sidewalks in order to improve connections to transit stops, increase non-motorized connectivity with emphasis to schools, parks, downtown commercial, and other activity centers as well as extending existing trails and connectivity between trail systems. Focus on reducing overall use of vehicles and not just changing employer commute trips due to commute trip patterns outside of Union Gap. Additionally, the City of Union Gap has a Complete Streets Policy to ensure the safe accommodation of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists, emergency responders, freight, and users of all ages and abilities in all new construction, retrofit and or reconstruction projects of public streets.

e) Describe critical aspects of land use and transportation that should be sustained and key changes that should be considered to improve commute trip reduction's contribution to the land use and transportation objectives you reference.

The City has been aligning with its goals to densify and increase non-motorized facilities and safe routes to school. Additionally, the City has been actively increasing transit shelters with new development within the City limits. Improvements to continue to work toward include:

- Providing better connections between the residential and commercial centers within the City.

- Increase efficiency and to improve the quality of our on demand transportation services with efficient routes and studies for a future investment in micro transit services for local and outlying businesses.
- Continuing to actively engage with neighboring transit services to increase regional connectivity.

These elements will continue to support and improve commute trip reduction.

2. Describe how the CTR program will help achieve the jurisdiction’s land use and transportation objectives.

- a) Describe how and to what extent your CTR program will help your city or county achieve the land use and transportation objectives referenced in question 1.*

The city’s focus on increasing housing density and completing the multi-modal networks support the reduction in drive alone trips by providing alternatives for both employees and local trips in general. The CTR program mutually supports those goals by making higher density housing more desirable to employees when it is paired with access to multi-modal networks.

The CTR program will also encourage the continued coordination between local transit operators to provide improved transit options for commuters to travel between cities and not just locally within each City given the number of users commuting to neighboring jurisdictions.

3. Describe how the CTR program will help achieve the jurisdiction’s environmental objectives.

- a) Describe how the CTR program will support jurisdiction greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts.*

Union Gap identifies protecting and enhancing its environmental quality, including surface water, wetlands, floodplain, groundwater, and wildlife habitat resources. Additionally, Union Gap is eligible for both federal CMAQ and Carbon Reduction Programs that could support CTR activities.

Each drive-alone trip that converts to an alternative mode (transit, rideshare or a non-motorized), eliminates the greenhouse gas emissions that would have been generated by that drive-alone trip.

- b) Describe how the CTR program will support jurisdiction environmental objectives in addition to greenhouse gas emission reductions.*

Each drive-alone trip that converts to an alternative mode (transit, rideshare or a non-motorized), supports the City's goal to protect and enhance the City's environmental quality. Additionally, Union Gap is eligible for both federal CMAQ and Carbon Reduction Programs that could support CTR activities.

4. Describe how your CTR program will help achieve regional and state objectives.

- a) Summarize the local, regional, and state benefits that would be gained if you achieve your CTR targets.*

The City's Goals as identified in the Comprehensive Plan which are supported by the CTR program include:

- Increase housing density,
- Require frontage improvements with development including sidewalks and consideration for transit connectivity
- Increase non-motorized connectivity with emphasis to schools, parks, downtown commercial, and other activity centers as well as extending existing trails and connectivity between trail systems.
- Protecting and enhancing its environmental quality, including surface water, wetlands, floodplain,

groundwater, and wildlife habitat resources.

New outcomes as identified in WSDOT's 2023-2025 State CTR Draft Plan:

- Improve delivery of CTR programs.
- Expand CTR market to address equity.
- Produce more useful transportation behavior data.
- Expand investment and service to advance equity and environmental justice.
- Respond to shifting mobility patterns.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

These local and statewide goals are benefited through achieving the CTR goals by:

- The preparation of the CTR plans included coordination and conversations with the local jurisdiction, employers, and stakeholders as well as with the broader region and WSDOT providing an opportunity to discuss and improve delivery of the program.
- The state and region both have the goal of reducing environmental impacts. Each commute trip that is shifted to a non-drive alone mode through the city's CTR program reduces environmental impacts such as greenhouse gas emissions.

b) List adjacent CTR-affected cities and counties.

Yakima City and County. Although not adjacent, additional affected cities within the County include Toppenish, Moxee, and Selah.

c) Describe the top few cross-border and regional transportation issues that affect your jurisdiction.

The Yakima Valley region is a generally rural area driven by agriculture with daily commute patterns extending outside the local jurisdictional boundary. Transit connectivity throughout the region is limited with Yakima, Union Gap, and Selah each providing transit service primarily within their City limits. This poses a challenge for commuting in non-drive alone options as most residents of Union Gap commute outside of the City for work with many commuting to the Lower Valley region and Yakima.

Additional cross-border and regional transportation issues related to alternative modes are identified below.

- Non-motorized connectivity between Union Gap and its surrounding jurisdictions is currently predominantly available via the Greenway which provides connectivity north of Union Gap through Yakima, Selah, and to the town of Naches. Access to the Greenway is located on the eastern side of the City, east of I-82.
- The movement of freight traffic is critical for the region and relies on I-90 to connect to Western Washington. It is anticipated that with improvements/expansions of the Yakima Airport that there will also be a growth in freight traffic associated with the airport which may result in a shift in travel patterns by providing an improved alternative mode.

d) Describe the strategies you, adjacent cities and counties, and your region have agreed to use to address the top issues described in the previous bullet.

The City is actively perusing a location for a transit center which could facilitate coordination between transit agencies. Additionally, the local transit operators are cooperatively meeting and open to transit coordination improvements. Pathways, a non-profit organization, is leading the effort to facilitate the transit coordination

between the operators.

The jurisdictions within Yakima County also participate in Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Mobilizing Public Access Countywide Transportation Advisory Committee (MPACT) meetings to facilitate coordination and work together as a region.

Additional strategies related to alternative modes are identified below.

- The proposed Yakama Nation’s Heritage Connectivity Trail is anticipated to provide connectivity between Yakama Nation, Toppenish, Zillah, Wapato, and eventually connect to Fullbright Park within Union Gap.
- There is the potential return of scheduled passenger rail service as well as potential increase of WSDOT Intercity Transit and countywide transit services which would provide increased transit opportunities.
- Planned improvements/expansions of the Yakima Airport may result in increased commercial passenger and freight traffic which may result in a shift in travel patterns with possible increased air ridership and/or may result in increased employment and business growth.

Performance targets

5. List your jurisdiction’s CTR performance target(s).

a) List performance targets that reflect only CTR-affected worksites.

Per the WSDOT CTR Guidelines Appendix B. The Drive Alone Rate (DAR) performance target for the City of Union Gap is 72%. (Aligns with performance targets Option 2).

a) List any additional performance targets.

None

6. List the base value you’ll use for each performance target.

a) For each performance target, provide the number you’ll use as the baseline (or starting number). You’ll measure the difference between this number and your results to report performance.

Performance targets will be tied to the CTR survey. We will establish a base value during the 2023-2025 survey cycle and measure progress using 2025-2027 survey results.

7. Describe the method you used to determine the base value for each target.

a) Provide the source for each base value listed.

Performance targets will be tied to the CTR survey. Base values will be established during the 2023-2025 survey cycle and progress measured using 2025-2027 survey results.

8. Describe how you’ll measure progress toward each target.

a) List the method you’ll use to measure progress for each target.

Progress will be measured using 2025-2027 survey results.

9. List your jurisdiction's CTR-affected worksites.

a) *List all your CTR-affected sites.*

CTR affected sites within the City include:

- City of Union Gap
- WSDOT South Central
- Borton Fruit
- Washington State Department of Ecology

10. List a performance target for each CTR-affected worksite.

a) *For any performance targets tied to the CTR survey, indicate that you'll establish performance targets during the 2023-2025 survey cycle.*

Base year performance targets will be established during the 2023-2025 survey cycle.

11. List the base value you'll use for each site.

a) *For any performance targets tied to the CTR survey, indicate that you'll establish a base value during the 2023-2025 survey cycle.*

Base values will be established during the 2023-2025 survey cycle

Services and strategies

12. Describe the services and strategies your jurisdiction will use to achieve CTR targets.

In addition to the city's focus on increasing housing density and completing the multi-modal networks, the following strategies are anticipated to support the City achieving its CTR goal:

- To work towards greater efficiency and to improve the quality of our on demand transportation services with efficient routes and studies for a future investment in micro transit services for local and outlying businesses.
- The City is actively perusing a location for a transit center which could facilitate coordination between transit agencies.
- The local transit operators are cooperatively meeting and open to transit coordination improvements. Pathways, a non-profit organization, is leading the effort to facilitate the transit coordination between the operators.
- The jurisdictions within Yakima County also participate in TAC and MPACT meetings to facilitate coordination and work together as a region.
- Supporting YVCOG's "Switch Your Trips" program, encouraging non drive alone trips.

13. Describe how jurisdiction services and strategies will support CTR-affected employers.

The addition of a transit center within the City will facilitate improved service and allow for easier coordination with neighboring transit agencies by providing a turn around location which would support regional transit travel and ability for employees to commute between their residence and place of work. By improving transit as well as other alternative mode connections, employers' goals of lowering the drive alone

rates are supported.

14. Describe barriers your jurisdiction must address to achieve CTR targets.

a) Describe how you'll address these barriers.

Ability for an employee to get between where they live and where they work. Given the rural area, access to transit near a residence or job is limited. Transit service is generally limited to within the City limits and does not align with many residents working outside of their City of residence. Existing coordination between transit operators is limited to an overlapping stop, allowing for a transfer but schedules are not coordinated and is up to the user to coordinate a trip between cities.

- To work towards greater efficiency and to improve the quality of our on demand transportation services with efficient routes and studies for a future investment in micro transit services for local and outlying businesses.
- The City is actively perusing a location for a transit center which could facilitate coordination between transit agencies.
- The local transit operators are cooperatively meeting and open to transit coordination improvements. Pathways, a non-profit organization, is leading the effort to facilitate the transit coordination between the operators.
- The jurisdictions within Yakima County also participate in TAC and MPACT meetings to facilitate coordination and work together as a region.

15. Describe the transportation demand management technologies your jurisdiction plans to use to deliver CTR services and strategies.

- Work with transit agencies to identify technology enhancements that can increase ridership (i.e. arrival times, etc.)
- Supporting YVCOG's "Switch Your Trips" program, encouraging non drive alone trips.

16. Transcribe or link to your local CTR ordinance.

Union Gap Municipal Code (UGMC) 9.52

17. Describe your financial plan.

a) Describe the estimated average annual costs of your plan.

The CTR is managed by YVCOG on behalf of the City. The budget allocated for the City of Union Gap for the 2025-2027 Biennium is approximately \$34,800, so approximately \$17,400 per year.

b) Describe likely funding sources, public and private, to implement your plan.

The CTR is managed by YVCOG on behalf of the City with fees allocated for the 2025-2027 Biennium.

18. Describe your implementation structure.

a) Describe who will conduct the activities listed in your plan.

The CTR is managed by YVCOG on behalf of the City.

b) Indicate who will monitor progress on your plan. List job title, department, and name.

The CTR is managed by YVCOG on behalf of the City. Geoff Wagner (CTR Coordinator) at YVCOG manages the CTR process on behalf of the City.

The Transportation Coordinator for the City of Union Gap’s own CTR program will be managed by Jason Cavanaugh, the Director of Public Works and Community Development.

19. List your implementation schedule.

a) Provide the timeline for anticipated projects.

The CTR is managed by YVCOG on behalf of the City. YVCOG has identified the following activities and anticipated frequency of those activities as summarized in the table below.

YVCOG Activity	Frequency
a. Identify Worksites and Employee Transportation Coordinators.	Annually
b. Engage and Train Employee Transportation Coordinators.	Annually
c. Support Distribution of Information About Transportation Options to Commuters	Annually (minimum), or as new local/state opportunities allow.
d. Enable Incentives, Subsidies, and Disincentives.	Annually
e. CTR Plans and support Code Updates	2025. <i>Anticipate next update in 2029</i>
f. Performance Reporting	Biennially

20. Describe the CTR plan for jurisdiction employees.

a) Describe the services, programs, information, and other actions your city or county put in place to help its employees reduce their drive alone commute trips.

As identified per UGMC 9.52.050c, required elements for affected employers and for the City’s CTR plan include:

1. Designate a transportation coordinator to administer the CTR program who will oversee all elements of the employer's CTR program and act as liaison between the employer and city.
2. Information about alternatives to SOV commuting shall be provided to employees at least once a year.
3. Complete an annual review of employee commuting and progress and good faith efforts toward meeting the SOV reduction goals. The report shall describe each of the CTR measures that were in effect for the previous year, the results of any commuter surveys undertaken during the year, and the number of employees participating in CTR programs. Within the report, the City will evaluate the effectiveness of the CTR program and, if necessary, propose modifications to achieve the CTR goals. Survey information or approved alternative information must be provided in the reports submitted in the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth years after implementation begins.

21. Describe how the CTR plan for jurisdiction employees contributes to the success of the overall plan.

a) Describe how the plan for jurisdiction employees reinforces the success of the jurisdiction plan?

The City, consistent with affected employers within the City are participating in the program, which supports employers involvement in the program given the City is held to the same CTR goals. Also, the established transportation coordinators at the City and affected employers allows for additional coordination opportunities to help facilitate continued progress toward meeting the CTR goal.

Alignment with plans

22. List the transit agencies that provide service in your jurisdiction.

- Union Gap Transit
- Yakima Transit
- Pahto Public Passage

23. List the transit plans you reviewed while developing this plan.

- Union Gap Transit Development Plan (TDP)
- Yakima TDP

24. Describe how this CTR plan supports the transit plans.

Providing employees with incentives to take transit can increase ridership which in turn can raise the profile of and social support for public transit.

25. Describe any comprehensive plan updates that are needed and when they will be made.

Comprehensive plan updates have recently begun and specific changes have not yet been identified. The updated plan is anticipated to be completed in 2026.

Engagement

26. Describe stakeholder engagement.

a) Who did you talk to?

Coordination meetings with City of Union Gap, adjacent jurisdictions, YVCOG, and local transit agencies. Additional meetings were held with the MPACT and YVCOG TAC groups. Additionally, surveys were conducted for MPACT members and employers of affected worksites.

Public outreach workshops were conducted at the Yakima Transit Center and the Valley Mall bus stop.

b) When did you talk to them?

Meetings were conducted as follows:

- MPACT members - 9/25/2024
- City of Union Gap - 10/7/2024
- YVCOG TAC Group - 10/10/2024

- Yakima Transit - 8/22/2022 and 10/3/2024
- Selah Transit - 7/20/2022
- People for People - 6/28/2022 and 10/3/2024
- Pahto Public Passage - 7/13/2022 and 11/5/2024
- Medstar - 7/20/2022
- Protran East - 6/29/2022
- Entrust Community Services - 7/27/2022

September 26, 2024 and October 2, 2024 surveys were sent to MPACT members and employers, respectively and a reminder to complete the surveys was completed on October 14, 2024.

Public engagement workshops were held on 9/1/2022 and 11/15/2022

c) What did they have to say?

The meetings allowed for discussion of the existing conditions, transportation and land use conditions, use and barriers of the CTR program, and what is planned.

The employer surveys allowed for input regarding what is working well for their worksite and employees as well as identify barriers they have relative to employees using the program.

The MPACT survey identified their target population/focus group, identify programs that are effective, programs that not effective, barriers to non drive alone trips, and recommendations on what programs could be added to provide reductions to drive alone rates.

The 2 public engagement events were as follows:

- The first event was to introduce the project to residents and gain insight from passengers on how transit is used today and how transit can be improved in the future. Feedback identified interest in extended service hours and more frequent service, more benches and amenities at bus stops, and challenges related to transfers and infrequent service.
- The second event was to share the findings and recommendations of the Yakima Valley Transit Study and get any additional feedback. Those who attended were generally in agreement with the findings and supportive of the study recommendations that are outlined within this report.

d) How did what they said influence the plan?

The feedback from the engagement meetings and surveys is incorporated above particularly in identifying the barriers and ideas to continue improve access for employees to use the program.

27. Describe vulnerable populations considered.

- Entrust Community Services - People with disabilities
- People for people - Individuals with special transportation needs
- Protran East/VGA Professional Services, Inc. - Non Emergent Medical Transportation, those who have no access to long distance medical transportation services. Low income, Veterans and Seniors.
- Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Yakima - BIPOC and Asian communities
- Yakama Nation and Pahto Public Passage
- Medstar

28. Describe engagement focused on vulnerable populations.*a) Who did you talk to?*

Entrust Community Services, People for people, Protran East/VGA Professional Services, Inc., Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Yakima, Yakama Nation and Pahto Public Passage, and Medstar

b) When did you talk to them?

Responses to the MPACT surveys, meetings, and public engagement. See response to 26b above.

c) What did they have to say?

The groups generally consistently identified the following:

- Effective programs - Shared rides, long distance shuttle services, work from home options, and public transportation such as bus, shuttle, etc. People For People provides these services and also specifically includes Community Connector and paratransit services. Also, specifically fixed bus routes that run both directions on route and have intervals 1/2 hour or less.
- Not effective services: Single one way routes that do not serve all adjoining communities equally, Carpooling as there is a lack of common schedule and destination/origin.
- Barriers to non-drive alone trips: the lack of coverage area outside of fixed route systems, Lack of safe pedestrian access with rural roads without shoulders and sidewalks or for individuals who cannot walk long distances to reach transit, Length of routes and long time duration between buses that prohibit people from actually reaching destinations without exhausting planning
- Opportunities for improvements: expanding bus routes, Safe pedestrian access, Locate high population resident area to business areas and include large companies that have over 100 employees requiring access regardless of being located in city or non incorporated city areas where employers s have moved out of cities have majority single occupant vehicles due to complete lack of service to all industrial exporting employers
- Additional feedback received from Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Yakima was that all areas should have equal access to DSHS and unemployment services for all of city of Yakima

d) How did what they said influence the plan?

The feedback received was incorporated into the identified barriers and recommended changes above.

29. List employers' suggestions to make CTR more effective.

Employers indicated there are numerous barriers to employees using non-drive alone options, including:

- Need car for family obligations on the way to/from work
- Lack of transit service
- Alternative commute options take too much time
- Personal safety
- Need my car during the day
- Need my car to get home in case of emergency

However, methods used at sites to promote the CTR program have included promoting the alternative mode options and providing preferred parking for carpoolers.

30. Describe results of engagement focused on vulnerable populations that will be provided for use in comprehensive plan and transit plan updates.

The updates to the plans are beginning at this time and this feedback will be considered and incorporated as possible such as identifying a new or revision to goals or policies.

Regional transportation planning organization CTR plan review

RTPO comments

The CTR plan was developed by the YVCOG in coordination with the City of Union Gap staff. As such, this local jurisdictional plan is consistent with the regional CTR plan.