

Participate in the 2021 Car Free Day!

Car Free Day is an annual event that occurs on an international level every September 22. This event encourages people around the world to go an entire day without using a car (more specifically, driving alone in a personal vehicle). Instead, participants use walking, biking, public transportation and carpooling to travel using more sustainable methods. Teleworking is also a good option for eliminating the need to travel altogether!

One of the most significant environmental impacts of transportation is the emission of greenhouse gases through fossil fuel combustion. Transportation accounts for roughly 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S.¹ Cars, SUVs, and pickup trucks account for 57% of greenhouse gas emissions within the transportation sector.¹ Reducing the greenhouse gas emissions from these vehicles is a key step to fighting the climate change crisis. Walking and biking provide transportation methods with zero direct GHG emissions, although these methods are somewhat limited by travel range. Public transportation and carpooling offer great reductions to greenhouse gas emissions by carrying multiple passengers (see Figure 1).¹ The U.S. Department of Transportation determined that buses emit 0.64 pounds of CO₂ per passenger per mile, approximately 2/3 of a single occupancy vehicle at 0.96 pounds of CO₂ per passenger per mile.¹ Even more efficient methods of travel are possible through the metro and carpooling.¹

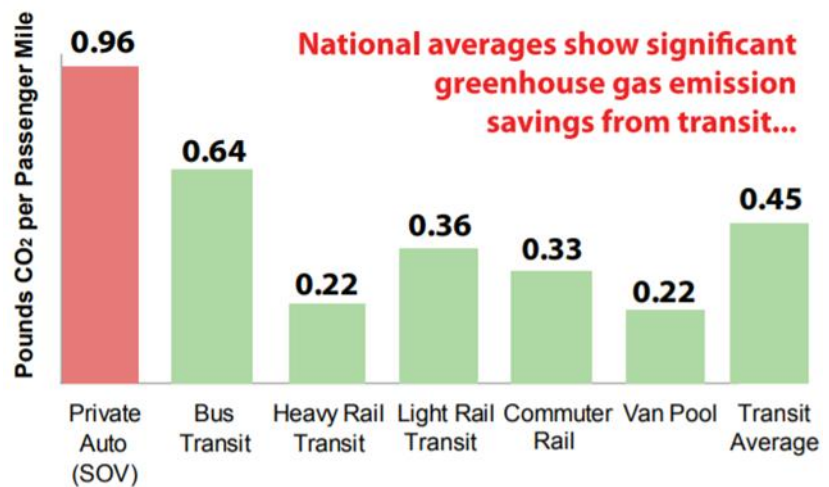


Figure 1. A chart showing the greenhouse gas emissions of various transportation methods per mile per passenger.¹

Commuting accounts for approximately 12% of greenhouse gas emissions at the NIH. This provides an opportunity for us to greatly impact the environment through reduced emissions from commuting. The D.C. metropolitan area has supported a local [Car Free Day event](#) for many years and will do so again for 2021 on September 22. All NIH staff are encouraged to participate in this event! Participating this year is easy if you can telework! You could also plan your week so that your errands have been accomplished before Car Free Day. If you plan to participate in this year's D.C. Car Free Day, then take the [Car Free Pledge](#) to enter for prizes! More details for this event, including extra details on how to go "car free," are available on the [event website](#).