# Carpooling is for everyone

Towards a more affordable, social, and sustainable intercity transportation network for all

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## **Executive Summary**



### Canada's intercity transportation network has suffered severely over the last decade.

With Greyhound leaving for good and other carriers going bankrupt, Canadians now face limited alternatives to using their personal vehicle for intercity trips, and it's damaging their quality of life. According to our recent surveys, the lack of intercity travel options has left 69% of Canadians unable to see family, 33% unable to get to work, and 16% unable to receive healthcare.



### Poparide has over one million members, demonstrating that Canada relies on carpooling.

Eighty-four percent of Poparide's members view carpooling as the best option for intercity travel, and 58% as critical for getting around. On 10 of Canada's top 50 most frequented intercity routes, carpooling is the only available shared transportation mode; on six others, the only alternative are infrequent/seasonal buses.



People carpool with Poparide because it is the most affordable, social, and sustainable way to travel between most cities in Canada. Drivers get to offset an average of \$29 per 100km of their cost, which allows passengers to travel cheaply for \$17 per 100km. With an average vehicle occupancy of 3.15, Poparide drivers and passengers benefit from 40-70% lower emissions and three human connections per trip.



On a macro level, carpooling is having a profound impact. It is shrinking transportation and infrastructure costs, bringing people together, and taking climate action in the here and now. In 2023 alone, Poparide saved Canadians \$10 million in transportation costs, fostered over 660,000 human connections, and prevented over 12,300 metric tonnes of  $CO_2$  from being emitted into the atmosphere.



Canada has just begun to adopt carpooling. There is a tremendous opportunity to fill even more seats in cars and create substantial and lasting benefits locally and nationally. While Poparide keeps driving technological innovation, bringing carpooling to the masses requires an evolved regulatory framework and effective collaboration on awareness-raising and incentive programs for specific routes and communities in need.

Are you interested in helping accelerate the growth of carpooling in Canada? We'd love to hear from you! Contact us at hello@poparide.com

## A statement from Poparide's CEO



Photo credit: TFDxWhistler

Back when I built the first version of Poparide in 2010, a website for local skiers to share rides, I had no idea that it would one day help tens of thousands of people get around in thousands of communities across the country.

Today, Poparide is Canada's largest carpooling community and it is filling an urgent need for Canadians across the country: to get around affordably and stay connected to urban centres, services, and loved ones.

Driven by the belief that travel is a fundamental right, not a privilege, Poparide has created a new way to get around that is more social, affordable, and sustainable for everyone. Filling empty seats in cars already on the road is "ridesharing" in the truest sense of the word.

Today, as we celebrate our one-millionth member, we want to use this milestone as an opportunity to give Canada's long-distance travellers and commuters a voice and showcase what tremendous impacts carpooling has on our communities.

By sharing proprietary insights from member surveys, member data, and market research, we hope to put a spotlight on Canada's intercity transportation network and drive the conversation toward the adoption of inclusive and sustainable shared mobility solutions that make a difference in the here and now, and for the generations to come.

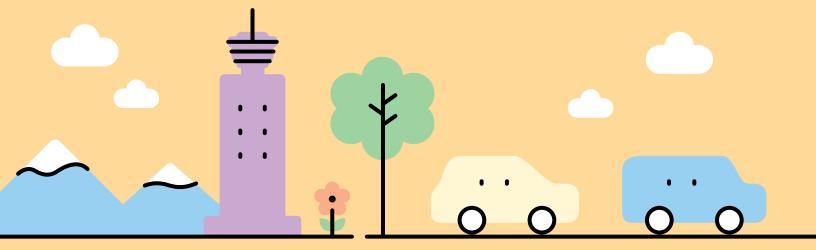
From countless stories of people finding jobs, housing, and new friends, we know the impact is real. In many cases, it is the only way for people to get around. For them, sharing rides in cars has become an essential service, creating hope and opportunity for people living far from urban centers who are often forgotten.

Let's bring people together wherever they need to go.

Flo Devellennes

CEO & CO-FOUNDER, POPARIDE

## Carpooling 101



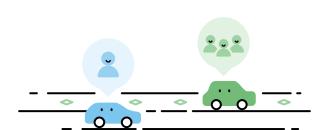


### What is carpooling?

CREATING A DEFINITION FOR CANADA'S FUTURE

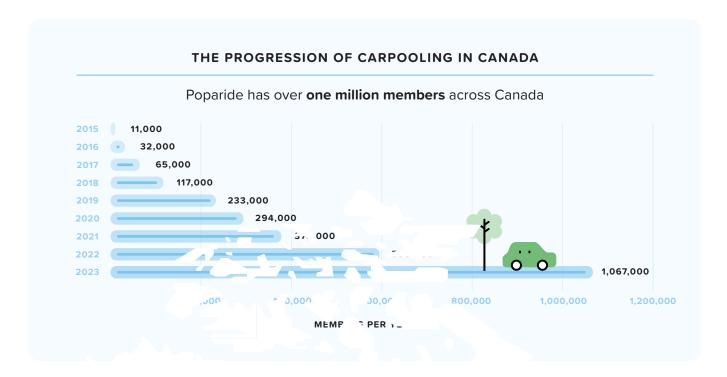
As a form of shared mobility, carpooling with Poparide takes place when a driver offers their empty seats to passengers heading in the same direction to offset the costs of their trip without making a profit. Sharing rides this way has proven to decrease the number of vehicles on the road by putting more people in fewer cars which in turn reduces traffic and carbon emissions.

The mean vehicle occupancy per trip through Poparide is 3.15, compared to the all-too-common single-occupancy-vehicle. Considering that 85% of Canadians drive to work as the sole occupant of their vehicle, the potential for cutting down on car usage is tremendous when carpooling activity scales.



It's important to point out that carpooling is not at all similar to the ride-hailing services offered by transportation network companies (TNCs) like Uber. TNC services are deregulated taxi services in which drivers are employed by an app to turn a profit by driving people around on-demand.

Secondly, ride-hailing services don't decrease the number of vehicles on the road. On the contrary, they make traffic worse. A 2021 study from MIT found that traffic jams became longer and worse when these services came to town. TNCs also cause emissions to increase by up to 30%, due to a surge of no-passenger driving and idling.

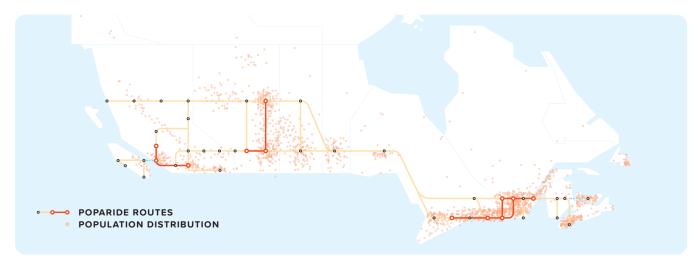




## Why carpooling matters

THE STATE OF INTERCITY TRAVEL IN CANADA

Intercity travel has suffered dramatically in recent years, leaving many Canadians without a way to get where they need to go. In urban areas, Canadians often have a wealth of travel options—public transit, micromobility, biking/walking all give Canadians the choice of how to get around.



However, more than two-thirds of the country's population live outside of city centres and are in dire need of a sufficient intercity transportation network. This leaves many Canadians with limited transportation options, equating to reduced economic prosperity and social participation.

The problem has been exacerbated over the last five years by several major bus carriers ceasing operations. The Saskatchewan Transportation Company shut down in 2017, leaving 253 communities with fewer viable intercity transportation options beyond private vehicles. Greyhound Canada withdrew from Western Canada a year later, before shutting down its service entirely in 2021. Flixbus entered the Canadian market in 2022, but the company hasn't been a replacement for the coverage Greyhound provided, servicing profitable routes only.



Carpooling is a solution that
Canadians have already embraced.
Fifty-eight percent of Poparide users
find carpooling integral to getting
where they need to go.

After all, in a country where infrastructure is built around the use of private vehicles, carpooling offers an option that is available in the here and now, without waiting for large, expensive public works projects or costly new regional transit lines to get approved.

Canadians don't have to wait for solutions. Survey respondents report being unable to participate in many important daily activities due to a lack of intercity travel options. They cannot get to doctor's appointments, attend school, or commute to work because they have no viable alternative to a single-use private car. They need something that they can leverage now.

Carpooling is the transportation solution that doesn't require waiting.



### Diving deep into carpooling

### SOURCING THE DATA IN THIS REPORT

This report illustrates who carpools, showcases what transportation gaps it is filling, and highlights its growth potential by combining industry expertise with public and proprietary data, including member surveys.

### PROPRIETARY DATA

Poparide's one million members shared a combined 68 million km in 2023 and our anonymized usage data illustrates how carpooling is being used today.

### SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Poparide conducted surveys in May and December of 2023 to get a sense of who uses carpooling in Canada and why. We received responses from over 6,000 community members.

### DATA USAGE IN THIS REPORT

Unless otherwise cited, all data in this report is either a result of Poparide's 2023 Member Surveys or Poparide proprietary data.

### **INDUSTRY EXPERTISE**



























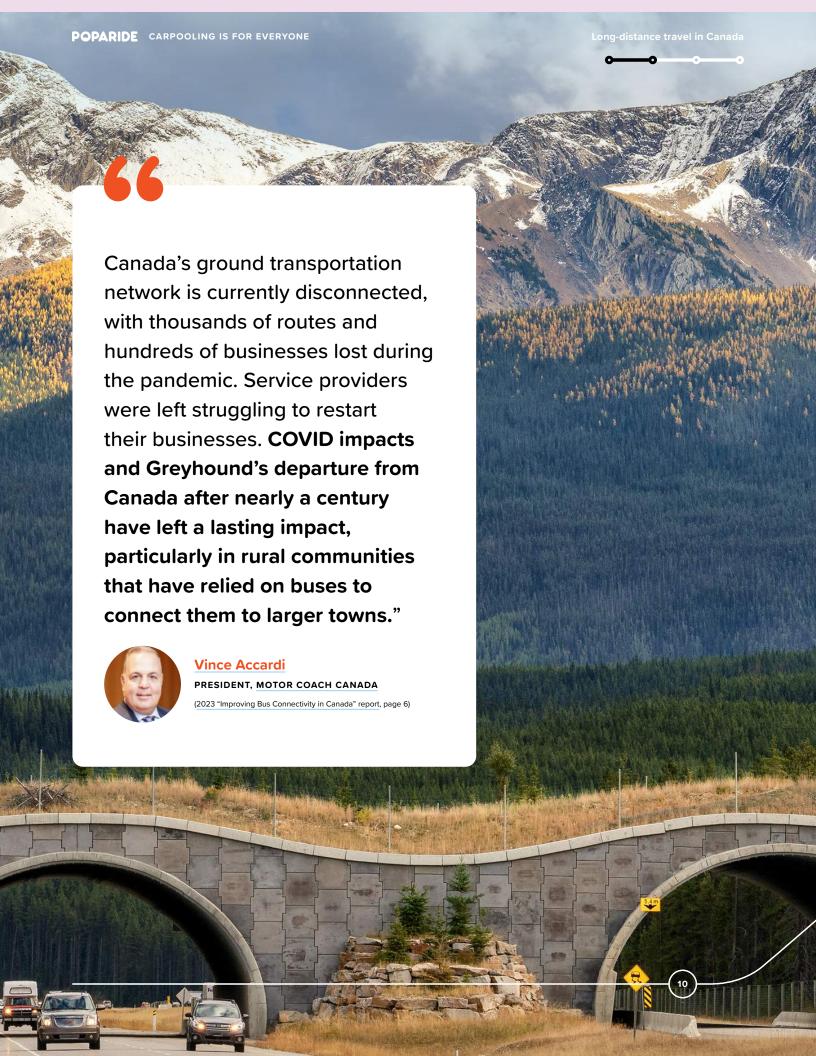






# Long-distance travel in Canada







## Without transit, Canadians are stranded

THE LACK OF INTERCITY TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS IS AFFECTING QUALITY OF LIFE



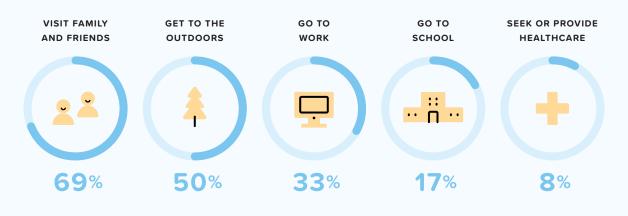


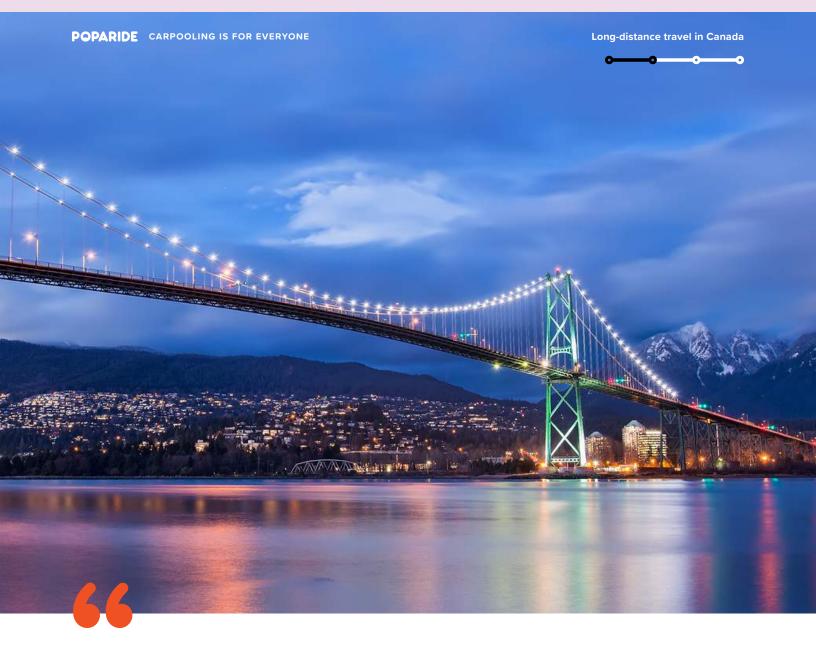
More than half (58%) of Canadians feel it's inconvenient to travel between cities, impacting heavily how they live their lives.

Without adequate intercity transportation options, Canadians can't do critical activities like getting to work or attending medical appointments. They can't wait for costly infrastructure projects, new carriers, or regional transit lines.

### THERE ARE REAL-WORLD CONSEQUENCES ATTACHED TO A LACK OF TRANSIT

What activities have you been unable to do due to a lack of transportation options?





There's a huge 'missing middle' in Canada's transport policy, for trips that involve more than going across town but less than going across the country.

Right now, many Canadians are forced to drive these in-between distances. Structured, easy-to-access carpooling can help close this gap."



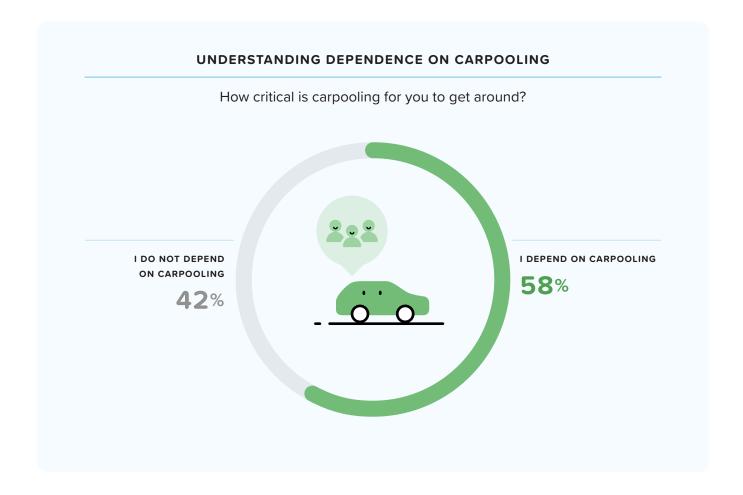
Stephen Miller
POLICY LEAD, TRANSIT APP



## Carpooling is a lifeline for struggling Canadians

MORE THAN HALF OF POPARIDE MEMBERS ARE DEPENDENT ON CARPOOLING

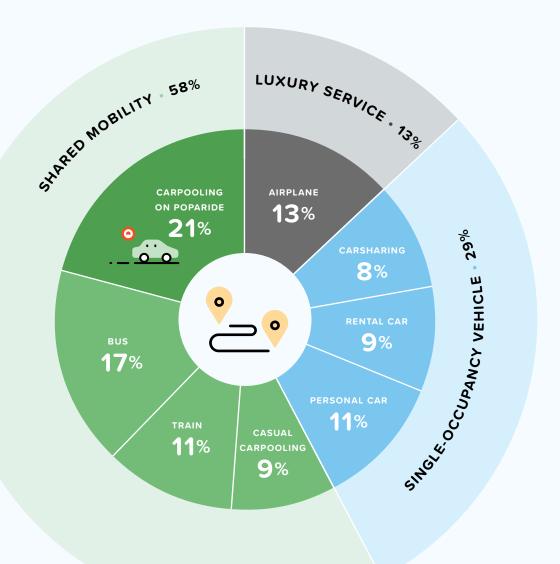
Carpooling is an easy and immediate way for Canadians to meet their transportation needs. It's not a utopian solution; it's reliably helping Canadians. Carpooling is the number one way that Poparide members travel between cities, and over half of Poparide members need carpooling to get around.





### CARPOOLING USAGE FOR INTERCITY TRAVEL, COMPARED TO OTHER MODES

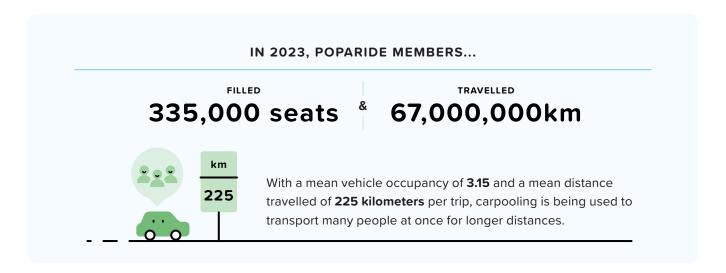
How do you travel between cities?



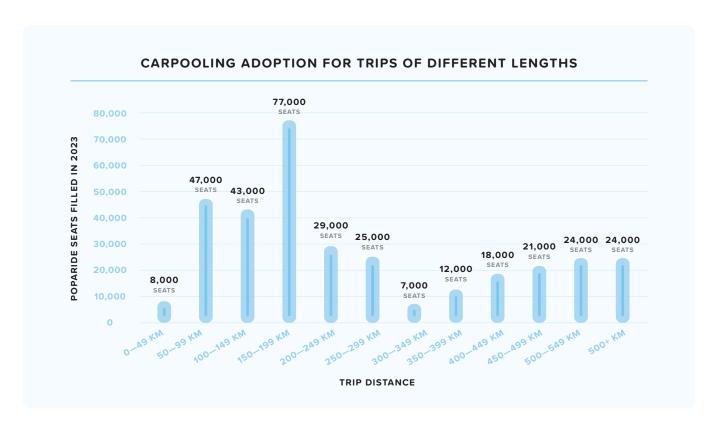


## Carpooling already boasts significant adoption rates

INTERCITY TRAVEL PROBLEMS ARE BEING SOLVED BY CARPOOLING



According to the graph below, demand is less for trips in the 300-400 km range. It should be noted that, because of Canada's geography and road network, there aren't many intercity connections that fit within that distance.



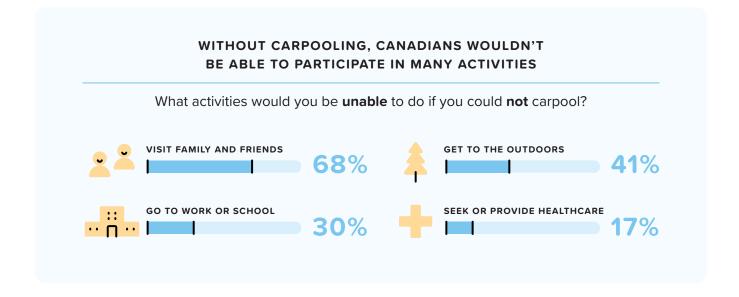


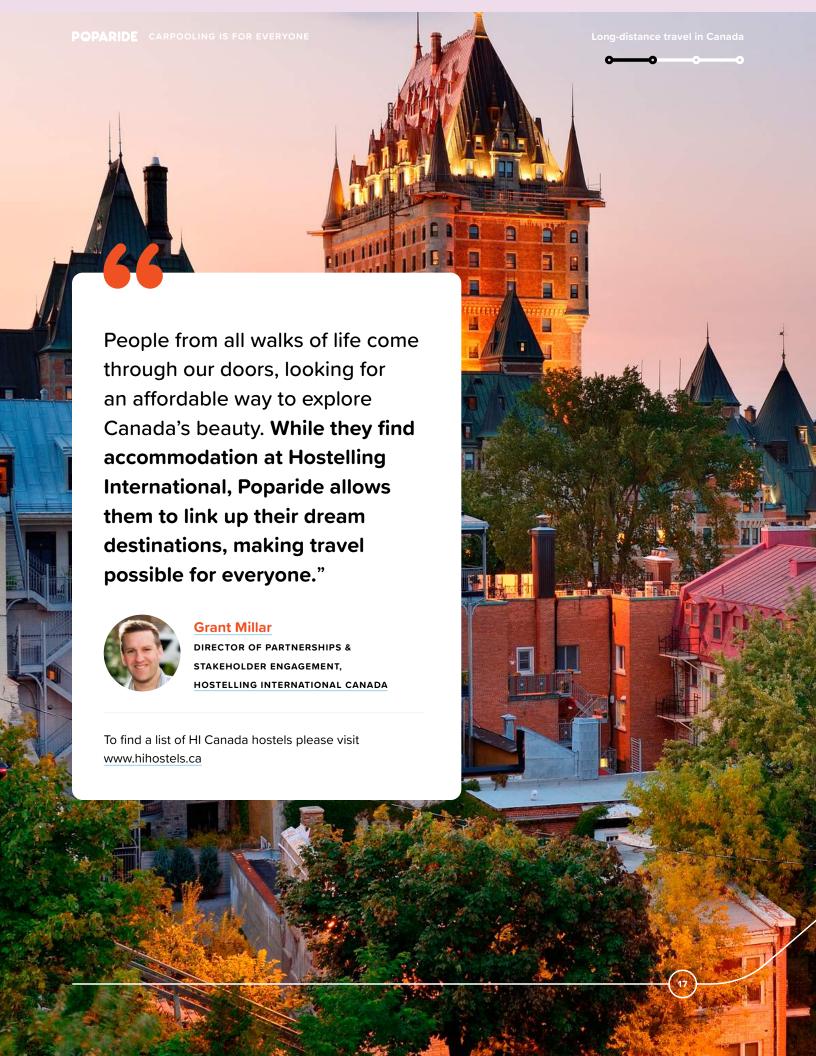
# Carpooling enables Canadians to live healthy lives

CANADIANS USE CARPOOLING FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES



Carpooling allows Canadians to live fuller, healthier lives. Without carpooling, nearly two-thirds of Poparide members wouldn't be able to visit family and friends, roughly one-third wouldn't be able to get to school, work, or into the outdoors, and 17% wouldn't be able to find or provide healthcare.







# Skyrocketing transportation costs make mobility a challenge

CANADIANS HAVE TO MAKE TOUGH FINANCIAL CHOICES WHEN IT COMES TO TRANSPORTATION





Transportation accounts for the second largest source of household expenditure in Canada, clocking in at **15**% of average household spending.

It comes in just behind housing (31%) and is on par with food (15%).

With gas prices fluctuating and the cost of living everincreasing, Canadians need to have low-cost options to get where they need to go. But the contrary happened over the last years on longer distances.

We've seen a decline both in terms of affordability and overall availability which means more and more Canadians end up left behind and cut off from the prospering city centres.



Mobility is more and more an intersection of inequality, particularly for already disadvantaged rural and remote people [...] The right to stay in rural places and the ability to live a good life are increasingly contingent on the right to move."

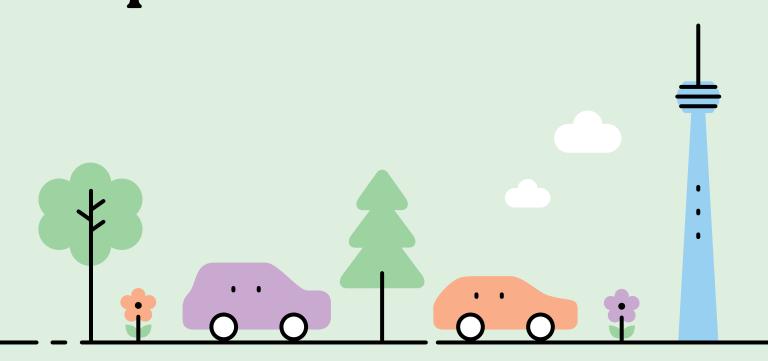


Dr. JoAnn Jaffe

PROFESSOR WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

(2023 "Improving Bus Connectivity in Canada" report, page 6)





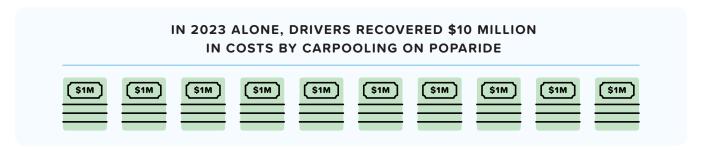


# Carpooling is the cheapest option when compared to other modes of transportation

CARPOOLING ISN'T ABOUT PROFITS; IT'S ABOUT SHARING EXPENSES

Carpooling uses existing infrastructure to provide immediate relief to cash-strapped Canadians. For drivers already on the road, carpooling reduces travel costs per 100km by roughly \$29.





Those savings set carpooling apart: When compared to other modes of transportation in terms of cost per km travelled, carpooling is the cheapest option.





## Cost savings are a big motivator for carpooling

CANADIANS ACROSS ALL INCOME LEVELS CHOOSE TO SAVE MONEY BY CARPOOLING



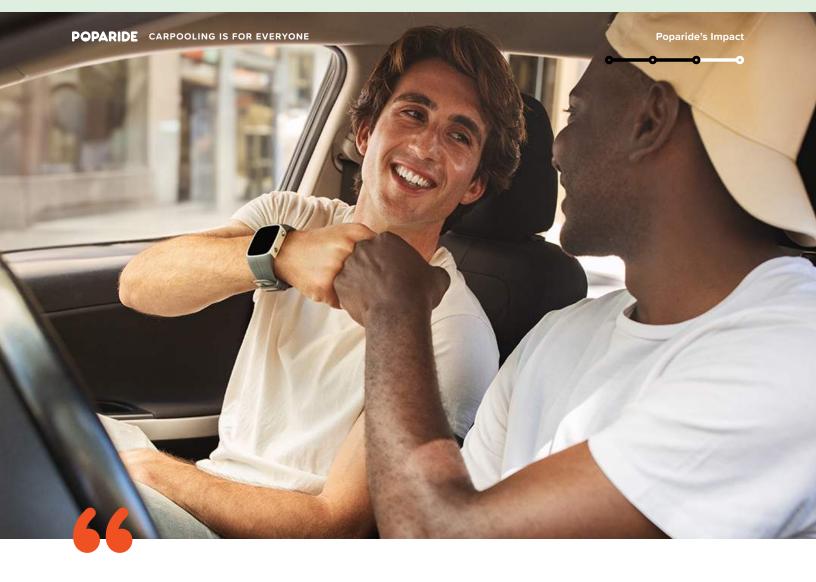
**84% of passengers** choose to carpool because it's the **cheapest option** for them to get to their destination, and 74% of passengers say that they value saving money in carpooling.



Conversely, **81% of drivers** choose to carpool to **recover their costs**, and 71% of drivers say that they value carpooling because it allows them to save money.

Carpooling is used the most by lower-income individuals, but the difference in adoption between income levels isn't too substantial. It also should be noted that carpooling is used the most by Canadians under the age of 40.

### MORE LOWER-INCOME INDIVIDUALS USE CARPOOLING. BUT USAGE IS STILL WIDESPREAD ACROSS INCOME LEVELS Typical income levels of Poparide's members LOWER LOWER MIDDLE **UPPER MIDDLE UPPER** (<25K CAD) (25-50K CAD) (50-75K CAD) (>75K) 24% CARPOOLING IS FAVORED BY YOUNG PEOPLE Typical age of Poparide's members 25-29 30-39 40-49



Over recent years, commutes have become increasingly lengthy, disjointed, and expensive, not to mention the significant environmental toll of single-occupancy vehicles. For employees facing long commutes or those underserved by transit systems, we're seeing an increasing impact on job satisfaction and overall health. On the upside, many are interested in exploring carpooling as an affordable alternative, once the local network boasts a reliable service level."





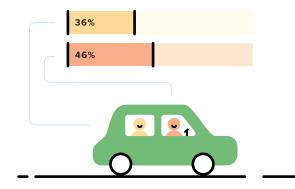
# Social connections are another motivator for carpooling

THE LONELINESS EPIDEMIC IN CANADA IS AFFECTING HEALTH

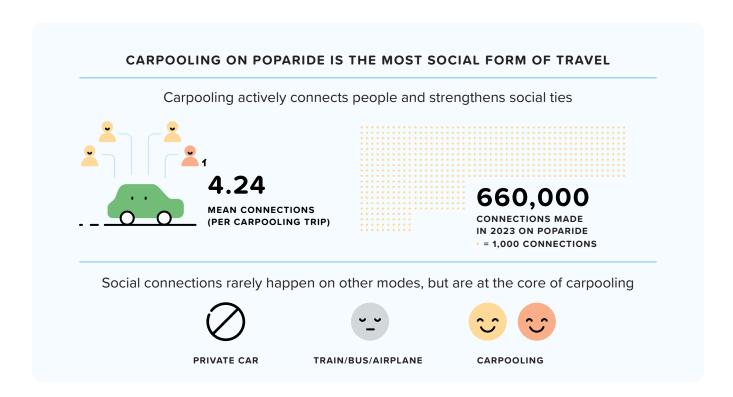
One in five Canadians identify themselves as lonely. The health risks of that reality are far-reaching. Loneliness has been linked to higher rates of heart disease, diabetes, dementia, suicide, and depression. It contributes to 45,000 deaths per year in Canada—as much as smoking.

People are hungry for genuine social connections, which is something carpooling can provide. Carpooling allows people to meet and bond with each other as they share not just travel costs, but also travel time. The journey becomes just as important as the destination.

Compared with other modes of transportation, carpooling allows for more social interaction, and for many Poparide members, that social interaction is the main selling point of carpooling.



Thirty-six percent of passengers and 46% of drivers value meeting new people when carpooling.





# Social connections provide much-needed novelty

NOVELTY AND FUN ARE IMPORTANT FACTORS IN INFLUENCING NEW TRANSIT BEHAVIORS

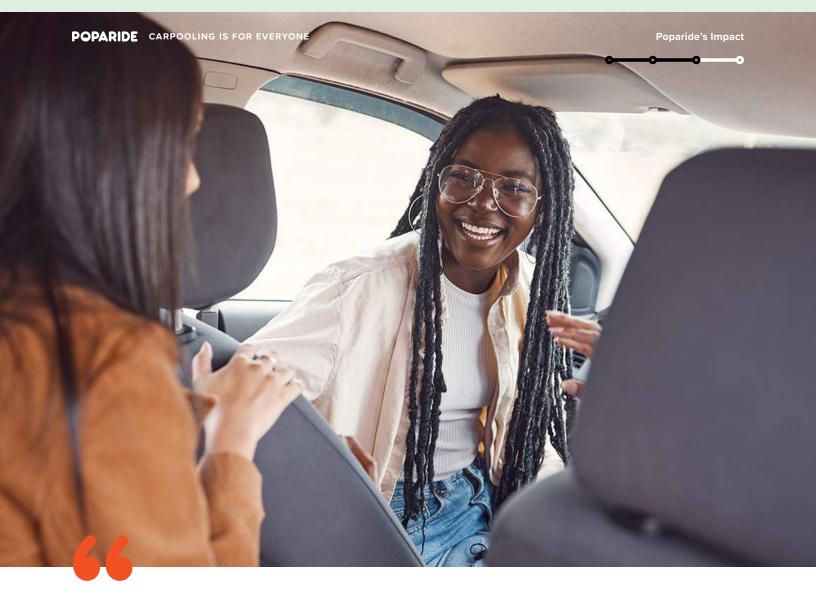


According to emerging research from Royal Roads
University, novelty plays a big role in micromobility
adoption across Canada. A recent study revealed that
British Columbians in Kelowna, Vernon, and Richmond
were motivated to take e-scooters over other forms of
transit because they viewed the e-scooters as more fun.

Looking at Poparide's research, users cited that they were motivated to carpool by a sense of freedom and rediscovery that they didn't associate with their private vehicles. They choose it because it injects novelty and fun into the often mundane experience of traveling.

Passengers and drivers share unique travel experiences, often engage in cross-cultural conversations, and connect with newfound friends over spontaneous moments of laughter and sharing. This is what transforms ordinary trips into memorable adventures and opportunities for discovery, where the journey becomes as enjoyable as the destination.

The stories from users are as diverse as it gets! We had people find anything between a new pet, new job, new hobby, and new life partner, or whatever makes them feel like they belong.



If we want to divert people away from single-occupancy vehicles, we shouldn't overlook the 'fun' factor. As part of my academic research, I studied how and why people adopted scooters as a micromobility option. Participants often cited fun and novelty as the reason why they chose scooters over other forms of transportation.

Transportation experiences are complex, and for many, it's about finding an enjoyable option."



Karly Nygaard-Petersen

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE AT ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY

AND CONSUMER MARKETING AT EVO CAR SHARE



## With better alternatives, intercity travellers make better choices

CARPOOLING ACTIVELY CHANGES BEHAVIORS TOWARD MORE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

According to our member survey, 37% of our trips wouldn't have taken place otherwise. The increased demand for intercity travel is a net positive because it doesn't result in any additional vehicles on the road and therefore doesn't negatively impact the environment.





Canadians need affordable, safe and reliable travel options for all types of trips. Outside of our major metro areas, intercommunity travel options tend to be very limited, leaving people with no choice. The public and private sectors have begun to fill the significant gaps left by Greyhound's departure, but there is still so much work to do to develop our long-distance public transportation networks. Carpooling is a great opportunity. It can fill a critical gap where public transportation doesn't exist and provide a much-needed option for the many Canadians living in smaller communities."



Erin Toop
PRINCIPAL, TOOP CONSULTING

### CARPOOLING INDUCES GREATER DEMAND FOR INTERCITY TRAVEL

Would you have taken your last long-distance trip without carpooling?

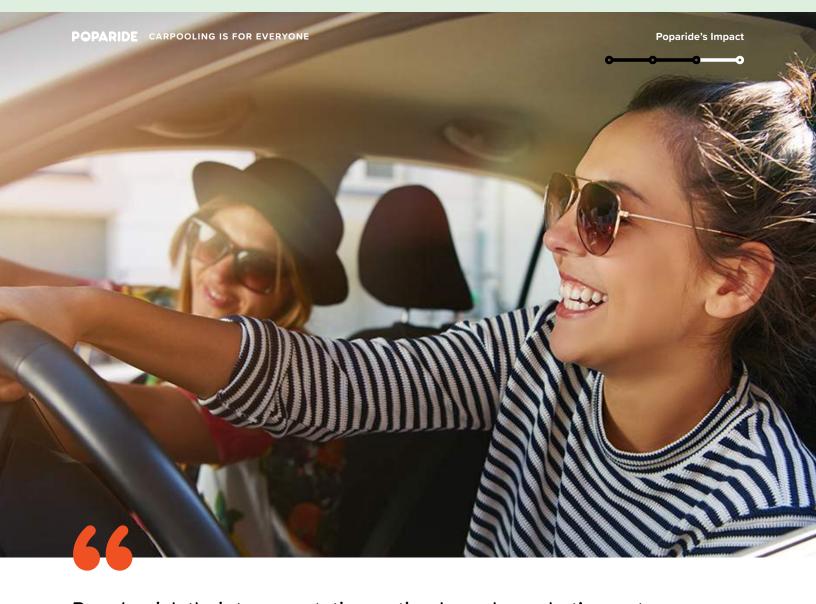




The remaining 63% of trips replace an alternative mode of intercity travel and change behaviors away from single-occupancy vehicles because for 40% of these trips, a personal car (25%), rental car (9%), or carsharing (6%) would have been the alternative.

Further, carpooling replaces the bus for 33% of the trips, casual carpooling (e.g., Facebook/WhatsApp groups) for 15%, the train for 9%, and flying for 3%. While these shared mobility options are better in terms of sustainability and affordability compared to single-use cars, they aren't as impactful as Poparide—except for the train.

### LOOKING INTO MODES OF INTERCITY TRAVEL REPLACED BY CARPOOLING If carpooling with Poparide becomes unavailable to you, how would you travel between cities? SINGLE-OCCUPANCY 40% 60% **SHARED-USE VEHICLES VEHICLE** PERSONAL CAR **25%** 33% RENTAL CAR CASUAL CARPOOLING 9% 15% CARSHARING TRAIN 9% 6% AIRPLANE 3%



People pick their transportation option based on what's most reliable, safe and cost-effective. In urban areas - where there are lots of reliable choices - personal preferences around comfort, experience, and sustainability often drive choice. Intercity, where choices aren't as abundant, overall cost and reliability are most important. So adding options for people that don't have or can't drive their own car is key. Carpooling is a key piece to the puzzle as a cost-effective, community-driven solution that can be available for everyone, everywhere."

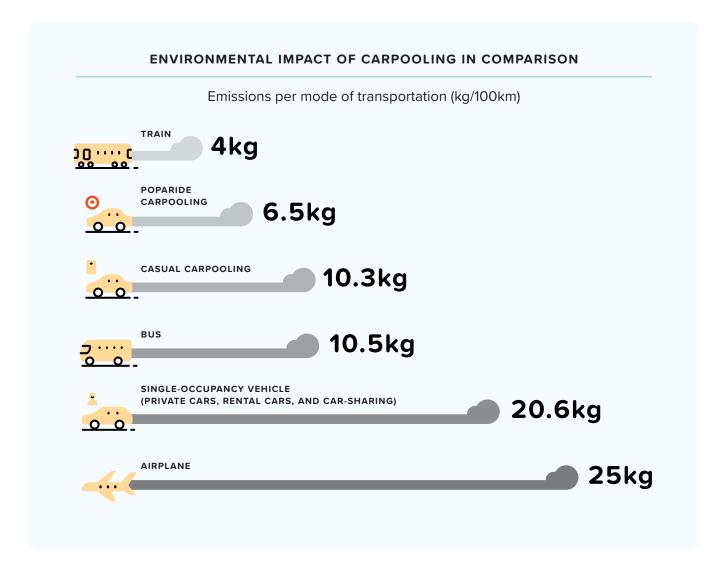


Sandra Phillips
SHARED MOBILITY ARCHITECT, CEO AND FOUNDER, MOVMI



## Environmental impact of carpooling in comparison

CARPOOLING'S EMISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS



Carpooling's potential emission savings depend on what modes the passenger would have used otherwise and their respective emissions. We estimate that with an average vehicle occupancy of 3.15, carpooling on Poparide reduces carbon emissions between 7.9kg (38%) and 14.1kg (68%) per 100 km, depending on what modes of transportation the passenger would have used otherwise.





Our team's recent carbon audit of Vancouver Island tourism showed us that if we truly want travel to be a force for good for our communities and environments, we need to rethink how we move around. That's why we like carpooling with Poparide. It's simple to use, saves us money, and cuts each traveller's carbon footprint in half (or more). It's a solution we can all start using today."

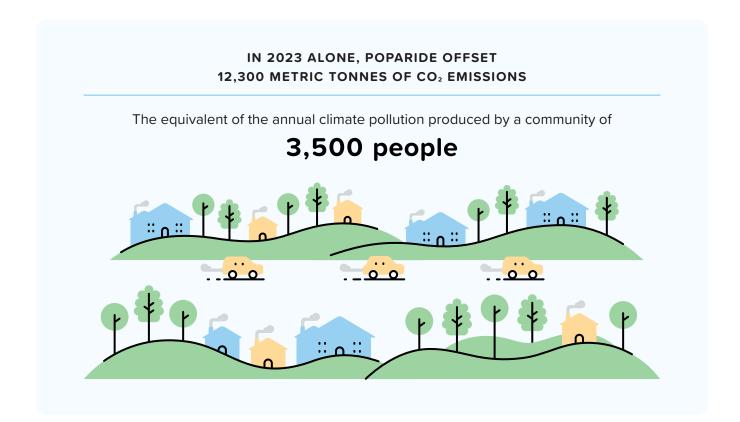


Caleb McIntyre

MANAGER, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, 4VI (TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF VANCOUVER ISLAND)

With that in mind, it's fair to say that carpooling can help save between **40-70% of intercity transportation emissions**, with the figure being lower (around 40%) in areas where there are many shared mobility options for intercity transportation, and closer to 70% where there are only a few to none.







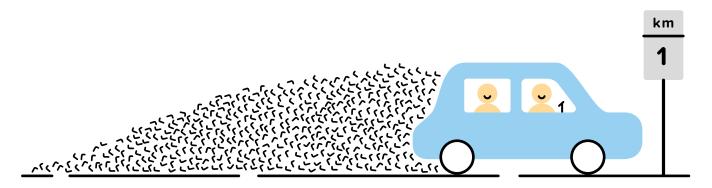


## Carpooling takes a bite out of emissions

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF CARPOOLING CAN'T BE OVERSTATED

Canadians drive the world's most polluting vehicles. Each Canadian car emits on average more than 60 tonnes of climate pollution ( $CO_2$ ) over its lifespan and 206 grams of  $CO_2$  per kilometre.

To visualize those 206 grams of climate pollution, picture tossing 400 plastic straws out the window every kilometer.



While more and more Canadians are making the switch to electric vehicles, the transition is happening far too slowly to keep pace with climate action goals. Only 5.3% of vehicles registered in 2021 were electric; the rest still relied on gasoline.

The age of cars in Canada has been steadily increasing over the past few decades, and the figure now stands at approximately 10 to 11 years as the average age of each car in Canada.

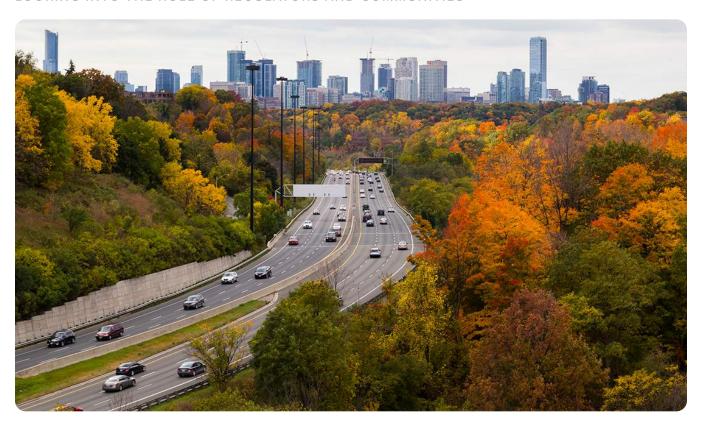
Road transportation is by far the <u>largest source</u> of Canada's transportation emissions and has experienced considerable growth in recent decades, having more than doubled between 1990 and 2022. In 2022, Canadian vehicles released 180 million metric tonnes of  $CO_2$  into the atmosphere.

The fastest way to decrease this major source of climate pollution is to ensure fewer private vehicles are on our roads. By giving Canadians a viable way to get around that doesn't involve being the sole passenger in a polluting car, we can take an appreciable bite out of emissions.



## Carpooling needs more than innovation to thrive

LOOKING INTO THE ROLE OF REGULATORS AND COMMUNITIES



What started as a blank canvas transportation innovation is now a proven solution that closes a gap in Canada's intercity transportation network safely and reliably.

While Poparide is driving technological innovation, bringing carpooling to the masses requires an evolved regulatory framework ensuring compliance and public safety as well as effective collaboration on a community level.

To continue its growth and tap into new segments of the population, being legally tolerated by some provinces and encouraged by a few local communities is no longer enough. Carpooling needs to be fully sanctioned and supported at a policy level so it can be promoted and adopted at a community level.



Europe's approach to carpooling, as facilitated by platforms like BlaBlaCar, is a best practice of the tremendous value unlocked if the government and communities embrace innovation. French regulations help distinguish carpooling from commercial transport services by emphasizing the non-profit aspect of sharing a ride, thereby supporting the inherent sustainability and community-driven ethos.

Through such backing and with the support of provinces, municipalities, and other community bodies, carpooling can make a big difference for Canada's travellers and commuters. And in the process, policymakers can come in as innovators and drivers for change. It's a win-win.



As on-demand transit has proven in urban areas, modular and flexible transportation solutions covering any distance are of immense value to communities. They complement and enrich the existing transportation network, and allow providers to collect valuable demand data and understand travel patterns to plan more structural interventions."



Jerome Mayaud
DIRECTOR, DATA SCIENCE, SPARE



# Carpooling is already solving transportation issues in Canada

WRAPPING UP OUR FINDINGS





### Carpooling is often the only alternative to a private, single-occupancy vehicle

Carpooling is helping Canadians get where they need to go when no other transportation option is the only reliable alternative. This makes sure more Canadians can go to work, attend school, see family members, and get the healthcare they need.



### Carpooling saves significant transportation costs

Transportation is the third most expensive spending category for Canadian households. Carpooling helps drivers subsidize their car usage and allows passengers to find low-cost ways to get around, saving Poparide members \$10 million in 2023.



### Carpooling is taking immediate climate action

Carpooling lowers emissions from the biggest source of climate pollution in the country. By increasing car occupancy and offering alternatives to single-use private vehicles, carpooling shrinks intercity transportation emissions significantly by 40-70%. To hit climate targets, we need to cut emissions in the transportation sector, and carpooling is an immediate solution.



### Carpooling can alleviate the loneliness epidemic

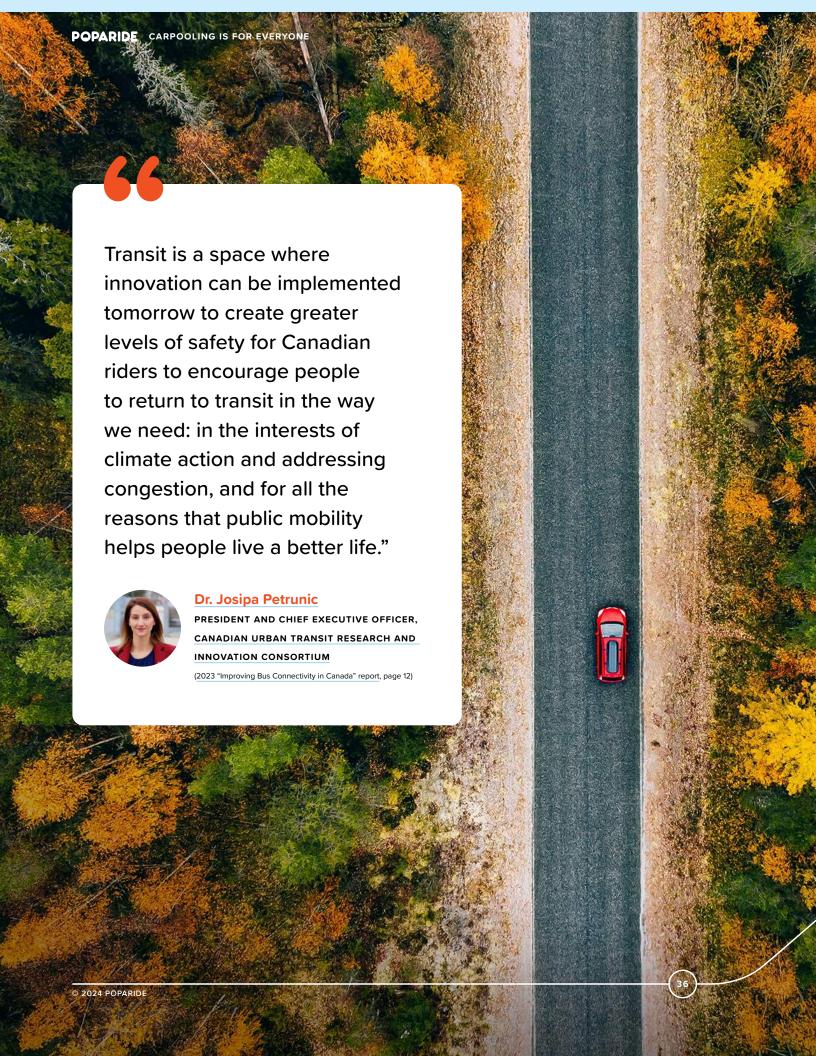
Canadians are lonely and are hungry for more social connections. Poparide members enjoy an average of two social connections each per trip, resulting in over 660,000 social connections in 2023. Those connections are cited by both drivers and passengers as a critical part of why they carpool.



### Carpooling needs your help

Carpooling is the most social, affordable, and sustainable option for intercity travel on most of Canada's routes, and it can have an even bigger impact with government support. With the help of innovative policies and awareness campaigns, carpooling can help even more Canadians cut their emissions, save money, connect with others, and get where they need to go.

Are you interested in helping accelerate the growth of carpooling in Canada? We'd love to hear from you! Contact us at hello@poparide.com



## **About Poparide**

Poparide is on a mission to fill empty seats in cars and make travel more social, affordable, and sustainable for everyone.

We provide a city-to-city carpooling service that connects drivers who are already driving from A to B with passengers heading in the same direction. Founded in 2015 and headquartered in Vancouver, BC, our service boasts over one million members across Canada.



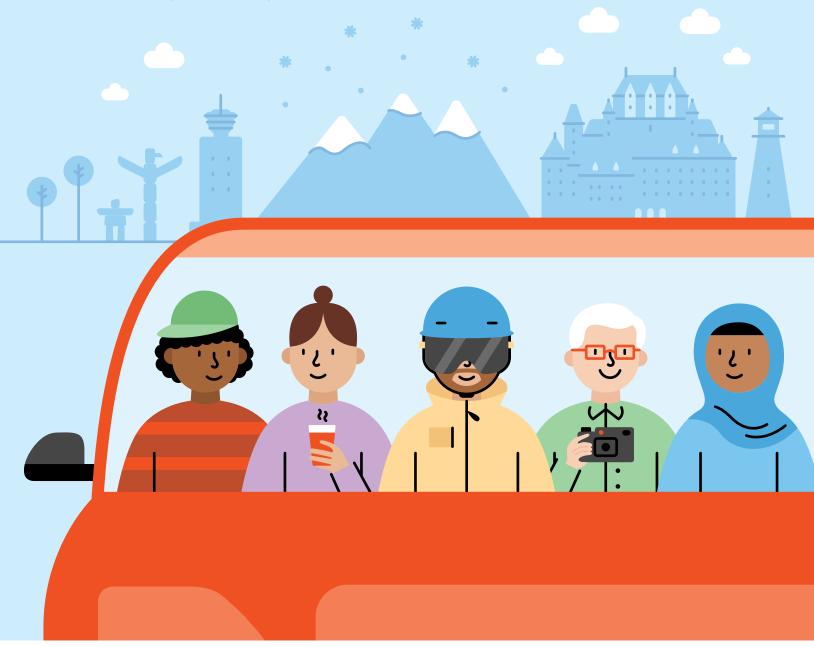
If you want to learn more about how Poparide can help your municipality lower emissions, cut costs, and connect people in your community, contact us at hello@poparide.com



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# Carpooling is for everyone

Poparide acknowledges that it operates from the unceded traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwəta<del>l</del> (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.



**POPARIDE**