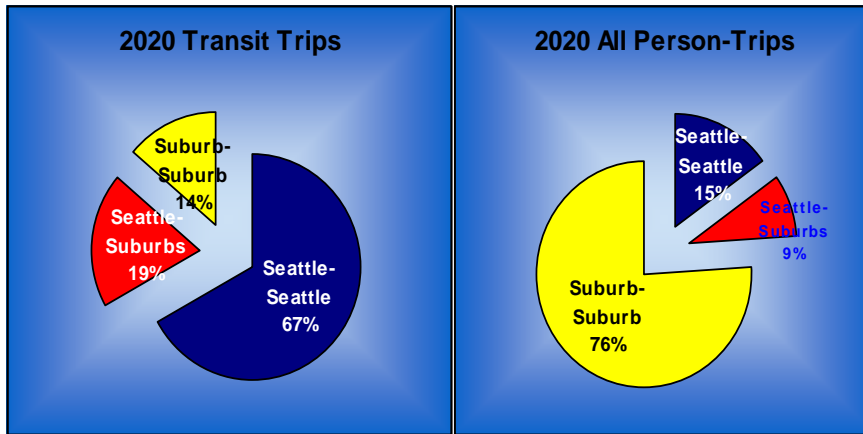


8. What will or will not reduce congestion?

Reducing congestion requires improvements in all of the modes of travel -- transit, walking, bikes and cars/trucks. **However, unlike current plans, we should tailor each mode's programs to the markets that the particular mode best serves.** Transit best serves the peak period commute trip and trips for the elderly/handicapped and others who cannot use privately operated vehicles. Typically, transit's big markets are connections between higher-density residential areas and high density employment centers. That is why 86% of all regional transit trips include destination or origins within the City of Seattle. Just 14% of transit trips are suburb-to-suburb, but 76% of all regional person trips (whether transit or by car) are suburb-to-suburb. See the chart below.

City of Seattle Dominates Transit Trips



30- Jan-07

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Walking has a bigger market share than transit, but for all but a few hardy souls, walking won't handle trips longer than a few hundred feet and won't deliver lettuce and boxes of cereal to grocery stores. As appealing as light rail may be, it captures a very small market share, typically less than 1% of daily trips in US urban areas. Sound Transit's Phase 2 plan would add, by their figures, 160,000 daily transit riders in 2030. That sounds like a big number, but is only 1% of our daily 16 million person-trips. PSRC projects that regional travel demand will grow by 1.5% per year through 2030, so ST2 would not even handle one year's growth in demand. **Adding as little as 6% to our total lane-miles of roadways could reduce congestion below today's levels.**

Some hope that moderate increases in the density of residential and commercial development will help relieve congestion. Unfortunately, the opposite is more likely. The chart below, derived from the National Household Travel Survey, shows mode of

travel for 8 categories of population density. For each density category, it shows how Americans actually travel and illustrates that transit ridership is relatively insensitive to density increases until densities above 10,000 persons per square mile are reached. For perspective, the average density of the Seattle urbanized area is about 2,200 persons per square mile (there are, of course, some census tracts of higher density). For a given area, doubling of density would double transit ridership but would also double travel by cars, trucks and vans.

