Washington Auto Outlook

Sponsored by: Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association

FORECAST

Area New Vehicle Market Predicted to Decline 4.9% in 2026

Key factors boosting new vehicle sales

Pent up demand. New vehicle sales since the onset of the pandemic have been below average. And the Great Recession of 2009 was called great for a reason: it took nearly seven years for sales to return to normal levels. Due to this extended period of below-average sales, the vehicle fleet is aging (see below). Vehicle purchases have been postponed, which will provide support to the market.

Consumers have incentive to upgrade. Average age of vehicles in operation has reached an all-time high. No question, modern vehicles are built better and last longer, but today's models offer many upgraded features vs. the average 12.5-year-old car. Passive and active safety technology, advanced infotainment options, and alternative powertrains are just a few examples. Many vehicle owners have a strong incentive to upgrade.

Declining interest rates? Prior to the Iran war, the prospects were good for interest rates to fall during 2026. But the war and subsequent increases in oil and gasoline prices have brought that into question. Lower finance rates are critical for improving affordability, which is the primary negative for the market.

Key factors holding back new vehicle sales

New vehicle affordability. Finance costs remain elevated due to high interest rates, vehicle transaction prices are hovering around $50,000, and income growth is barely keeping pace with inflation. Manufacturers can alleviate price pressures by reducing content levels and offering more affordable models, but these adjustments take time.

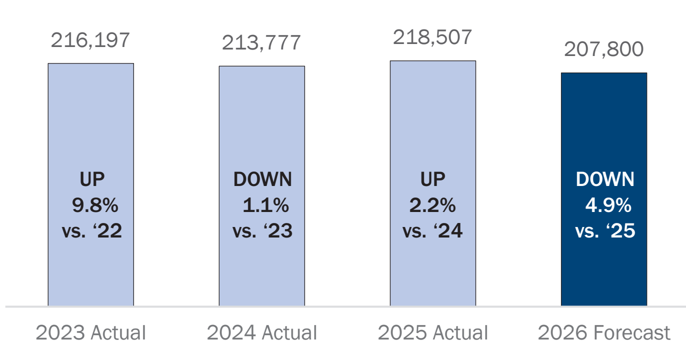
Tariffs. Higher tariffs will negatively impact new vehicle sales in 2026. Up until now, manufacturers and dealers have largely absorbed the costs, but eventually, consumers will feel the effects. Tariffs also lead to increasing inflation in the economy, which reduces disposable household income.

Uncertainty. Forecasting auto sales is always challenging, but the past 15 months have been particularly unpredictable. Unforeseen events like fluctuating tariff rates, the phase-out of BEV tax credits, the war in Iran, and rising gasoline prices have all thrown uncertainty into the outlook. Largely as a result of this ongoing tumult, consumer confidence has plummeted to near record-low levels. Heightened uncertainty makes people reluctant to make big-ticket purchases, like automobiles.

Key Trends in Area Market

- Area new retail light vehicle registrations are predicted to decline 4.9% for all of this year versus 2025.
- Registrations in the first quarter of 2026 slipped to 45,112 units, off by 15.9% from a year earlier and below the previous five year average (see page 2). The U.S. market declined 8.5%.
- BEV and PHEV registrations fell by more than 54% in the first quarter of this year (see page 6). BEV market share fell to 7.6%.
- Among top 25 sellers, Nissan was the only brand to have an increase in registrations so far this year (see page 5).
- BMW X5 is a relatively strong performer in the area market (see page 7).

Forecast for Area New Retail Light Vehicle Registrations



The graph above shows annual new retail light vehicle registrations from 2023 to 2025, and Auto Outlook's projection for 2026.
Historical data sourced from Experian Automotive.

Market Summary

	YTD '25 thru Mar.	YTD '26 thru Mar.	% Chg. '25 to '26	Mkt. Share YTD '26
TOTAL	53,623	45,112	-15.9%	
Car	10,946	8,594	-21.5%	19.1%
Light Truck	42,677	36,518	-14.4%	80.9%
Domestic	14,946	11,291	-24.5%	25.1%
European	7,656	6,106	-20.2%	13.5%
Japanese	24,357	21,740	-10.7%	48.2%
Other Asian	6,664	5,975	-10.3%	13.2%

Domestics consist of vehicles sold by GM, Ford, Stellantis (excluding Alfa Romeo and FIAT), Tesla, Rivian, and Lucid. Other Asian includes Genesis, Hyundai, Kia, and VinFast.
Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

KEY TRENDS IN WASHINGTON AREA NEW VEHICLE MARKET

AREA MARKET VS. U.S.

% Change In New Retail Market YTD '26 thru March vs. YTD '25	Washington Area	U.S.
	DOWN 15.9%	**DOWN 8.5%**

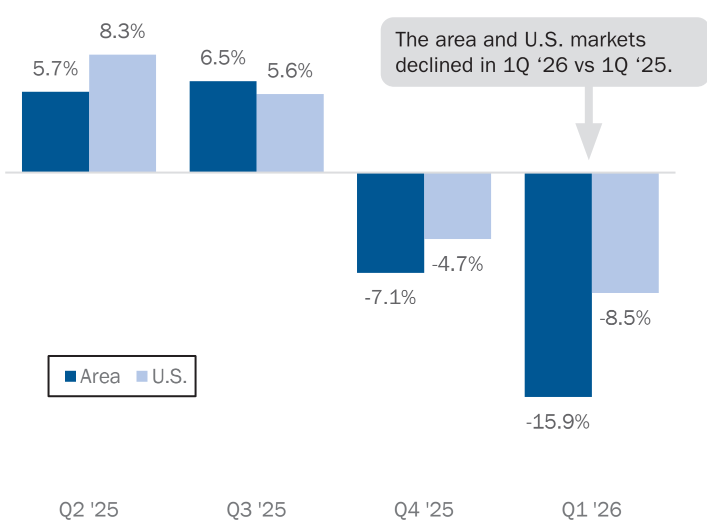
New retail light vehicle registrations in the area declined 15.9% during the first three months of this year versus year earlier, below the 8.5% fall in the Nation.

Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

QUARTERLY RESULTS

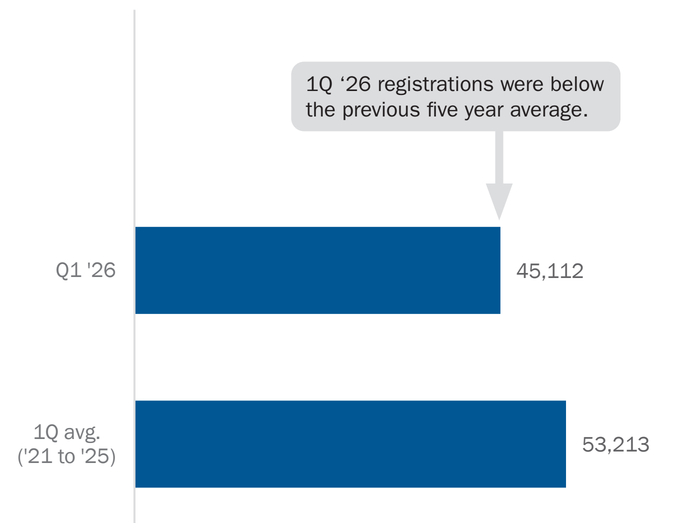
QUARTERLY TREND

Percent Change in Registrations vs. Year Earlier



QUARTERLY PERSPECTIVE

1Q '26 Registrations Versus 1Q Average for Previous Five Years



Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

Washington Auto Outlook

Published by:
Auto Outlook, Inc.
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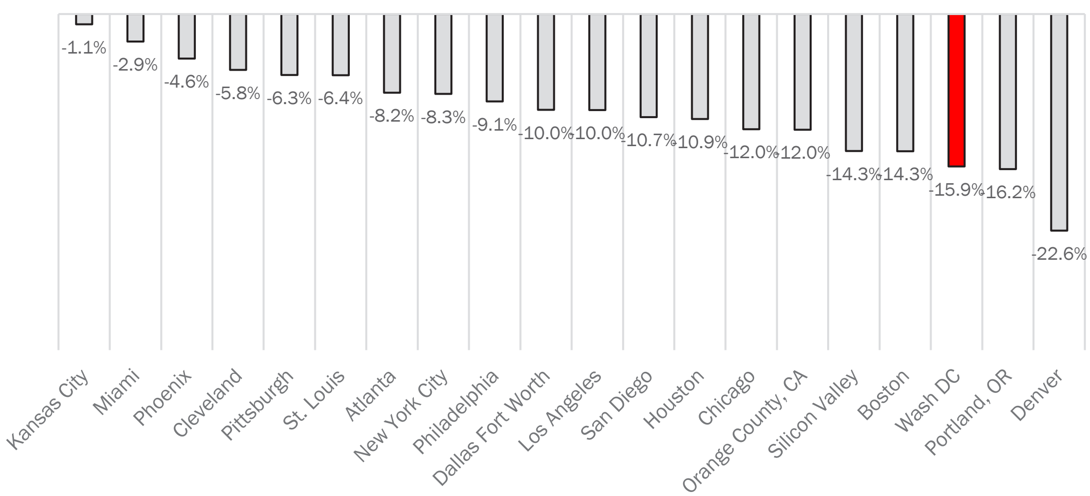
COMPARISON OF METRO AREA MARKETS

COMPARE

INDUSTRY RESULTS IN FIRST QUARTER 2026

Percent Change in New Retail Light Vehicle Registrations - 1Q 2026 vs. 1Q 2025



The graph on the left shows the percent change in new retail light vehicle registrations during the first three months of this year versus year earlier in 20 selected metro areas. Washington area registrations fell 15.9% in the first quarter of this year, below average compared to other markets. The Kansas City market had the smallest decline, off 1.1%.

Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

MARKET SHARE BY BRAND CATEGORY

Market Share by Brand Type in 20 Selected Metro Area Markets - YTD 2026 thru March

	Domestic Brands		European Brands		Japanese Brands		Other Asian Brands	
Rank	Area	% share	Area	% share	Area	% share	Area	% share
1	St. Louis	45.2	Los Angeles	18.1	Portland, OR	52.4	Chicago	14.7
2	Cleveland	44.5	Miami	18.1	Boston	48.8	Cleveland	14.7
3	Dallas Fort Worth	41.3	Orange County, CA	16.9	Wash DC	48.2	Atlanta	14.0
4	Kansas City	40.8	New York City	16.7	San Diego	48.1	Miami	14.0
5	Houston	40.5	Silicon Valley	14.3	Los Angeles	47.8	Phoenix	14.0
6	Pittsburgh	39.8	San Diego	14.0	New York City	45.7	Wash DC	13.2
7	Phoenix	36.7	Wash DC	13.5	Orange County, CA	44.5	Philadelphia	13.0
8	Atlanta	35.1	Boston	13.4	Philadelphia	44.3	Pittsburgh	13.0
9	Silicon Valley	34.3	Philadelphia	13.3	Denver	44.2	Kansas City	12.4
10	Chicago	32.7	Denver	12.7	Silicon Valley	42.4	Denver	11.6
11	Denver	31.5	Chicago	12.0	Atlanta	40.9	New York City	11.6
12	Philadelphia	29.4	Phoenix	10.4	Chicago	40.6	St. Louis	11.6
13	Miami	29.0	Houston	10.3	Pittsburgh	40.5	Dallas Fort Worth	11.3
14	Boston	28.5	Atlanta	10.0	Miami	38.9	Portland, OR	10.9
15	Orange County, CA	28.2	Portland, OR	9.8	Phoenix	38.9	Los Angeles	10.8
16	San Diego	27.7	Dallas Fort Worth	9.7	Houston	38.7	Houston	10.5
17	Portland, OR	26.9	Kansas City	9.0	Kansas City	37.8	Orange County, CA	10.4
18	New York City	26.0	St. Louis	8.8	Dallas Fort Worth	37.7	San Diego	10.2
19	Wash DC	25.1	Pittsburgh	6.7	Cleveland	34.4	Boston	9.3
20	Los Angeles	23.3	Cleveland	6.4	St. Louis	34.4	Silicon Valley	9.0

The table above shows percent market share for Domestic, European, Japanese, and Other Asian brands in 20 selected metro area markets in the first quarter of this year. Other Asian brands include Genesis, Hyundai, Kia, and VinFast. Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

BRANDS

TOP SELLING BRANDS IN 7 PRIMARY SEGMENTS

The seven graphs on this page show brand market share in seven key segments during the first three months of 2026 in both the Washington Area and U.S. markets. Area percent share is depicted by the red bars, U.S. share is light gray. Top ten brands in each segment are ranked from top to bottom based on Washington Area share.

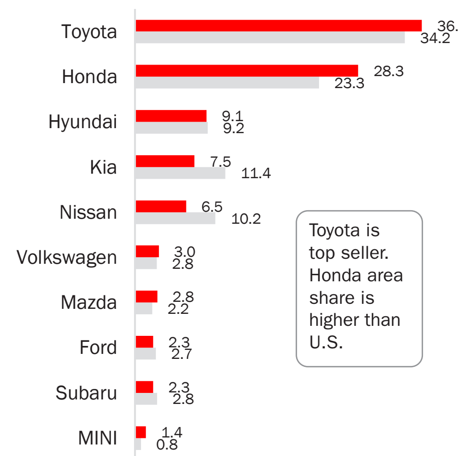
Segments were defined based on model classifications instead of overall brand positioning. For instance, Chevrolet appears on the Luxury and Sports cars graph because of the Corvette. Small SUVs consists of both Sub Compact and Compact models.

Legend for all graphs

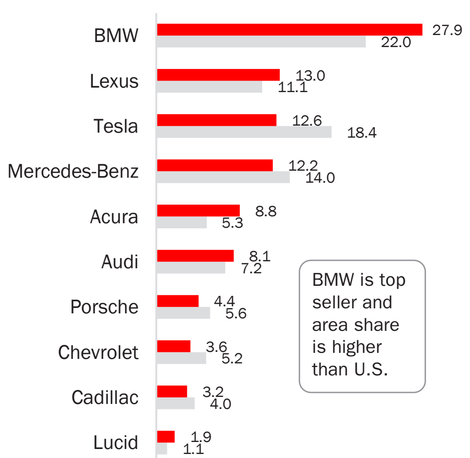
Brand share of segment in Washington area during YTD ‘26

Brand share of segment in U.S. market during YTD ‘26

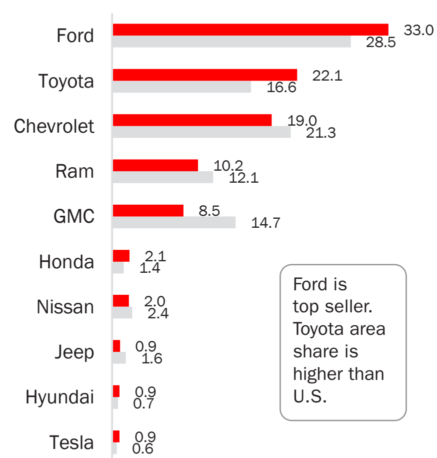
Mainstream Cars



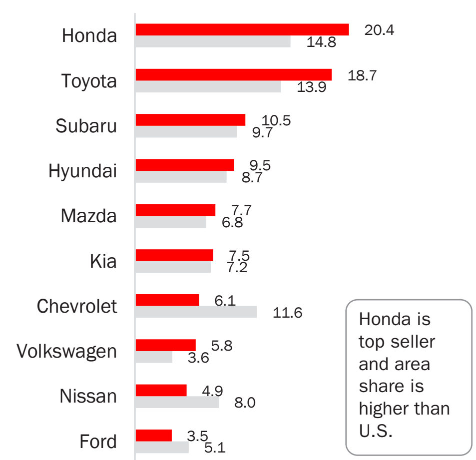
Luxury and Sports Cars



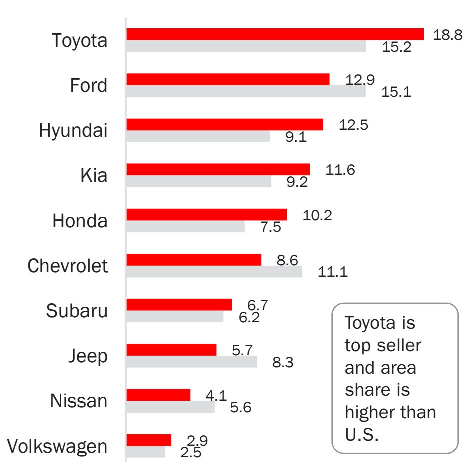
Pickups



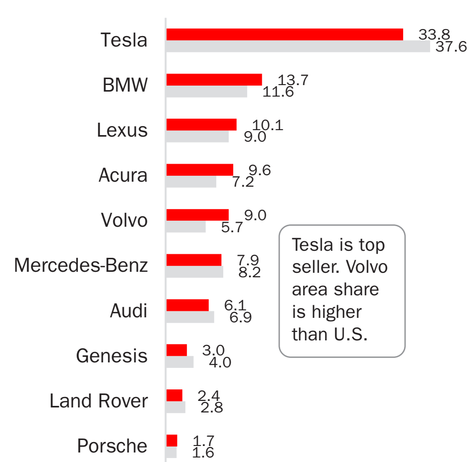
Small Mainstream SUVs



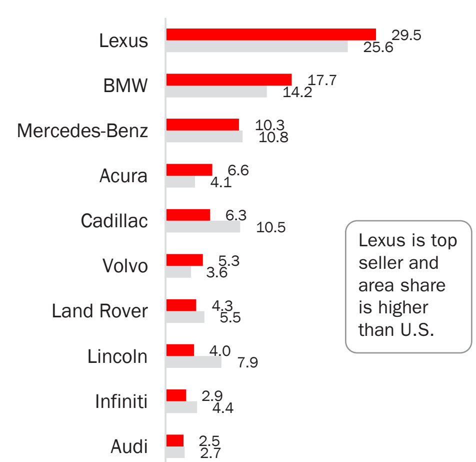
Mid and Full Size Mainstream SUVs



Small Luxury SUVs



Mid and Full Size Luxury SUVs



Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

BRANDS

WINNERS AND LOSERS

The graph below shows both the percent and unit change in registrations during the first quarter of this year versus year earlier for the top 25 selling brands in the Washington area market.

Percent and Unit Change in New Retail Light Vehicle Registrations for Top 25 Selling Brands - YTD ‘26 thru Mar. vs. YTD ‘25

Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

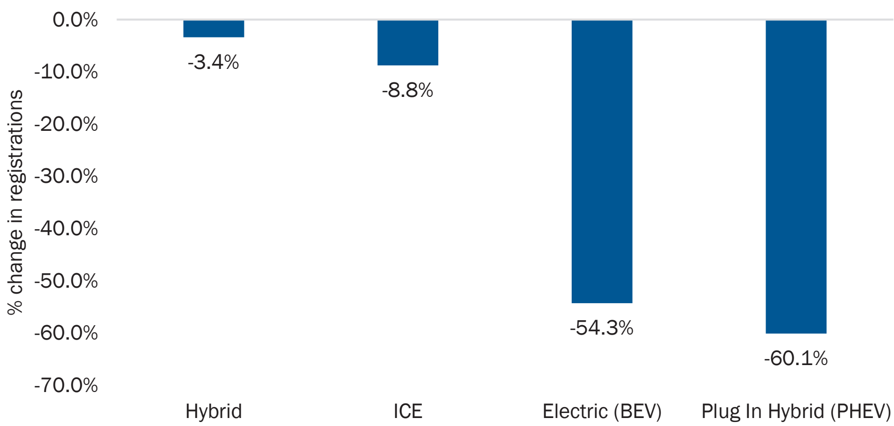
POWERTRAINS

FIVE KEY TRENDS

1. BEV registrations declined 54.3% during the first three months of 2026 vs. year earlier.
2. BEV market share fell to 7.6% in 1Q '26, down from 14% in 1Q '25.
3. Hybrid vehicle registrations slipped 3.4% so far this year vs. the 15.9% drop in the overall market.
4. Plug-in-hybrids had the largest percentage decline in 1Q '26 versus year earlier.
5. BEV/PHEV market share was highest in the Small Luxury SUV segment (see graph below).

ICE, BEV, PHEV, AND HYBRID MARKET SHARE

% Change in Registrations by Powertrain Type YTD '26 thru Mar. vs YTD '25



Data sourced from Experian Automotive. Hybrid registrations exclude mild hybrids.

% Share of Industry Registrations by Powertrain Type

YTD thru March

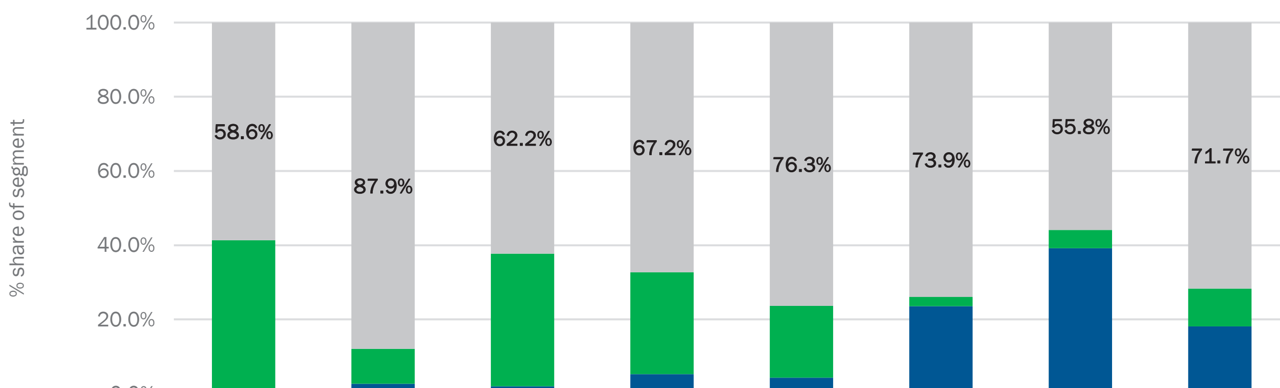
	YTD '25	YTD '26	
Hybrid	18.7%	21.4%	▲
Electric (BEV)	14.0%	7.6%	▼
Plug In Hybrid (PHEV)	3.4%	1.6%	▼

Quarterly

	4Q '25	1Q '26	
Hybrid	20.7%	21.4%	▲
Electric (BEV)	12.2%	7.6%	▼
Plug In Hybrid (PHEV)	2.1%	1.6%	▼

POWERTRAIN SHARES FOR VEHICLE SEGMENTS

Percent Share of Segment Registrations by Powertrain Type - YTD 2026 thru March



	Non Luxury Cars	Pickups	Vans	Small Non Luxury SUVs	Mid Size and Large Non Luxury SUVs	Luxury Cars	Small Luxury SUVs	Mid Size and Large Luxury SUVs
ICE	58.6%	87.9%	62.2%	67.2%	76.3%	73.9%	55.8%	71.7%
Hybrid	40.0%	9.4%	35.8%	27.5%	19.4%	2.5%	4.9%	10.1%
BEVs + PHEVs	1.3%	2.7%	2.0%	5.3%	4.3%	23.6%	39.2%	18.2%

The graph above shows market share by powertrain type for eight vehicle segments. Gray bars show ICE market share, green is hybrids, and blue is combined share for BEVs and PHEVs. Luxury segments are shown on the right side of the graph. BEV/PHEV share exceeded 23% for Luxury Cars and Small Luxury SUVs. Hybrids accounted for 40% of the Non Luxury Car segment. Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

MODELS

COMPARISON OF TOP-SELLING MODELS IN AREA AND U.S. MARKETS

The table below shows rankings in the area and U.S. market for the top 30 sellers in the area. Models are shown from top to bottom based on area registrations. The bars on the right of the table show the difference between area and U.S. rankings. Honda CR-V was the best-selling model in the Washington Area and third in the Nation. BMW X5 was a relatively strong performer in the area, with area ranking exceeding U.S. by 21 positions, the largest positive differential.

Washington Area and U.S. Rankings for Top 30 Selling Models in Area - YTD 2026 thru March

Model	Area Rank	U.S. Rank	Difference in area and U.S. rankings Positive # = higher rank in area. Negative # = lower rank in area
Honda CR-V	1	3	2
Toyota RAV4	2	4	2
Tesla Model Y	3	6	3
Honda Civic	4	11	7
Toyota Camry	5	9	4
Ford F-Series	6	1	-5
Toyota Corolla	7	12	5
Hyundai Tucson	8	13	5
Honda Accord	9	22	13
Subaru Forester	10	15	5
Chevrolet Silverado	11	2	-9
Lexus RX	12	32	20
Toyota Tacoma	13	8	-5
Toyota Grand Highlander	14	24	10
Kia Sportage	15	17	2
Honda HR-V	16	28	12
Kia Telluride	17	20	3
Subaru Crosstrek	18	18	0
Honda Pilot	19	29	10
Hyundai Palisade	20	34	14
Mazda CX-5	21	27	6
Toyota Corolla Cross	22	38	16
Hyundai Santa Fe	23	37	14
Ram Pickup	24	7	-17
Volkswagen Tiguan	25	45	20
Hyundai Elantra	26	40	14
Toyota Sienna	27	47	20
Subaru Outback	28	33	5
BMW X5	29	50	21
Nissan Rogue	30	14	-16

Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

Brand Registrations Report Washington Area New Retail Car and Light Truck Registrations												
	First Quarter						Annual Totals					
	Registrations			Market Share (%)			Registrations			Market Share (%)		
	1Q '25	1Q '26	% change	1Q '25	1Q '26	Change	2024	2025	% change	2024	2025	Change
TOTAL	53,623	45,112	-15.9				213,777	218,507	2.2			
Cars	10,946	8,594	-21.5	20.4	19.1	-1.3	48,263	45,016	-6.7	22.6	20.6	-2.0
Light Trucks	42,677	36,518	-14.4	79.6	80.9	1.3	165,514	173,491	4.8	77.4	79.4	2.0
Domestic Brands	14,946	11,291	-24.5	27.9	25.1	-2.8	59,648	57,584	-3.5	27.9	26.4	-1.5
European Brands	7,656	6,106	-20.2	14.3	13.5	-0.8	30,972	29,848	-3.6	14.5	13.7	-0.8
Japanese Brands	24,357	21,740	-10.7	45.4	48.2	2.8	97,827	102,561	4.8	45.8	46.9	1.1
Other Asian Brands	6,664	5,975	-10.3	12.4	13.2	0.8	25,330	28,514	12.6	11.8	13.0	1.2
Acura	963	848	-11.9	1.8	1.9	0.1	3,966	4,209	6.1	1.9	1.9	0.0
Alfa Romeo	20	12	-40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	114	72	-36.8	0.1	0.0	-0.1
Audi	841	520	-38.2	1.6	1.2	-0.4	3,489	3,283	-5.9	1.6	1.5	-0.1
BMW	1,942	1,877	-3.3	3.6	4.2	0.6	7,727	7,778	0.7	3.6	3.6	0.0
Buick	252	151	-40.1	0.5	0.3	-0.2	845	876	3.7	0.4	0.4	0.0
Cadillac	450	356	-20.9	0.8	0.8	0.0	1,815	1,948	7.3	0.8	0.9	0.1
Chevrolet	2,935	2,579	-12.1	5.5	5.7	0.2	11,443	12,059	5.4	5.4	5.5	0.1
Chrysler	138	98	-29.0	0.3	0.2	-0.1	662	478	-27.8	0.3	0.2	-0.1
Dodge	208	132	-36.5	0.4	0.3	-0.1	1,256	732	-41.7	0.6	0.3	-0.3
Ford	4,278	3,613	-15.5	8.0	8.0	0.0	15,903	16,979	6.8	7.4	7.8	0.4
Genesis	291	251	-13.7	0.5	0.6	0.1	1,144	1,267	10.8	0.5	0.6	0.1
GMC	783	654	-16.5	1.5	1.4	-0.1	2,697	3,000	11.2	1.3	1.4	0.1
Honda	6,944	5,829	-16.1	12.9	12.9	0.0	25,658	28,744	12.0	12.0	13.2	1.2
Hyundai	2,983	2,935	-1.6	5.6	6.5	0.9	11,706	13,874	18.5	5.5	6.3	0.8
Ineos	26	13	-50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	88	80	-9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Infiniti	196	143	-27.0	0.4	0.3	-0.1	785	673	-14.3	0.4	0.3	-0.1
Jeep	1,314	944	-28.2	2.5	2.1	-0.4	5,304	5,001	-5.7	2.5	2.3	-0.2
Kia	3,389	2,789	-17.7	6.3	6.2	-0.1	12,479	13,361	7.1	5.8	6.1	0.3
Land Rover	410	282	-31.2	0.8	0.6	-0.2	1,591	1,502	-5.6	0.7	0.7	0.0
Lexus	2,228	1,939	-13.0	4.2	4.3	0.1	8,463	9,256	9.4	4.0	4.2	0.2
Lincoln	246	219	-11.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	975	1,085	11.3	0.5	0.5	0.0
Lucid	57	83	45.6	0.1	0.2	0.1	114	243	113.2	0.1	0.1	0.0
Mazda	1,472	1,346	-8.6	2.7	3.0	0.3	6,020	5,883	-2.3	2.8	2.7	-0.1
Mercedes-Benz	1,223	1,081	-11.6	2.3	2.4	0.1	5,491	5,474	-0.3	2.6	2.5	-0.1
MINI	215	158	-26.5	0.4	0.4	0.0	841	883	5.0	0.4	0.4	0.0
Mitsubishi	188	84	-55.3	0.4	0.2	-0.2	998	603	-39.6	0.5	0.3	-0.2
Nissan	1,420	1,512	6.5	2.6	3.4	0.8	7,136	6,487	-9.1	3.3	3.0	-0.3
Polestar	41	23	-43.9	0.1	0.1	0.0	189	167	-11.6	0.1	0.1	0.0
Porsche	343	239	-30.3	0.6	0.5	-0.1	1,219	1,276	4.7	0.6	0.6	0.0
Ram	615	580	-5.7	1.1	1.3	0.2	2,113	2,409	14.0	1.0	1.1	0.1
Rivian	146	113	-22.6	0.3	0.3	0.0	675	511	-24.3	0.3	0.2	-0.1
Subaru	2,461	2,098	-14.8	4.6	4.7	0.1	10,129	9,666	-4.6	4.7	4.4	-0.3
Tesla	3,523	1,769	-49.8	6.6	3.9	-2.7	15,721	12,262	-22.0	7.4	5.6	-1.8
Toyota	8,485	7,941	-6.4	15.8	17.6	1.8	34,672	37,040	6.8	16.2	17.0	0.8
Volkswagen	1,650	1,231	-25.4	3.1	2.7	-0.4	6,891	5,861	-14.9	3.2	2.7	-0.5
Volvo	856	604	-29.4	1.6	1.3	-0.3	2,898	3,164	9.2	1.4	1.4	0.0
Other	91	66	-27.5	0.2	0.1	-0.1	560	321	-42.7	0.3	0.1	-0.2
Data sourced from Experian Automotive. Other Asian Brands includes Genesis, Hyundai, Kia, and VinFast.												

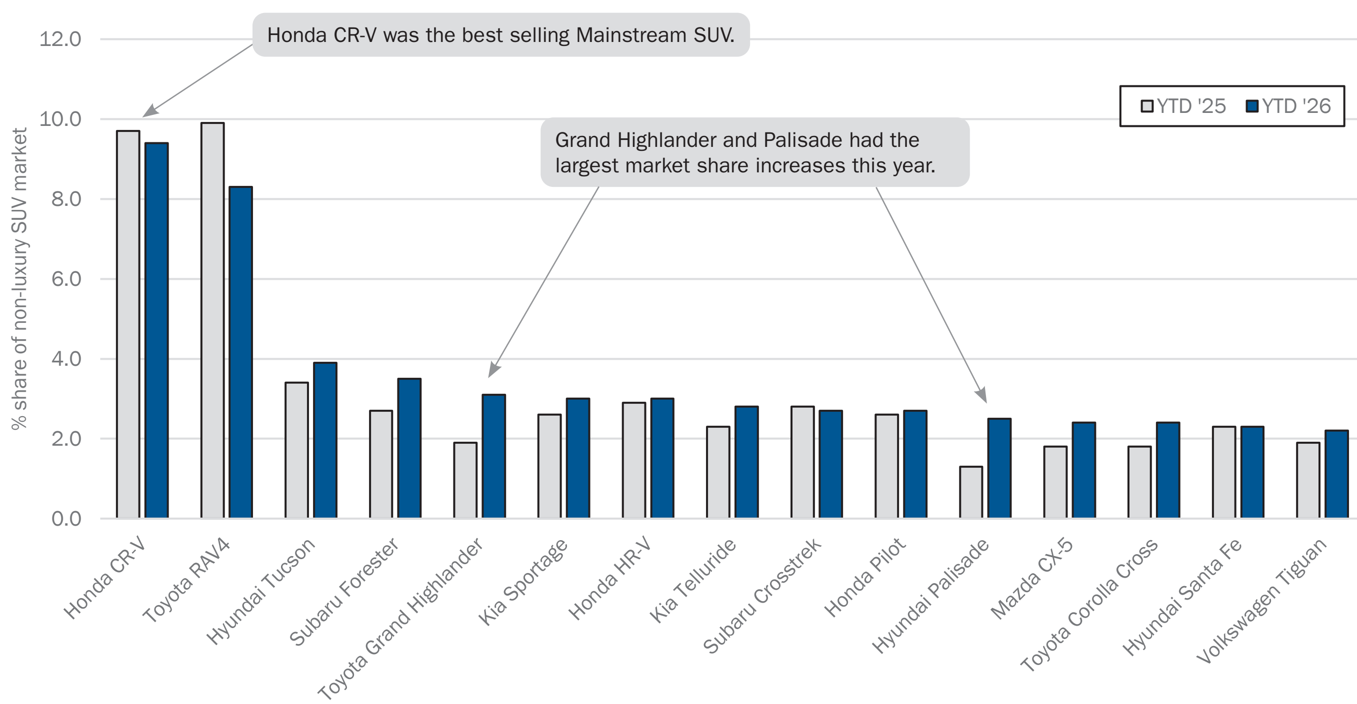
The table shows new retail light vehicle (car and light truck) registrations in the Washington Area market. Figures are shown for the first quarters of ‘25 and ‘26, and annual totals in 2024 and 2025. The top ten ranked brands in each change category are shaded yellow. Vehicle registrations are recorded based on when the vehicle title information is processed, which occurs after the vehicle is sold.

SUV MARKET SHARES

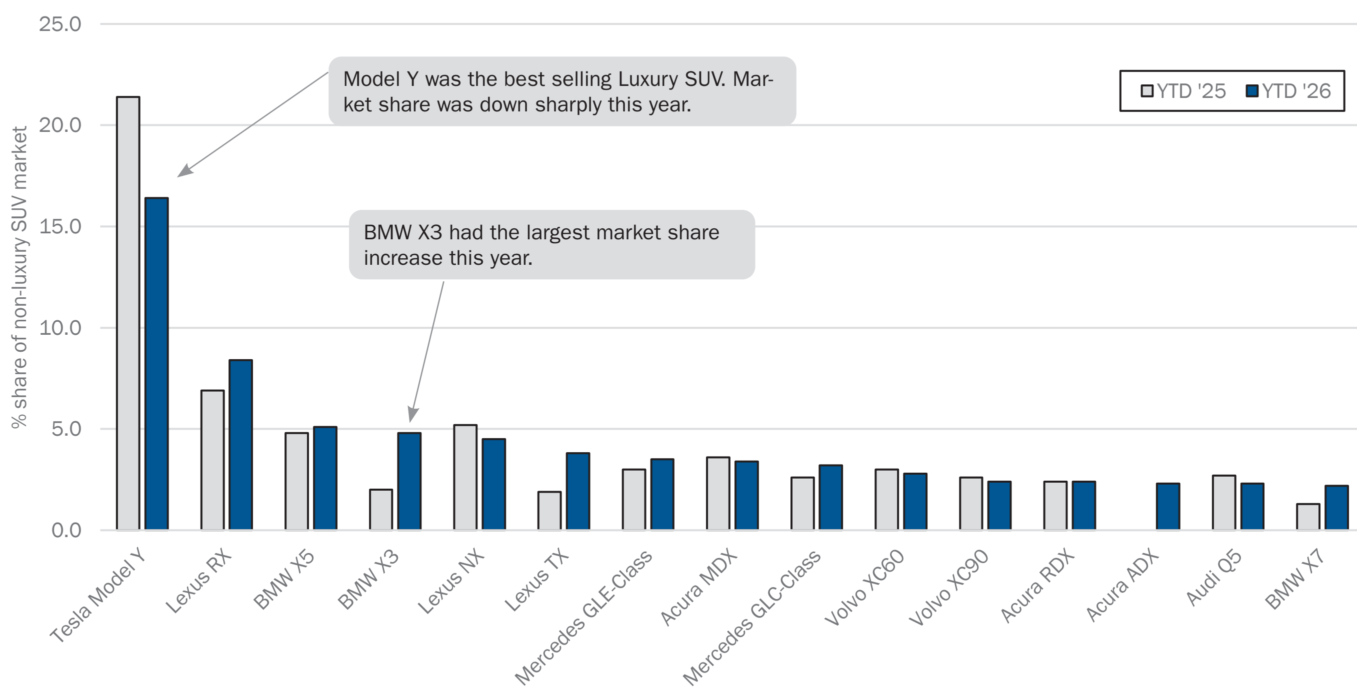
CR-V is On Top for Mainstream SUVs; Model Y Has Lead in Luxury Segment

The two graphs below show market share in the Washington Area during the first three months of 2025 and 2026 for the top 15 selling Mainstream and Luxury SUV models.

Market Share for Top 15 Selling Mainstream SUVs - YTD 2025 and 2026 thru March



Market Share for Top 15 Selling Luxury SUVs - YTD 2025 and 2026 thru March

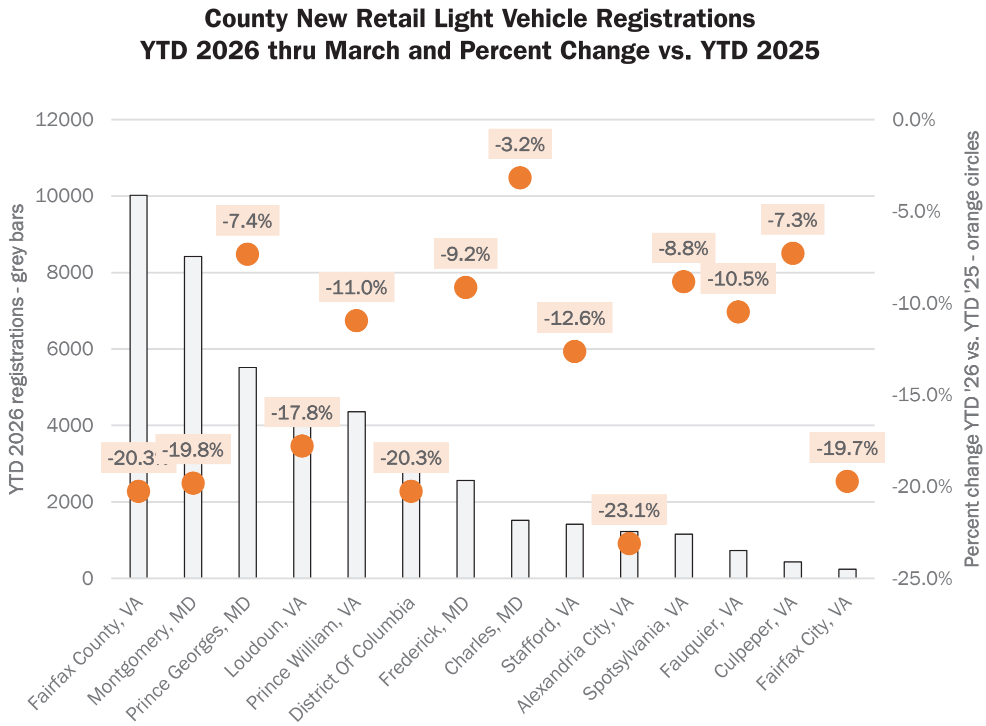


Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

COUNTY MARKETS

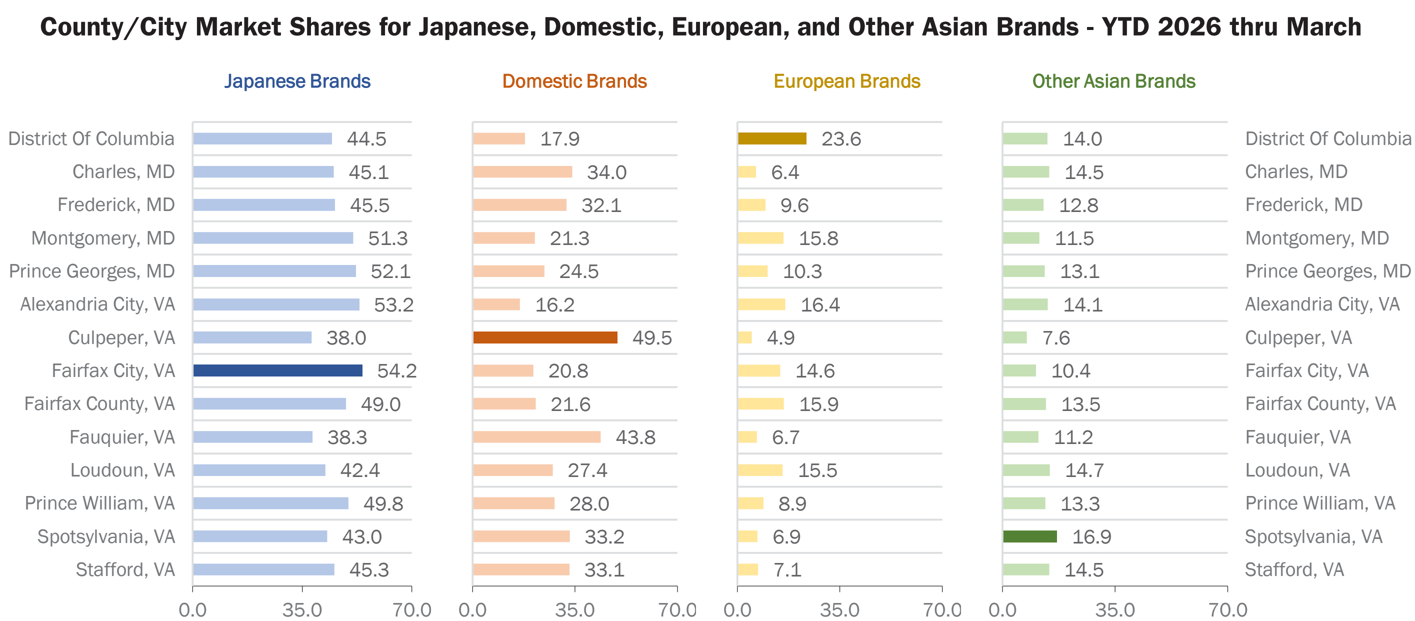
Registrations Declined in All County Markets

The graphs and tables on these two pages show specific data on each of the area's 14 county/city markets. The figures represent new vehicles registered to retail customers residing in each of the areas, and includes both purchase and lease transactions.



New Vehicle Registrations YTD 2026 thru March	
County	Regs.
Fairfax County, VA	10022
Montgomery, MD	8418
Prince Georges, MD	5520
Loudoun, VA	4641
Prince William, VA	4354
District Of Columbia	2869
Frederick, MD	2560
Charles, MD	1522
Stafford, VA	1416
Alexandria City, VA	1231
Spotsylvania, VA	1154
Fauquier, VA	733
Culpeper, VA	432
Fairfax City, VA	240

The graph above shows new vehicle registrations during the first three months of this year (grey bars and left axis) and percent change vs. year earlier (orange circles with labels and right axis). Data sourced from Experian Automotive.



The graphs above show market shares by brand segments. Darker colors show the highest rated county/city for each segment. Other Asian includes Genesis, Hyundai, Kia, and VinFast. Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

COUNTY MARKETS

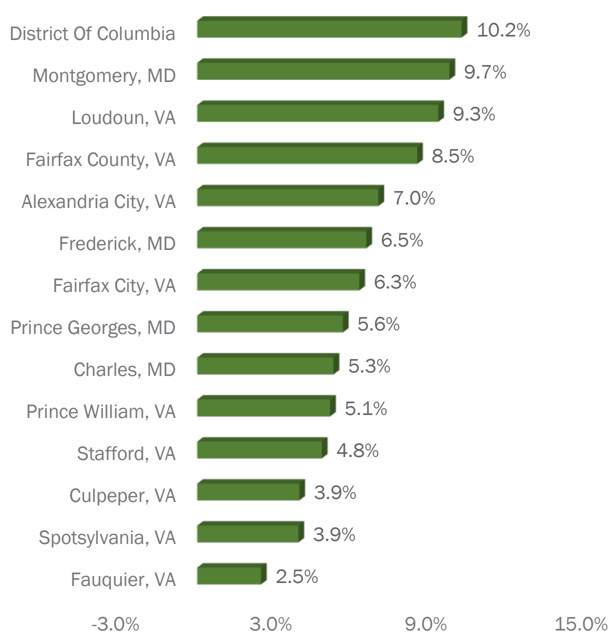
Honda Market Share Approached 15% in Prince William County

Brand Market Share - YTD 2026 thru March

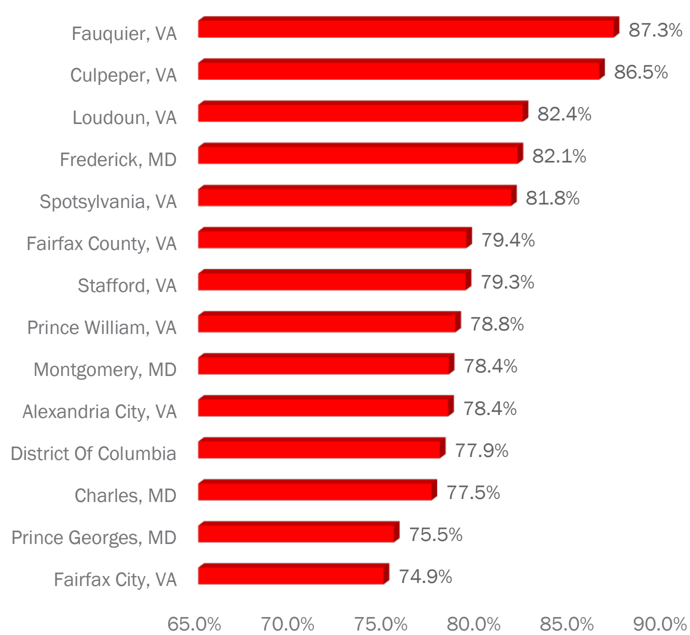
County/City	Toyota	Honda	Ford	Hyundai	Kia	Chevrolet	Subaru	Lexus	BMW	Tesla
District Of Columbia	15.4	11.6	5.2	7.6	5.9	3.2	5.3	3.5	6.2	3.4
Charles, MD	15.6	11.3	10.1	8.2	5.4	10.8	2.6	4.1	2.0	2.7
Frederick, MD	15.7	13.5	10.0	7.5	5.1	9.0	5.6	2.9	2.7	3.2
Montgomery, MD	18.7	13.2	6.1	5.6	5.5	3.9	5.3	5.2	4.8	5.3
Prince Georges, MD	19.5	13.2	8.0	8.1	4.5	7.0	2.2	5.4	3.3	2.6
Alexandria City, VA	21.0	14.1	5.8	7.0	6.5	3.3	5.0	4.1	6.0	2.8
Culpeper, VA	18.8	8.6	15.5	3.5	4.2	16.0	5.8	0.9	0.7	2.3
Fairfax City, VA	20.8	13.8	7.1	7.9	2.5	3.8	7.1	4.2	3.8	3.3
Fairfax County, VA	17.7	13.3	7.0	6.2	6.6	3.7	5.6	4.8	5.0	4.6
Fauquier, VA	16.2	7.9	16.4	3.7	7.1	17.1	5.9	2.9	0.8	1.1
Loudoun, VA	14.5	12.7	8.9	6.4	7.6	4.9	4.1	4.2	5.7	5.2
Prince William, VA	18.1	14.7	9.9	5.6	7.1	7.2	3.9	3.4	2.8	3.1
Spotsylvania, VA	17.0	11.3	10.1	6.9	9.7	9.4	5.3	1.2	1.0	2.1
Stafford, VA	19.2	10.4	12.0	6.4	7.7	8.3	4.2	2.7	1.4	2.6

The table above shows brand market shares in each of the 14 county/city markets. (Includes top ten selling brands in the area.) Highest market share for each brand is shaded grey. Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

Battery Electric Vehicle Market Share YTD 2026 thru March



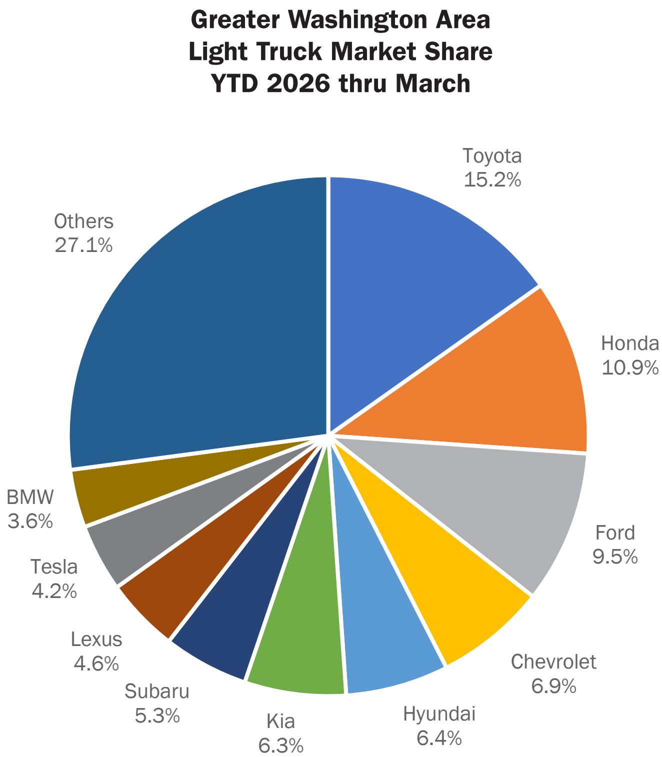
Light Truck Market Share YTD 2026 thru March

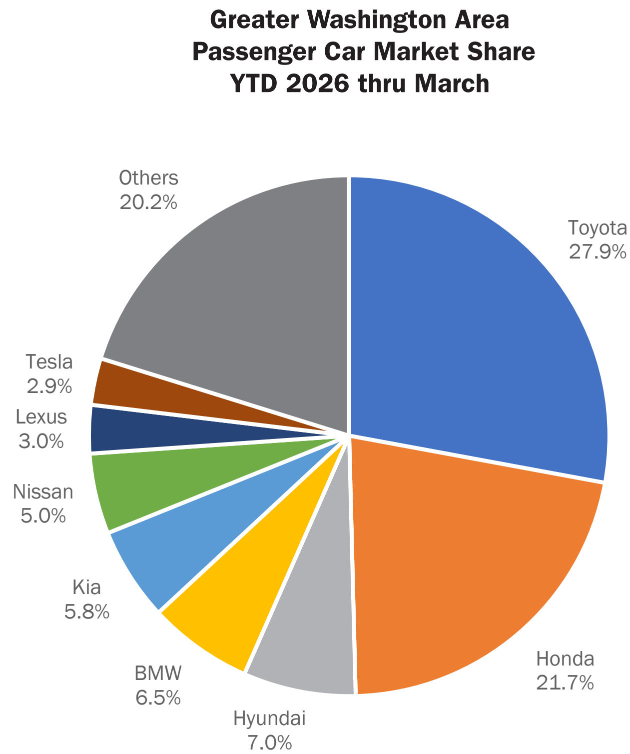


Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

BRAND MARKET SHARES

Toyota Leads Area Light Truck and Passenger Car Markets





The two graphs above show the top ten selling brands in the Washington area light truck and passenger car markets during the first three months of 2026. Light trucks consists of all SUVs, pickups, and vans.

Data sourced from Experian Automotive.

Washington Auto Outlook

Provided by:

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Published by:

Auto Outlook, Inc

WASHINGTON AREA NEW AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

Washington Auto Outlook is distributed exclusively to members of the Washington Area New Auto Dealers Association. The publication is supported and provided by WANADA.

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