

Alternative Transportation Mode Strategies

CARPOOLS AND VANPOOLS

Carpools

A motor vehicle occupied by two to six people traveling together for a commute trip that results in the reduction of a minimum of one motor vehicle commute trip. Persons under 16 years of age commuting in a carpool do not count as a carpool member because they do not eliminate a vehicle trip.

Vanpools

A vehicle occupied by seven to 15 people traveling together for their commute trip that results in the reduction of a minimum of one motor vehicle trip. Vanpools may have a destination other than an employee's worksite and may have employees from other agencies.

Vanpools are not limited to vehicles furnished through transit agencies. A private party may form a vanpool using his/her own vehicle and using a special vanpool license plate. The private party may be exempt from sales/use tax on the vehicle when it is purchased and from vehicle excise tax any year the vehicle is used as a vanpool (RCW 46.16.023.)

For a copy of the "Do it Yourself Vanpool Guide" click on:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/mobility/tdm/DoVanpool/diyvg.html>

Vanpools using private vehicles should meet the following criteria:

- ◇ Consist of at least seven people. Seven is the minimum start-up number generally required by transit agencies, which supply most public vanpools in the state.
- ◇ Be not for profit/not for hire to qualify for incentives. This is part of the requirements outlined in RCW 46.74 (Ridesharing Act of 1979).
- ◇ Be pre-arranged.

Program Strategies

Carpool and vanpool programs work best if some combinations of incentives are offered such as preferential parking and parking passes for days the carpool or vanpool members must drive alone. The following elements are recommended:

- ◇ **Registration System:** Most carpool/vanpool programs require the establishment of a vehicle registration system that will provide the agency valuable data that will assist in program development and evaluation.

Typically, drivers and riders must register themselves as well as the vehicles. Only one permit per carpool/vanpool is provided so only one vehicle can be brought to the worksite on a given day.

- ◇ **Preferential Parking:** Preferential parking in the form of reserved, covered if available, or convenient parking close to building entrances for carpools/vanpools should be provided. This can be used with either free or paid parking policies. It's

suggested that the parking spaces allotted to carpools/vanpools be in highly visible locations to encourage ridesharing.

Preferential parking requires a registration system, for the vehicles, drivers, and riders; special spaces be signed and/or striped and a monitoring system. If the parking area is large or employees have multi-work locations within a site, it may be preferable to allow carpools/vanpools to park anywhere in the parking lot.

Parking Fees and Ridesharing

If your agency charges parking fees, the following strategies should be considered.

◇ **Discount Parking Fees for Carpools**

Discount parking fees assume that carpool-parking costs are either reduced or eliminated. While this can be an effective strategy, it can require significant monitoring. Before offering reduced or no parking fee incentives for carpools, state agencies should emphasize the benefits of sharing parking charges and vehicle costs such as fuel, maintenance, and insurance. Other benefits include quality of life issues such as reduced stress, being able to use high-occupancy vehicle lanes, and knowing that carpools reduce air pollution, traffic congestion, and our dependence on petroleum products.

Considerations when providing discount parking fees for carpools:

- Requires a more complicated registration and permit system that includes special policies for carpool formations
- Requires an extensive monitoring system to determine minimum use.
- Results in higher registration and monitoring costs.
- As the differential between single-occupant vehicle and carpool parking rate increases, the potential for abuse also increases.
- Reduces revenue.

◇ **Discount Parking Fees for Vanpools:**

Discount parking fees or free parking constitutes a significant incentive to form vanpools. However, there are some costs involved, including lost revenue from parking fees and administrative costs. Because vanpools from transit agencies are so visible, a discounting parking fee programs is easier to administer than for carpools. Vanpools in nontransit vehicles should follow the same strategies as for carpools.

◇ **Parking Passes:** Studies indicate that CTR programs that recognize the need for high-occupancy vehicle commuters to have access to their automobiles several times a month are much more successful. Parking passes allow registered carpools, vanpoolers, bicyclists, walkers, and bus riders to park for free or at a reduced rate on days they need their automobiles.

A parking pass system provides non single-occupant vehicle users with flexible options and is fairly easy to administrate. However, such a system could impact parking capacity on certain days. A way to administer a parking pass program is to sell a set quantity of reduced rate parking passes to non single-occupant vehicle users

on a monthly or quarterly basis. The reduced rate parking pass should be set at a rate significantly lower than the daily single-occupant vehicle rate.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Transit is a multiple-occupant vehicle operated on a for-hire, shared ride basis, including bus, ferry, shared ride taxi, shuttle bus, or vanpool. Transit is actually a broad array of services and facilities, from fixed route to demand response to rail and ferry service.

Public transit is an important element of the transportation system of many cities and is a viable commute option for many employees. Transit can be a vital part of worksite CTR programs in those areas where transit exists. A transit trip has the added benefit of counting as zero vehicle trips.

[Click here to connect to a specific Transit Agency](#)

Recommended Transit Strategies

- ◇ State agencies should assess each worksite for transit use by its employees.
- ◇ Transit, where available, should be an element included in each worksite's commute trip reduction program.
- ◇ **Information Distribution:** Transit information should be provided on a regular basis to all employees and especially to new employees during orientation.
- ◇ **Subsidies:** Employers can encourage transit use by helping to pay for employee transit fares. This can be through a partial or whole subsidy. This action demonstrates an employer's commitment to commute alternatives, as well as provides a substantial incentive for employees to use transit. Under federal law, employers may subsidize employee transit expenses up to \$100 per month. Most transit agencies allow the value of bus passes to be transferred towards vanpool fares.
- ◇ **Pass Sale Outlet:** An on-site transit pass outlet can be an incentive to employees by making it convenient to purchase transit fares. It also demonstrates an employer's commitment to commuting alternatives, as well as creating an obvious place for the distribution of transit information. Such a mechanism also can facilitate an employer subsidy efficiently.
- ◇ **Trip Planning:** Some potential transit riders require more help than can be obtained from brochures or timetables. Most transit agencies offer assistance in the form of individualized trip planning. Transit staff will provide detailed instructions on how an employee can commute between home and work. Some agencies will even provide this service on a large scale; that is, provide a customized trip plan to each employee of a particular employer.
- ◇ **On-Site Information:** Transit agencies are able to provide employers with transit and other commuting information in the form of brochures and timetables. They may also provide stand-alone information kiosks and/or wall-mounted information displays.
- ◇ **Facilities:** The current physical design of most employment centers encourages single-occupant vehicle use and not transit. Physical improvements to correct this

situation, such as bus shelters, improved pedestrian access between bus stops and buildings will support efforts to promote transit use.

- ◇ **Negotiation:** Transit agencies may be willing to make changes and/or improvements to existing services or establish new services if it can be demonstrated that the number of employees using transit would substantially increase if the desired changes were made. Given the financial risk incurred by the transit agency in making the requested changes, the employer's willingness to guarantee all or a portion of the fare revenue for a trial period should new riders fail to materialize could be persuasive.

TYPES OF TRANSIT SERVICE

To assist agencies, outlined below are the most common types of transit service available to commuters. Employees are encouraged to contact their transit agencies for the services available in each area.

- ◇ **Fixed Route/Fixed Schedule:** The type of service provided in most cities is operated on a predetermined route and a set schedule. The route is generally designed to serve the greatest number of potential riders as is practical, while taking as direct a route as possible between two terminal points. This type of service is divided into a number of subtypes, as follows:
 - a) Local service is service between two terminal points using city streets, making frequent, regular stops at designated points (typically every 600 to 1,200 feet, depending on population density) where riders want to board/deboard. This type of service operates on a minimum frequency per hour and is usually only appropriate for commuters who live near work.
 - b) Peak service is a variation of local service in which service is increased in frequency during the peak commuter hours.
 - c) Limited stop service consists of buses traveling along routes as local buses, but making fewer stops. Generally this type of service is only operated during peak hours.
- ◇ **Shuttle Service:** Is a type of fixed route/fixed schedule, operating on a short route and providing frequent service between two or more points. Often this type of service operates between park and rides and employment centers. Due to the nature of this type of service, the vehicles used may be smaller than the standard bus.
- ◇ **Express Service:** Provides limited or non-stop service between two points of a route. Generally such service originates in outlying urban areas, having a minimum number of stops for pickups and travels non-stop via major arterial/freeway to major employment centers. This routing is then reversed in the evening. Often a premium fare is charged.
- ◇ **Subscription Service:** Is a specially designed service (usually express or limited stop) provided to a group of employees (of a particular employer or site) that is tailored/ customized to the specific commuting needs of those employees. A premium fare is often charged. The service is generally limited and fixed in terms of scheduling and availability and service is often sponsored (subsidized in part or

whole) by a specific employer. This type of service has some obvious benefits to commuters:

- ability to respond quickly to service requests
- guaranteed seats for employees
- guaranteed arrival time
- express type service

WALKING AND BIKING

Walking and biking offers several benefits for employees who live reasonable distances from their worksites. Walking and biking produce no pollution, consumes no fossil fuel, and is an important travel option for employees. Walking and biking provide access to bus transit, and may be an essential link if buses do not stop close to the worksite.

Walking and biking offer excellent aerobic exercise. Because of these benefits, walking and biking commute trips receive 20 percent extra commute trip reduction credits.

To order free *Bicycle Commute Guide* booklets, e-mail ctrmail@ga.wa.gov.

Recommended Program Elements

◇ **Agency Support:** It is important that state government support employees who walk and bike to work. Although the number of walkers and bikers will be small, state government should encourage those who are able to walk or bike by providing flexible-time, especially in the winter, or other incentives, such as agency umbrellas. In a small agency, this may be a responsive and accommodating attitude by the facilities staff to find a safe place to store a few bicycles. In a larger organization this may require creating an advisory committee.

◇ **Access:** It may be useful to review pedestrian and bicycle access to the worksite. Ideally there should be direct, safe sidewalks or paths from various directions. Busy streets should have direct and safe crossings. Wheelchair access requires sidewalks with adequate curb cuts. If useful links are missing, it may be worthwhile to contact local transportation officials to discuss improvements.

An experienced bicyclist or bicycle advisory committee may need to review the conditions of bicycle access to the worksite and identify any bottlenecks or hazards, which might be brought to the attention of local transportation officials.

◇ **Bicycle Storage Space:** Safe and rainproof bicycle storage is essential for year-round bicycle commuters. This may consist of a storage space inside buildings (perhaps in a store room or closet), outdoor storage lockers (special lockers designed to store bicycles are commercially available), or racks located under covers with adequate supervision to prevent easy theft. If sufficient demand exists, develop a system to allocate bicycle parking spaces.

Bicyclists may be satisfied with minimal bicycle parking facilities. A simple rack or uncovered storage area may be sufficient to accommodate overflow summer bicycle storage needs, although a covered area is desirable, if possible, to protect against summer rains.

- ◇ **Shower/Changing Facilities:** Although walkers and bikers who travel short distances may be able to walk or bike in their work clothes, many worksites need a place for employees to shower and change. A shower already may exist in or near the worksite; in this case the agency should obtain permission and establish policies to use it. If showers are not easily available the agency may need to install them. If possible, clothes lockers should be provided for walking and biking commuters. Showers should be included in the design of new facilities when feasible.
- ◇ **Financial Assistance:** State government should be willing to spend at least as much money per potential bicycle commuter on bicycle facilities (storage lockers, showers, clothes lockers) as would be spend to add additional automobile parking.
- ◇ **Marketing:** Agencies should take special steps to encourage walking and bicycle travel.
 - Bicycling and walking should be included in any list of alternative modes in commute trip reduction publicity.
 - Bicycle clubs and shops should be invited to participate in any transportation fair and to provide appropriate information.
 - A buddy system for walkers can be established.
 - Bicycle safety information, maps, and event calendars can be posted and distributed.
 - There may be local bicycle commuting contests agencies can support.
 - Agencies can help form an employee bicycle club.