



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: March 25, 2008
TO: Mayor and Councilmembers
FROM: Transportation, Public Works Department
SUBJECT: Work Trip Reduction Incentive Program Update

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive a status report on the Work Trip Reduction Incentive Program (Work TRIP).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In July 2007, staff began implementation of the City employee Work TRIP Transportation Demand Management Program to encourage and support alternative commute options and commute traffic reduction for City employees. The purpose of this report is to provide a multi-dimensional summary of the work to date.

DISCUSSION:

On January 23, 2007, Council received a report from Staff describing proposed enhancements to the City's already existing Alternative Transportation Demand Management Program (ALTRANS). The recommended changes were based on professional judgment as well as suggestions from employees gathered through two employee commute surveys. ALTRANS was refashioned as Work TRIP, with a purpose of helping the City meet both its Sustainability and Circulation Element goals by reducing the employee single-passenger drive rate. The program is the result of ongoing collaboration with the City Administrator's Office, Public Works, Finance and Administrative Services Departments.

In anticipation of the program rollout, significant changes were made to the Vehicle Use Policy in order to reduce barriers to commute behavior change, namely, the availability of vehicles during the work day or in case of emergency.

REVIEWED BY: _____ Finance _____ Attorney

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The City's Vehicle Use Policy modifications provide greater support to employees who choose to carpool or use alternative transportation. Employees who use alternative transportation may now use a City vehicle not only in the event of unplanned overtime or medical appointments and emergencies, but also for occasional personal errands during breaks and lunch. Additional important changes allow employees to use city fleet vehicles to transport family members for doctor's appointments and medical emergencies, and employees with assigned vehicles to transport children to or from school on the way to or from work.

Specific information about the work to date on each of the program elements is described below.

Compensation for Use of Alternative Transportation

City Rideshare Program

The City Rideshare Program provides carpool matching services and City fleet vehicles for employee use in carpools of three or more people. The carpool pays its gas and vehicle usage costs at a rate of \$0.20 per mile so that the cost per mile decreases with increasing participation. The rest of the vehicle costs are born by the division providing the vehicle. In the 2007 calendar year, 35 employees participated in the rideshare program in 11 carpools. It is estimated that the rideshare program has reduced 113,000 vehicle miles traveled from July - December 2007.

This program has been received enthusiastically. Staff is considering an additional step of moving City vehicles onto an on-line reservation system would improve efficiency of the program for rideshare participants searching for vehicles, vehicle use and program administration.

Commuter Bus Pass Subsidies

In addition to the already existing free MyRide bus pass for local Metropolitan Transit District (MTD) bus service, transit benefits have been expanded for long distance bus commuters. Depending upon the level of participation and the operator, employees receive a 75% subsidy for monthly or ten ride bus passes for service outside the South Coast area. The Coastal Express pass for Ventura County commuters costs approximately \$75 per month. For North Santa Barbara County commuters, the Clean Air Express pass currently costs \$140 per month, and the MTD Valley Express costs \$120 per month. There are currently 38 employees taking advantage of the 75% discount on these fares.

Vanpool Subsidy

The City pays 75% of the cost of an employee's seat in a full vanpool. Currently, 6 employees are taking advantage of this benefit. Payment is either made directly to the vanpool leasing company or reimbursed to the employee, at a cost of \$75 - \$100 per rider.

My Ride Passes

Downtown Parking staff implements the Metropolitan Transit District (MTD) pass program, which offers MyRide passes for South Coast trips to all employees. The City is charged by MTD for actual usage. In the period beginning July 1, 2007, and ending December 31, 2007, 165 employees used their MyRide passes. The total number of alightings for the period is 9,098 rides. The program has been successful in generally introducing employees to transit service and providing transit options for the commute.

Guaranteed Secure Bicycle Parking

The City strives to provide a secure parking space for any bicycle commuter, reducing the risks of bike theft and damage. Many work locations have bike lockers, covered storage, or use indoor spaces for bike parking. Should demand for secured bicycle parking increase at other locations, staff would explore locations for additional bike lockers that may include non-carpool employee parking spots.

With the opening of the BikeStation in May 2007, the City began offering BikeStation memberships for employees reporting to work sites close to the Granada Garage. There are 13 employee BikeStation members. The annual cost for a Bike Station membership is \$96.

The following table describes the distribution of employee participation by department and mode:

Table 1: Summary of Employee Participation in Work TRIP Benefits

	Public Works	Police Dept	Admin/ Finance	Parks and Rec	Community Devt	Library	Airport	Total
Rideshare	11	16	2		6			35
Clean Air Express	4	2	1	6	1			14
Valley Express	3	0	1				3	7
Coastal Express	3		4	3	4	3		17
Vanpool	0	0	1		6			7
MyRide	52	9	36	20	13	25	10	165
BikeStation	13							13
Total	86	27	45	29	30	28	13	258

Citywide 9/80 Schedule

The City Administrator's Office implemented a Citywide condensed 9/80 workweek by closing administrative offices and public counters on alternating Fridays. This achieves many benefits in air pollution and congestion reduction. Employees on a 9/80 schedule commute 26 fewer roundtrips per year on Fridays, a busy freeway traffic day. Longer work hours have also shifted the timing of many trips to the workplace away from peak times just before 8:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m. Additionally, alternative work schedules are still available by application, or according to individual departmental needs.

At this time, 81% of the City full-time permanent employees are on the Citywide 9/80 or an alternative flexible work schedule. According to the 2007 Commute Survey, approximately 45% of our employees were working a 9/80 or 4/10 schedule previously, meaning the citywide schedule has increased our trip reduction over the standard work week by approximately 10,000 trips per year.

Employee Commuter Resource Center Websites

The Transportation Division created and maintains a user-friendly employee commuter resource website for Work TRIP on Portal. Employees can access this site from Human Resources, Sustainable Santa Barbara, and Transportation sites within the Portal System. The intranet site provides resources to make alternative commuting as convenient for City employees as possible. The material describes City policies and procedures, the various aspects of the Work TRIP benefits, and required forms. Future expansions call for information on businesses that might offer discounts to alternative transportation commuters and contests.

Additionally, the site links to external resources including a trip reporting and carpool matchlist service provided by Traffic Solutions. This service, developed in financial cooperation with the City, is called TS Online. Resources for staff implementation of Work TRIP include environmental and financial reporting tools and survey and raffle management. City staff has administrative authority on this website. Ongoing receipt of the financial benefits of the program requires registration and regular calendaring of commute trips by staff participants.

Green Commute Challenge

The Green Commute Challenge did not operate in the period described by this report. This Citywide contest will be available to all employees registered with TS Online using alternative transportation. Through participation in the calendaring function of TS Online, each day an employee uses alternative transportation to get to work, he or she is eligible for a weekly drawing for a chance to win a \$50 gift card, two per week, for use with local merchants.

SUMMARY:

The Work TRIP program is a leading edge Transportation Demand Management program reflective of a model employer in the area of trip reduction. Requiring significant staff resources, the program has measurable and important benefits. Staff anticipates that enrollment will increase subsequent to the start of construction of the 101 Operational Improvements, and as fuel costs increase.

Recommended next steps for a more efficient and engaging program include: moving City vehicles to an online reservation system and consideration of a “pay me not to drive” or “parking cash out” program. Staff continues to consider incentives for employees to walk or bike to work.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Program operating costs are currently funded through the Transportation budget. Employee contributions toward transit passes will be used for program operations. The total transit and vanpool costs, as well as the Green Commute Challenge, will be billed back to departments, proportional to the number of employees in the department.

Program Costs July – December 2007

The estimated costs of the rideshare program, based on estimated vehicle miles traveled at \$0.45 per mile during this six month period, is \$23,400.00. Employee payroll contributions toward fuel and vehicle rental for the rideshare program in the period amount to \$10,150.00. This cost is not billed to any program at this point, but is anticipated to reflect in higher replacement and maintenance charges that will result based upon the shorter life cycle expectations of vehicles in the program. These charges will be spread across all programs owning vehicles.

The costs for the MyRide local transit service subsidy are included in this report despite being funded by Downtown Parking, because of its relevance to the Work TRIP success. Over the period July – December 2007, the total cost billed by Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District was \$11,372.00.

The figures in Table 2 below represent a six month period only, for the long distance transit, vanpool and Bikestation subsidies.

Table 2: Distribution of Program Costs July – December 2008

	City Expenditure	Employee Payroll Contribution	Employee Payment to Vendor
Clean Air Express	\$8,210.00	\$1,586.25	\$200.00
Valley Express	\$2,765.00	\$300.00	\$271.25
Coastal Express	\$1,757.25		\$567.75
Vanpool	\$2,490.00		\$930.00
BikeStation	\$1,248.00		
TOTAL COST	\$16,470.25	\$1,886.25	\$1,969.00

Estimated Annual Costs

Because the cost per employee varies with the commute length, employees live in many different locations, and employees are coming in and out of the program at different times throughout the year, it is difficult to estimate the annual cost. However, using the program's highest monthly cost for each element, the first year program costs are estimated at \$137,500.

Assuming program growth of 10% distributed geographically in a similar pattern as that which exists today, the total annual cost of the rideshare, long distance transit, vanpool, MyRide and Bikestation elements is \$151,250.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Through the calendaring of trips online at TS Online, employees are provided individualized information about the environmental impacts of their trip reduction behavior. Traffic Solutions. The vendor accounts for cost savings using the Automobile Association of America's \$0.522/mile cost estimate for 2007, and State Air Resources Board emissions factors. The cumulative results of the employees who have been logging their trips at TS Online are described in the table below. Staff is working on methods to improve employee reporting, as there is significant under-reporting of employees, as illustrated by the under-reporting of total miles saved compared to staff estimates. The table below does not account for the Citywide 9/80 schedule.

Table 3:
 Cumulative Environmental and Financial Benefits of Work TRIP July – December 2007

	Total Trips Reduced:	Total Miles Saved:	Gallons of Fuel Saved:	Total Emissions Reduced:	Total Money Saved:
July - December 2007	2120 trips	70065 miles	3336 gallons	64805 lbs	\$36,574

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SUBMITTED BY: Paul Casey, Acting Public Works Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office