

Employer & Commuter Outreach Facts

Alternatives to solo commuting

Workers save money, and arrive at work relaxed and ready to go. Employers get the benefit of tax breaks and more productive workers. Metro area roads are less congested and safer. These are among the many reasons that alternatives to solo commuting make so much sense.

Metro Transit promotes alternative transportation for commuters who live or work in the Twin Cities area. These alternatives include:

- Bus and rail service
- Bicycling
- Carpools and vanpools
- Telecommuting, and flexible or staggered work hours
- Other travel-demand management strategies

The goal of Metro Transit's outreach efforts is to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles on the roads and highways by providing information and services for alternatives to driving alone.

Online ridematching makes pooling easier

Keeping up with the needs of commuters in the region, Metro Transit has an online ridematching service, the Rideshare Planner. This tool allows commuters to register their home address, work address, and work hours, and find other people who want to carpool or vanpool. One of the biggest advantages for commuters is that they can update their individual profile online and access potential matches as often as they need.

People who carpool or vanpool get benefits such as free, discounted or preferred parking, and the ability to use high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes on the region's freeways, in addition to saving money on gas, insurance and other commuting costs.

Preferred parking for carpools and vanpools

Metro Transit works with companies, schools, private and public parking-ramp and surface-parking owners, cities and others to provide discounted, free and preferred parking spaces for registered carpools and vanpools.

Locations are primarily in the downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis areas, though many companies in the suburbs also participate in the program.

Programs provide tax benefits to employers

In addition to reducing worker stress, some commuting programs provide tax benefits to employers. For example, the Metropass program allows employers a tax advantage of up to \$230 per month per employee if they underwrite the cost of transit passes for employees. As of May 2011, nearly 240 companies were enrolled in the program.

Companies of all sizes may also get pre-tax savings by purchasing transit passes through the TransitWorks! program. More than 200 companies throughout the Twin Cities area offer this program to their workers.



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All commuters who ride the bus or train, or who carpool, vanpool, bicycle or walk at least three days a week to work or school are eligible for the Guaranteed Ride Home program.

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In event of emergencies

All commuters who ride the bus or train, or who carpool, vanpool, bicycle or walk at least three days a week to work or school are eligible for the Guaranteed Ride Home program. Registered commuters receive two coupons every six months valued up to \$25 each. The coupons are valid for a bus or train ride, or reimbursement of a cab fare, in the event of an emergency.

Employers receive free assistance

Metro Transit provides an Employer Outreach Specialist to work with employers and schools – at no charge – to identify the most effective commuting strategies for their workplaces.

Council supports transportation management organizations

Metro Transit also provides support and funding for four Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs) in the region. They include:

- Commuter Services (494 Corridor)
- Commuter Connection (Downtown Minneapolis)
- Commuter Solutions (Anoka County)
- Smart Trips (St. Paul)

TMOs focus on the needs of the business community and commuters in specific geographic areas, with the goal of reducing single-occupant-vehicle trips. Metro Transit focuses on the needs of business and commuters on a regional level.

Metro Transit hosts monthly meetings for all agencies working with businesses on travel-demand-management (TDM) strategies. The meetings are designed for TDM professionals to meet, share information, brainstorm, and work on current and future projects. The goal is to ensure that funds for business outreach and other programs are used efficiently. Participants include Metro Transit staff, TMOs, other transit agencies and vanpool operators.

Annual promotions spur participation

To encourage carpooling, transit, biking and other commuting alternatives, Metro Transit sponsors an annual Commuter Challenge incentive promotion. The promotion engages businesses to promote commuting to their employees and offers prizes.

Metro Transit holds an annual event, the Commuter Choice Awards, to recognize companies, schools and individuals for their innovations in developing, implementing and supporting commuter transportation programs.

For more information

- Visit Metro Transit’s ridesharing resources or call 612-373-3333 (Option 4) for more information
- Visit TMOs to learn about other commuting alternatives.
- [Related fact sheets](#) include: Regional Transit Services, Metro Transit, Metro Mobility, Hiawatha LightRail and Transportation Planning.