

## Metro Transit

# Outreach to Employers, Commuters

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### 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. 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.

Metro Transit's outreach efforts seek to "reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles on the roads and highways by providing information and services for alternatives to drive-alone vehicles." Alternatives include bus, light rail, bicycle, carpools, vanpools, telework, flexible or staggered work hours, and other travel-demand management strategies.

### Online ridematching

Keeping up with the needs of commuters in the region, Metro Transit has an online ride-matching service, the Carpool/Vanpool 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.

### Preferred parking

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.

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 St. Paul and Minneapolis downtown areas, with many companies in the suburbs also participating in the program.

### Employer tax benefits

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 \$115 per month per employee if they underwrite the cost of transit passes for employees. As of Aug. 1, 2008, nearly 190 companies are enrolled, with approximately 153,000 employees total.

### Guaranteeing the ride

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 vouchers every six months valued up to \$25 each. The vouchers 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 groups**

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

They include:

- 494 Commuter Services
- Downtown Minneapolis TMO
- Anoka County TMO
- St. Paul Smart Trips

TMOs focus on the needs of the business community and commuters in specific geographic areas. 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 funds for business outreach and other programs are used efficiently. Participants include Metro Transit staff, TMOs, 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 at: [www.metrotransit.org/rideshare/aboutrideshare.asp](http://www.metrotransit.org/rideshare/aboutrideshare.asp)
- You can also call 612-373-3333 (Option 4) for more information.
- Links to TMOs and other commuting alternatives: [www.metrotransit.org/otherTransOpts/index.asp](http://www.metrotransit.org/otherTransOpts/index.asp)
- Related fact sheets:
  - [Regional Transit Services](#)
  - [Metro Transit](#)
  - [Metro Mobility](#)
  - [Hiawatha Light Rail](#)
  - [Transportation Planning](#)

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