

## Regional Travel Options

Metro's Regional Travel Options (RTO) program supports Metro's mission of making a great place by increasing the awareness of non-single occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel options such as biking, walking, taking transit, and ridesharing, and telecommuting/compressed work weeks. To accomplish this, the RTO program provides strategic investments that contribute to economic, environmental, and socio-economic health and prosperity for the region.

## Regional Travel Options Grants

For more information visit:

[www.oregonmetro.gov/traveloptions](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/traveloptions)



Metro, the regional government, crosses city limits and county lines to build a resilient economy, keep nature close by and respond to a changing climate. Representing a diverse population of 1.5 million people in 25 cities and three counties, Metro's directly elected council gives voters a voice in decisions about how the region grows and communities prosper.

## Description

Employer and commuter services help businesses promote travel options to employees and coordinate the outreach activities of partner's employer and commuter programs. Currently, the following partners carry out employer and commuter programs: Metro, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), TriMet, Wilsonville SMART, Vancouver Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program, Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) and TMAs.

## Purpose/Outcomes

Intended outcomes include lowering SOV use, promoting commute options to employees, initiating workplace competitions/challenges, leveraging resources, implementing rewards/incentive programs, car-pool matching services, vanpool formation, promoting telework/compressed work weeks, and avoiding duplication of effort among partners.

- Support local partners to market and engage with employers and commuters to increase the use of travel options for commute trips
- Provide information and technical services to local and regional partners to make the business case for employers to support travel options.
- Establish working relationships with employers to promote economic development with travel options tools and programs.

## TriMet Outreach

The TriMet Outreach program serves organizations of all sizes throughout the region with transportation program assistance, transit pass programs and surveying for DEQ compliance. The TriMet program is designed to reduce vehicle miles traveled and the resulting emissions through transportation program assistance, outreach and marketing campaigns to employers.



## Transportation Management Associations (TMAs)

TMAs are non-profit groups that work directly with employers to encourage greater use of commute options at the workplace. TMA staff work closely with TriMet to promote the employer pass program and assist with the distribution and collection of Employee Commute Option (ECO) survey data. Other TMA activities include individual trip counseling, publishing newsletters and web content, producing scatter maps and hosting transportation fairs and commute workshops. TMAs typically measure their success using VMR figures (from ECO surveys), employer participation in Drive Less Connect (DLC), and numbers of employees reached at events and workshops and new employer contacts.

## Challenges/Competitions

Challenges held across or within employment sites are successful tools for promoting commute options to employees. Two examples of successful challenges are the BTA's Bike Commute Challenge (BCC) and the Carefree Commuter Challenge (CCC). Both of these challenges encourage active participation and subsequent trip logging through an online medium, such as the BTA website or DLC. Challenges provide an excellent format for promoting commute options due to their competitive nature among worksites and colleagues. Prizes and rewards are distributed at the end of the event to winners in different categories. Measuring the outcome of challenges typically consists of participation levels (among both businesses and individuals) and the number of miles biked, walked or carpooled over the duration of the event.

### Examples/Best Practices include:

- BTA Bike Commute Challenge <sup>1</sup>
- Carefree Commuter Challenge <sup>2</sup>

## Employer Individualized Marketing

The City of Portland, TMAs and various planning firms have successfully conducted individualized marketing at the employer level. These projects provide employees with information, trip planning services, and personalized assistance with using commute options. Before and after surveys are conducted to measure decreases in single-occupant commute trips and potential increases in biking, walking, ridesharing, and transit.

### Examples/Best Practices include:

- Lloyd Links <sup>3</sup>
- Swan Island "Going to the Island"
- City of Portland SmartTrips Business <sup>4</sup>
- City of Vancouver, WA "Destination Downtown" Program <sup>5</sup>

## Measurement

- ECO survey mode shift data and vehicle miles reduced (VMR) calculations
- Participation in Transportation Fairs, meetings, commute workshops, and other transportation options events
- Number of employers and employees contacted
- Number of employers establishing commute reduction programs
- Employee participation in DLC
- Before and after surveys for employer individualized marketing projects

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1. Access the BTA Bike Commute Challenge website at: <http://bikecommutechallenge.com/>

2. Access Metro's Carefree Commuter Challenge website at: <http://www.drivelessconnect.com/challenge>

3. Access the Lloyd TMA website at: <http://www.lloydtma.org/personalized-support>

4. Access the City of Portland SmartTrips Business website at: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/43820>

5. Access the Destination Downtown website at: <http://www.mydestinationdowntown.com/>

## Grant Qualifications

- **Does the proposed investment contribute to increasing use of non-SOV modes?**  
This is established through a project proposal that provides a logical explanation demonstrating how the funded efforts will contribute to the increased use of non-SOV modes, identifying specific performance targets for each investment.
- **Does the applicant demonstrate interest and willingness?**  
Have strategic partners been identified and indicated their commitment to the project? This is established through a project proposal that identifies the specific opportunity or problem to which the applicant is responding.
- **Does the applicant have local financial support?**  
Minimum match requirements are used as base-level eligibility criteria. The minimum level is set at CMAQ thresholds, the federal source for RTO grants. Higher local match levels are needed when proposing higher-risk efforts and are rewarded through extra points in the scoring process.
- **Does the applicant have the capacity to implement?**  
This is determined based on the applicant's demonstration of a viable long-term business model and funding commitments.

### RTO Grant Timeline:

- Dec. 20, 2012 – Application packets available
- Jan. 9, 2013 – RTO Workshop
- Feb/Mar – Grant applications due
- Mar/Apr – Grant awards announced
- April to June – Grant agreements negotiated/signed
- July 1, 2013 – RTO Grant projects begin
- June 30, 2015 – RTO Grant projects completed

