

Transportation Choices Program



Introduction

What are the Transportation Choices?

There are many options for getting around town and going to work other than driving alone. Walking, biking, taking the bus, carpooling, vanpooling and even skateboarding are all forms of transportation. Other options are also available, such as working compressed work schedules and telecommuting.

What is the Transportation Choices Program?

The Transportation Choices Program (TCP) is a **FREE** program in San Luis Obispo County offered to businesses and organizations that encourage their employees to use alternative transportation. The goal of the TCP is to equip employers with the tools needed promote positive change in employee commuting habits.

The TCP Coalition includes Ride-On, Air Pollution Control District (APCD) and the SLO Bike Coalition (SLOBBC) with the San Luis Obispo Regional Rideshare (SLO Rideshare) managing the program. As individual agencies our mission is to reduce traffic congestion, and to promote alternative transportation and cleaner air. With the support of the TCP Coalition, SLO Rideshare would like to provide **no-cost consultation services and presentations to your business and employees.**

We believe there is a need to change the ways we commute to work. A simple look to the Los Angeles area illustrates how a huge highway infrastructure does little to reduce or eliminate major traffic congestion. The organizations and businesses that choose to participate in the TCP help preserve our air quality and minimize traffic congestion in San Luis Obispo County.



**AIR POLLUTION
CONTROL DISTRICT**
COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

Benefits to the Community

As individual agencies **our mission is to promote alternative transportation, thereby decreasing traffic congestion, reducing our reliance on foreign oil and maintaining clean air.** By making a choice and using alternative transportation, there are fewer cars on the road during the peak commuting hours, decreasing both traffic and air pollution. Decreasing the amount of single occupancy vehicles on the road also leads to an increase in disposable income. Currently 18% of a household's income goes to transportation when this money could instead be spent on our local economy.

Benefits to Employers

Offering alternatives to employees has been shown to **increase employee morale and productivity.** Providing incentives to employees who choose to use alternative transportation not only encourages continued use, but can also result in greater employee satisfaction. Furthermore, employees who carpool, vanpool, bus or walk together can build relationships that will help them work more cohesively as a team.

Getting Started

1. Employee Survey

A valuable tool for understanding the commute habits of your employees is to distribute a simple online survey to each employee. The survey not only assesses current modes of commuting, but also identifies attitudes towards alternatives such as vanpooling, carpooling, taking the bus, riding a bike, and even walking to work. **We provide the online survey link, evaluate the data, and develop a Trip Reduction Plan based upon the survey results.** The survey gives us an idea of the types of commute alternatives that will work best for you and your employees.

2. Transportation Choices Information Center

Giving employees access to information about their transportation choices is essential to changing commute habits. They need to be able to compare and evaluate what mode of alternative transportation might work best for them. Employees need to know about bus and vanpool schedules and fares. They need to know who to contact about starting or joining a vanpool or carpool, and where to go for answers to questions about transportation. The Transportation Choices Information Center can be set-up at your office where employees mingle, eat lunch or hold staff meetings. **We provide you with all the materials needed for your Transportation Choices Information Center.**

3. Onsite Transportation Choices Presentation

We offer Transportation Choices Presentations at your worksite at no cost to you. Based on the results of the commute survey, we can meet with your

employees and provide easy to understand information about using the bus, joining a vanpool or carpool, and other transportation alternatives.

4. Select an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC)

We find the most successful programs have an enthusiastic employee on site that helps promote the Transportation Choices Program. You probably have an employee that supports the use of alternative transportation and may already be carpooling, vanpooling, using the bus or riding a bike to work. That person may be willing to act as your Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC), or the point of contact for TCP information. We will train the ETC and check-in with them to make sure your company's questions and concerns are handled.

ETCs are invited to attend quarterly luncheons to meet ETCs from other businesses, discuss programs and services enacted at other worksites and to learn about new alternative transportation programs. They help maintain the Transportation Choices Information Centers and are available to assist your employees in learning about commute options.

Commuting Options

1. Subsidized Vanpool and Bus Passes

Some businesses support their employee's use of bus service and vanpools by covering all or part of the employee's cost for choosing alternative transportation. It helps to promote alternative transportation while **increasing employee satisfaction and reducing employee turnover**. Employers and employees can participate in SAFETEA-LU (formerly Transportation Equity Act, TEA 21) benefits that allow up to \$110 each month in commuter subsidies as pre-tax benefits or offered as an employee benefit.

2. Carpool Program

Employees can register with SLO Rideshare's free online commuter matching tool, TripLink, at www.rideshare.org to connect with other registered commuters who live and work in similar locations. TripLink connects users with carpool, vanpool and bike buddies traveling the same route at the same time. In many instances, employees carpool with other individuals at their worksite, or neighboring worksites. Also, by logging miles into TripLink, employees are eligible for free incentives and employers can receive data about the amount of carbon and miles reduced by employees.

3. Bicycling or Walking to Work

Each person who chooses to ride a bicycle or walk to work will save you parking spaces, leaving more parking available for your customers and clients. By installing bicycle racks at your worksite, you send a message of support to employees who will ride their bikes to work. Adding lockers or showers increases the strength of

your message. Biking and walking are excellent ways to promote alternative transit and are healthy lifestyle choices.

4. Telecommute Plan for your Business

Another way to reduce the number of cars in your parking lot is to establish a policy allowing certain employees to work from home. Certain jobs at your business may allow an employee to work from home one or more days a week. We can provide all the information you need to establish a policy based on plans that have worked well for other companies. Your company can review the information and develop your own plan or you can work with us to develop a customized telecommuting program for you.

5. Compressed Work Schedule Options

Working 4/10s or 9/80s will limit the number of days that your employees will need to commute to work, reducing traffic and air pollution. Additionally, with the longer hours, your employees will not be driving during the peak commute hours on the days that they do commute. Many employees enjoy having a weekday off, and employers can benefit from longer hours of focused employee productivity.

Commuter Services

1. Guaranteed Ride Home Program

SLO Rideshare's Guaranteed Ride Home Program (GRH) offers insurance in the event of emergencies. If an employee becomes sick or needs to work overtime on a day they have carpooled, vanpooled or taken the bus, they can request a ride through TripLink and be picked up anytime before 7 p.m. The service is only eligible for those who have logged into TripLink and can be used four times a year per employee and covers the whole county. The fare is \$4 per ride which can be paid by your company or the employee.

2. Trip Planning Service

When your employees are thinking about trying the bus, the times and prices are just a phone call away. Employees can call SLO Rideshare (781-4362) for help with planning their trip to work.

3. Lunchtime Shuttles

Ride-On offers free lunchtime express shuttle services in the City of San Luis Obispo, **to 19 sponsoring restaurants in San Luis Obispo. Any party of two or more may reserve a space at least 24 hours in advance and the service operates Monday thru Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** In addition, the Cities of Paso Robles, Atascadero, Cambria, Morro Bay, and some of the communities in the South County offer Dial-A-Ride shuttle services at very low fares for mid-day errands and connector services to other transit.

4. Lucky Bucks

SLO Rideshare's Lucky Bucks is a fun way to reward employees who choose to use alternative transportation to get to work. The employee records the days they ride a bus, vanpool, carpool, ride their bike, or walk to work into TripLink at rideshare.org. They can also redeem commute points online and receive gift certificates for **movie tickets, restaurants, smoothies, stamps, car washes, and more**. The cost to the employer is simply \$2.00 per user per month together with the cost of the gift certificates redeemed. Rideshare administers the program and submits an invoice to the employer each month.

5. Join the TMA

Ride-On Transportation Management Association (TMA) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to develop and operate services that make it easy to choose and use alternative transportation. The TMA operates vanpools and shuttle services such as Airport/Amtrak Shuttle, Medical Shuttle, Lunchtime Express and Special Event Shuttles. The annual fee is \$2 for each employee who works for your business. Your employees receive a 20% discount on any TMA ride, even if their trip is not work related. Supporting the TMA is a commitment to help improve commuter transportation in San Luis Obispo County.

6. Clean Car Information

When shopping for a new or used car, truck or sport utility vehicle, consider the air quality impact of that vehicle. With California's stringent emission standards, many automobile manufacturers now offer vehicles that are designed to produce very low levels of air pollution. Hybrid, compressed natural gas, electric, and low emission vehicles running on gasoline are now available in the marketplace. Whether you are replacing fleet vehicles, or if your employees are purchasing new private vehicles, the APCD can offer assistance in helping you learn more about the low emission