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Rideshare Review

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Commuter Financial Incentives

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Many employees who commute by car receive a free (or heavily subsidized) parking space with a typical market value of \$50-100 per month. This is equivalent to a matching grant for solo-commuting, with no comparable benefit for use of other modes. This is unfair and encourages automobile commuting. Commuter Financial Incentives (CFIs) increase fairness by giving non-drivers a benefit comparable in value to what motorists receive.

CFIs are usually part of an overall Trip Reduction Plan or Parking Management Plan. Rules need to be established for employees to follow in order to qualify for these benefits and employees must agree to the frequency in which they will use alternatives prior to obtaining them. These benefits can also be pro-rated for part-time commuters.

The most common financial incentives that employers can provide to benefit commuters using alternate modes of travel are as follows.

Voluntary Parking Cash-Out is the practice of providing employees with the option of taking the cash value of their free parking if they choose not to drive to work. Parking Cash-Out programs are well-regarded by employees and can reduce automobile commuting by 10-30%. They also serve to increase equity by providing carpoolers, transit-users, cyclists and pedestrians with financial benefits comparable to those that solo-commuters receive in parking subsidies.

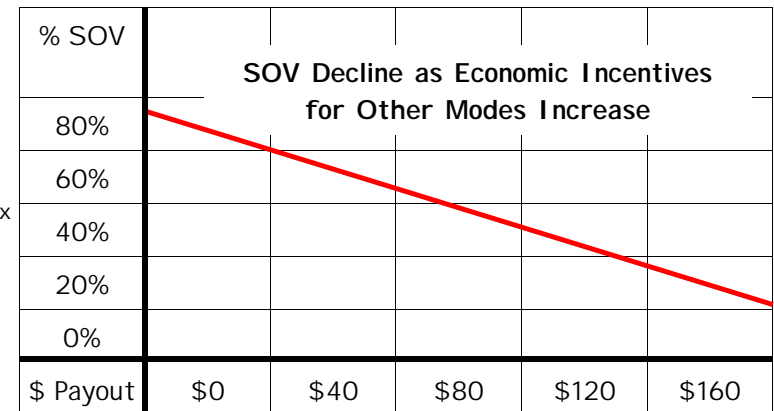
Travel Allowances are provided in lieu of free parking. Monthly payments are paid to employees to cover the cost of parking or another travel mode.

Transit and Rideshare Benefits are free, or discounted transit fares may be made available by employers.

CFIs can reduce SOV commuting by 10-30% when compared with free employee parking and no benefits for alternative modes. Travel is affected by the value of the benefit and quality of travel choices as well as worksite setting. In urban areas, travel will likely shift to transit and walking; in suburban areas, the trend is shifted towards ridesharing, telecommuting and cycling.

Although parking is tax deductible, cash pay-outs (along with payroll deductible bus pass programs) are not, and therefore increase taxable revenue. While many believe that some pay-out is better than no pay-out at all, a change in the Canadian tax code is required to allow a more equitable tax benefit to those who chose an environmentally-friendly mode of transportation.

Although these programs may involve subsidies, these are usually less than current driving subsidies.



Source: Victoria Transport Policy Institute

Congratulations!

Brock University in Ontario, has set up 6 carpools, transporting 13 riders and saving 18 kg of CO2 daily!

Way to Go Brock!

HTTip of the Month:

www.vtppi.org

The Victoria Transport Policy Institute web site is a great resource for anyone in the transportation management field and includes an extensive TDM Encyclopedia!

Benefits of Commuter Financial Incentives

Employers can obtain many direct and in-direct benefits from introducing Commuter Financial Incentives as part of an overall Trip Reduction Plan. These include:

- Increased income, choice and equity for employees
- Reduced peak period traffic, reduced congestion, road and parking savings, crash reductions and environmental improvements
- Increased demand for alternatives leading to improved travel choices (increased transit use, carpooling, support for cycle and pedestrian improvements)
- Employee satisfaction as a result of fairness. Added employee benefit which can assist in the recruitment and retention of employees
- Flexibility—the ability to use this strategy to deal with parking problems, such as growing demand, or the need to use land currently devoted for parking
- Increased developable land, efficient land use
- Increased tax revenue, since taxable cash bonuses replace tax-exempt parking subsidies

Source: Victoria Transport Policy Institute, TDM Encyclopedia, Financial Incentives.

Participation by Campus - November 30, 2000			
University/College	Sept 30	Oct 31	Nov 30
University of British Columbia	54	74	89
Simon Fraser University	11	14	20
University College of the Fraser Valley	0	0	2
Langara College	4	6	16
Okanogan University/College	2	3	4
University of Victoria	5	6	7
Royal Roads University	14	16	18
Camosun College	0	1	4
University of Calgary	8	15	18
University of Saskatchewan	3	6	7
University of Toronto	28	38	49
Brock University	-	24	54
Queen's University	0	3	4
Conestoga College	11	11	11
University of New Brunswick	17	16	17
University of Kings College	0	0	0
Project Total	157	233	323

The staff at Commuter Connections would like to take this opportunity to offer best wishes to everyone for a joyous holiday season and a safe and prosperous New Year!

LINK YOUR UNIVERSITY WEBSITE TO WWW.CARPPOOL.CA

Road Rage... Another reason to consider ridesharing

Aggressive driving, popularly referred to as “Road Rage”, is a new arrival on the public agenda and one that is reaching epidemic proportions. Just go to your favourite internet news group, type in “road rage”, and the headlines alone will be enough to make you nervous.

Road rage has been taking place since the invention of the automobile, but as society spends more and more time driving, its escalating effects need to be addressed. The US Department of Transportation estimates that two thirds of US traffic fatalities are at least partially caused by aggressive driving.

Focus groups set up at the University of Southern California indicated that two thirds of drivers reacted to frustrating situations aggressively and over half admitted to deliberately braking suddenly, pulling close to another car, or taking some other potentially dangerous step. Another interesting fact: drivers of SUV's and light trucks are more aggressive than drivers of economy size cars.

Increasing gridlock and its subsequent spin-off, road rage, can be a motivating factor in promoting ridesharing. Many commuters don't realize that they can take the stress out of everyday driving by sharing the ride, or more importantly, sharing the drive. Carpooling not only has the direct effect of reducing stress for drivers, but less cars mean less congestion, less congestion means less time on the road, and less time on the road leads to less stress for everyone.

Source: www.drivers.com

Tracking Participation: The Key to Measuring Success

Historically, one of the greatest challenges of rideshare programs has been measuring success. Regional model programs have always had difficulty determining what happened once a registrant received their match report. Did they receive any quality matches? Did they make contact with any of the matches? Were they successful in forming a carpool? If a group was formed, who was riding and how long did the carpool last? Gathering the answers to these questions has always proven to be very difficult and labour intensive.

When rideshare programs are tied to parking management policies, their success can be easily measured. Once a carpool is formed the participants need to approach the parking department in order to apply for a “Carpool Permit”. This gives the registrant a reason to come back and provide information regarding the number of persons in their group, who they are carpooling with and how often. If the group wishes to actively recruit new riders they can continue to be included on match lists, if not, they can remove themselves from the matching process without removing their files completely from the system.

Once participation is tracked, success can be measured in the form of reduced trips, money saved, and benefits to the environment. Parking needs and policies can be adjusted to reflect these savings.

HOW TO AVOID ROAD RAGE



Do not retaliate. Never take the other driver personally, he/she is reacting on road rage instinct.

Don't make eye contact with an angry driver.

Before you react to an enraged driver's behaviour, ask yourself if it's worth the possible consequence—it isn't.

Be polite and courteous, even when others are not.

Put yourself in the other driver's shoes—could he or she have possibly made a mistake? To err is human...

If you are harassed by another driver and fear that you are being followed—do not go home. Drive to the nearest police station and file a complaint.

Never underestimate another driver's capacity for mayhem.

Allow yourself enough time to get where you're going. Practice patience and keep your cool.

Don't endanger yourself by trying to avoid a road rager. Drive the speed limit and obey traffic signals.

Remember—you can't control the behaviour of others, however, you can control your reaction. Be calm and drive safely.

Slow down, relax, and join a carpool!



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.....the key to ridesharing

Commuter Connections is a BC based, non-profit organization committed to reducing single occupancy vehicle use through the promotion and implementation of rideshare programs.

The purpose of the Rideshare Review is to provide a forum for sharing information to aid in the delivery of rideshare programs. We would be happy to hear your feedback or any ideas you would like to see incorporated into future issues.

This project "Mitigating Climate Change Through Rideshare" has been generously funded by Environment Canada/Natural Resources Canada's Climate Change Action Fund. For more information about our programs, please visit our website at www.carpool.ca, call us at 1.800.668.RIDE, or send an e-mail to information@carpool.ca.

There may be others who would benefit from information on ridesharing. Please pass this newsletter on!

More Low Cost Marketing Tips and Tools

- Produce in-house flyers and distribute regularly.
- Establish a monthly column in the company/campus newsletter or newspaper. Include information about benefits, increases in participation, success stories.
- Send out internal memos or e-mails, make them colourful to attract attention.
- Include a "paycheck stuffer" several times per year for staff (bookmarks are ideal for this purpose)
- Work on setting up a "Transportation Centre" which includes transit information, rideshare materials, copies of relevant newsletter articles, transportation facts, etc.
- Hold a "Brown Bag" session to provide information about ridesharing and other transportation alternatives
- Develop a program motto or theme for your rideshare program.
- Implement a "Leave Your Car at Home Day" which can coincide with Earth Day or Clean Air Day.
- Include rideshare information in "new employee information packages".
- Photo display of rideshare "Employee of the Month".

If you take on one or more of these tasks each month, your rideshare program will grow at a steady pace and it won't be long before you see the rewards!

Driving Home the Facts:

- On average, 15–20% of household expenditures in Canada are devoted to motor vehicles.
- Transportation costs are a financial strain, especially for lower income families.
- Vehicles are the leading source of bankruptcy for Canadians.