

A Greener Commute

GETTING TO WORK HAS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Driving to work contributes to two major air quality concerns in Kansas City: **greenhouse gas emissions and ozone formation**. Members of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce Climate Protection Partnership can do something to change that.

According to the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, transportation is second only to electricity generation in terms of the volume and rate of growth of greenhouse gas emissions.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports that **transportation accounts for about 30 percent of ozone-forming emissions** that cause smog and contribute to health conditions such as asthma.

To help reduce these harmful emissions, the Climate Protection Partnership supports increased use of transportation alternatives such as transit, carpooling, bicycling and telecommuting.

The Mid-America Regional Council's RideShare Program — in partnership with the Greater Kansas City Chamber — has created this guide for employers about how to develop an effective alternative transportation program for employees.

EMPLOYEE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS PAY DIVIDENDS

Employer-based commuter programs that encourage alternatives to driving alone benefit employees, companies and the larger community.

- Reduced commuting costs
- Improved compatibility of work and personal life
- Less stress, absenteeism and tardiness
- Reduced on-site parking demand and expenses
- Improved ability to recruit and retain skilled employees
- Reduced traffic congestion and air pollution

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IDEAS

Start an Employee Transportation Program

1. MAKE A COMMITMENT.

To have a successful employee transportation program, it's critical to have buy-in and ongoing support from management.

2. REQUEST RIDESHARE EMPLOYER SERVICES.

RideShare offers a variety of free programs, tools and services for Kansas City area employers and commuters:

- Employee transportation surveys to help determine commuting trends and barriers
- Internet-based ride matching through Carpool Connection (either within your company or in the regional database)
- Reporting tool for employers to monitor alternative transportation usage, miles of driving saved, and reductions in harmful emissions
- Guaranteed Ride Home service and training for on-site ride coordinators
- Presentations and tabling events with area transit agencies at your workplace
- E-newsletter that highlights actions area companies are taking with transportation programs at their workplaces

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Choose steps that best fit your company's unique needs.



3. LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE. Consider the commuting needs of employees, the special characteristics of your company and work site, and transportation options in the area. Identify the services and incentives likely to persuade your employees to try alternatives to driving alone, and eliminate obstacles.

4. IDENTIFY YOUR OBJECTIVES. Does your management team want to recruit and retain high-quality employees? Reduce parking needs? Offer a low-cost employee benefit? RideShare can help you identify measurable targets.

5. DESIGNATE A COORDINATOR. This person (or group) serves as a link between an employer and its workforce to coordinate and promote an employee transportation program.

6. DESIGN YOUR PROGRAM. Once you understand the unique transportation needs of your work site, the commute preferences and patterns of your employees, and the underlying corporate culture, you can design a program that meets your needs. Consider including some of the following in your employee transportation program:

- Ride-matching service for carpools and vanpools
- Pre-tax benefit for monthly transit passes or vanpool subsidies
- Flexible hours, such as a compressed work week or telecommuting
- Preferential parking for carpools and vanpools
- Bicycle facilities, showers or amenities for bicyclists and walkers

Once you have designed a program, prepare a budget that includes facilities, equipment and materials, and staff hours.

7. IMPLEMENT YOUR PROGRAM. Establish a schedule and timeline for your program's objectives. Plan implementation steps including a kickoff and promotions. Establish contacts with RideShare, transit agencies and local bicycle coalitions.

8. PROMOTE YOUR PROGRAM.

Cultivate employee participation through marketing and incentives. Find employees who already use commute alternatives and ask them to help you spark an interest in co-workers. Contact RideShare for assistance and suggestions.

- Register your company to participate in RideShare's **Green Commute Challenge** during July and August, and compete against other area employers.

9. MEASURE AND EVALUATE. Monitor participation, employee feedback and costs. Determine which benefits and tactics work and which don't. RideShare's Carpool Connection employer module can help track alternative transportation use at your company, as well as harmful emissions prevented.

10. EXPAND AND IMPROVE. Based on your program evaluation and employee feedback, consider expanding the commute benefits you offer.



Other Resources

TELECOMMUTING

Telecommuting — the use of telephone or computer technologies — enables employees to work at home or another location, outside of the traditional workplace. Get answers to common questions about telecommuting at www.marc.org/rideshare/telecommute.htm.

PUBLIC TRANSIT PROVIDERS

The Metro and The JO offer reduced-cost transit, tax-deductible pass programs for employers, with an emergency ride home taxi service for participants.

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (The Metro) – www.kcata.org
TRIP employer pass program, 816/346-0274

Johnson County Transit (The JO) – www.thejo.com
Passport program, 913/782-2210

VANPOOLING

AdVANtage Vanpool Program
(provided by KCATA), 816/346-0800

VPSI Inc., 1/800-826-RIDE

MORE INFO

To learn more about RideShare's employer services or how to develop an employee transportation program, contact:

DARRIN DRESSLER
RideShare Employer Outreach
Coordinator
816/701-8203, ddressler@marc.org
www.marc.org/rideshare



Ride Share

A PROGRAM OF THE MID-AMERICA REGIONAL COUNCIL