



Reimagining the Commute

Tools to support safe and smart commutes for your employees



The Return to Work

We've been through a lot this past year, whether that's been adapting to a remote workforce or new protocols for on-site work.

Now, with rapid vaccination, we are entering a new phase of reimagining our workplaces and our commutes. Some employees may be going back to the workplace full time, while others may continue to work remotely all or some of the time. As an employer, chances are you are making plans and accommodations for how your workplace and employees will operate.

But what about how your employees get to work? **Employees' commutes contribute to overall job satisfaction and workplace safety.**

Exacerbating employees' commute pains, **traffic in the Portland Metro area is already ranked #7** in a 2019 study of "the worst cities for commuters." As we return to workplaces, **traffic is likely to increase** beyond those levels if more employees choose to drive alone for fear of sharing rides in a carpool or on transit.

The good news? You, and your employees, have options - and you can help.

This guide will help you prepare your employees for a successful transition back to workplace commuting. Read on for tips, commuter solutions, and regional resources for you and your employees.



Step 1 Assess Your Situation

Assess your workplace's situation to identify what strategies might help employees find their best commute.

If you are planning to survey your employees about other topics as they return to work, consider adding the following questions to that process. Otherwise, consider the information you already have on file or infer based on what you already know.

A survey can help you answer questions like:

1. How far away do your employees live?
2. How did they commute to work before and, if relevant, during COVID-19?
3. What commute options do you think are viable for your employees (given your location(s), work schedules, available transportation services)?
4. What COVID-related or other commute concerns do you expect employees to have?

If you'd like a prepared survey, TriMet can help you conduct a survey to find out how your employees are currently getting to work, and which commute options are of interest to them. They'll even process them, analyze the results and provide a written report—all at no cost. [Learn more here.](#)

Note: If your company is subject to the Oregon's **ECO (Employee Commute Options) Rule**, these surveys are required.



Find the latest COVID guidance for workplaces for your county:

Multnomah County:

<https://multco.us/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/businesses-and-employers-covid-19-guidance>

Washington County:

<https://www.co.washington.or.us/HHS/CommunicableDiseases/COVID-19/workplace-guidance.cfm>

Clackamas County:

<https://www.clackamas.us/coronavirus/business>

Step
2

Explore Solutions & Resources

The tables on pages 5-9 offer workplace solutions you can implement at your worksite to improve the commute for your employees. Check the **For Employers** tab on Get There to find more resources and updates. To learn more about using the Get There tool, check out the **Get There Employer Guidebook** or email regionaltravelloptions@oregonmetro.gov.



Get There Oregon is a statewide ridematching and trip planning tool funded by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Commuters can use the Get There tool to compare commute options, find a carpool, participate in challenges or reward programs, and track stats like reduced carbon emissions and calories burned.



WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS



Rewards & Incentives

Reward employees for using transportation options.

Solution	Description	Resources & Sample Program
Reward/ Incentive Program	Offer rewards through raffle drawings, monetary incentives, or special events for those who do not drive alone to work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OHSU pays employees \$1.50 each day they walk or bicycle to work.¹ ■ The City of Austin lets employees earn up to 16 additional PTO hours by avoiding a drive-alone commute to work.² ■ Resource: Get There Employer Guidebook (pg. 7 & 8)

¹Source: <https://www.ohsu.edu/visit/commute-work-and-school>

²Source: <https://rideamigos.com/city-of-austin-commuter-incentives-case-study/>



Parking

Manage increased parking demand and make driving alone a less attractive option.

Solution	Description	Resources & Sample Program
Daily parking charges	Require employees to pay for parking daily instead of monthly or annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Gates Foundation began charging for parking by the day (\$12/day for the first 10 days of each month), and saw a huge reduction in parking use.³
Parking cash-outs	Offer employees the option to accept taxable cash income instead of a free or subsidized parking space at work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Resource: Best Workplaces for Commuters Parking Cash-Out Guide ■ Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc. began offering employees the choice between employer-paid parking or the cash equivalent; only 2 out of 9 employees chose paid parking.⁴

³Source: <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/the-not-so-secret-trick-to-cutting-solo-car-commutes-charge-for-parking-by-the-day/>

⁴Source: <https://www.smartergrowth.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Examples-of-employers-implementing-parking-cash-CSG.pdf>



Transit

Help reduce the cost of using transit to make it more attractive to your employees.

Solution	Description	Resources & Sample Program
Tax Benefits	When you cover part or all of your employees' transit passes, you can save money on FICA taxes. And with a pre-tax payroll deduction, your employees can too.	■ Resource: Get There Oregon For Employers Page
TriMet Pass Programs	Offering an annual transit pass to employees is a great incentive and a competitive advantage. Choose from among TriMet's three transit pass programs.	■ Resource: trimet.org/employers





Biking

Provide amenities and benefits to make biking a comfortable and viable option.

Solution	Description	Resources & Sample Program
Secure bike parking	Provide secure bike parking options such as bike lockers, bike rooms, or covered bike racks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Resource: APBP Essentials of Bike Parking Guide ■ Check with your local jurisdiction about guidance/requirements for bike parking. ■ Go Lloyd offers corporate memberships to the Lloyd Cycle Station. Employers in the Lloyd neighborhood can provide secure bike parking for their employees as a workplace benefit.



Remote Work & Flexible Schedules

Improve productivity and performance with continued teleworking and flexible schedules.

Solution	Description	Resources & Sample Program
Teleworking policy	Revise your telework policy and establish a post-COVID plan for effective teamwork and continued productivity in a remote work environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Resource: Remote and Teleworking Toolkit■ The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) had about 300 of over 4,000 employees working from home. In 2020, 1,800 employees worked from home. It has been so successful that moving forward ODOT expects 1,500 employees to work from home and will consolidate building leases and reduce costs.
Flexible schedules	Flexible work schedules include any arrangement which differs from the typical 9 am—5 pm, five days-a-week schedule, and includes compressed work weeks, non-standard hours, and working from home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Resource: Office of Human Resources Management Alternative Work Schedules■ Some employers in Oregon (e.g., City of Tigard, ODOT, DEQ) allow their employees to work 4/10's, where employees work four, 10-hour days and have three days off each week.



Carpool/Vanpool

Encourage employees to share the ride when other options aren't viable.

Solution	Description	Resources & Sample Program
Carpool incentives (parking priority)	Create dedicated parking spots for carpoolers/vanpoolers in a premium location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Resource: Best Workplaces for Commuters Employer Carpool Programs ■ Providence Portland Medical Center reserves close-in preferential parking spots for carpoolers.⁵

⁵ Source: https://oregon.providence.org/~/_media/Files/Providence%20OR%20PDF/Transportation%20management%20plan%20for%20Providence%20Portland%20Medical%20Center.pdf

EMPLOYEE RESOURCES



The following existing programs and resources offer commute solutions for employees in the Portland Metro region.

Program	Eligibility	Features
GENERAL COMMUTE SOLUTIONS		
<p>Get There Oregon</p>	<p>Employees in Oregon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Compare commute options ■ Find a carpool or vanpool ■ Participate in challenges for the chance to win prizes ■ Track stats like reduced carbon emissions and calories burned ■ Sign up for The Connection, for the latest news, helpful tips, and inspirational stories from the community
<p>WTA Commuter Kickbacks</p>	<p>People who live or work in Washington County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monthly incentive drawings among eligible participants ■ Use Get There Oregon to log at least four days of commuting without driving alone in a month to become eligible ■ Log 8 or more days of non-drive alone commutes for an extra entry ■ Submit a commute story and photo for two bonus entries ■ Special incentives exclusively available to frontline and essential employees
<p>Go Lloyd Commuter Rewards</p>	<p>Commuters in the Lloyd neighborhood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monthly incentive drawings among active participants ■ Log at least two trips per month in Get There Oregon to be eligible ■ Lloyd commuters are eligible for Lloyd Links, a personalized trip planning service

Program	Eligibility	Features
City of Portland Transportation Wallet	People who live or work in two designated Parking Districts in Portland - Northwest and Central Eastside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A collection of passes and credits for use on transit, streetcar, bike share and scooter share
TRANSIT		
TriMet Trip Planner	People in the TriMet service area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plan trips by bus, light rail, and commuter rail in the Portland metro region
Transit and COVID safety	People in the TriMet service area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Visit TriMet's COVID-19 and Transit page to learn more about staying safe while riding transit.
WALKING AND BIKING		
BIKETOWN	Anyone in the BIKETOWN service area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Visit biketownpdx.com to learn how to use Portland's electric bike share system
Interactive Portland Bike Map	People who live or work in the City of Portland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dynamic, interactive online Portland bicycle maps to plan routes
Paper bike maps (order online)	People who live or work in the City of Portland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Portland SmartTrips provides free walk and bike maps, guides for taking active trips like walking, biking and transit, and tips for moving safely through the city no matter what mode
CARPOOL/VANPOOL		
Carpool and COVID safety	Existing and potential carpoolers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Visit GetThere's COVID-19 Safety Tips page to learn more about staying safe while carpooling
Carpool Parking Permits	Commuters in the Downtown or Lloyd meter district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employees who work Downtown or in Lloyd may be eligible for a City of Portland on-street carpool parking permit

Step
3

Communicate

Customize the content to the right and share with your employees along with your communications about returning to work and related office protocols. You can use this content for email, newsletters, internal webpages, etc. Use the information available in the table above to provide them with commuting resources, opportunities, and benefits that fit your workplace.

Sample Communications

As you know, we are beginning to return to the office on [DATE]. We are here to support you as you transition your schedule and routine and rediscover your commute. Trade in driving alone for an improved commute and reap the many benefits, including:

- **Avoiding traffic:** As we return to the office, traffic is likely to increase and parking may be scarce. Avoid traffic by biking or walking to work if you live within a few miles, or let someone else do the driving by taking transit or carpooling.
- **Saving money:** Paying for gas, vehicle maintenance, and parking add up. Learn how much you could save with the Commute Cost Calculator at [GetThereOregon.org](https://www.getthereoregon.org).
- **Reducing stress and increasing happiness:** Commuting can be the most stressful part of the day. Improve your commute and see how it reflects in your day-to-day mood.

Whether you plan to bike, walk, take transit, or carpool to work, here are some resources to make your trip easier:

- **Get There Oregon:** Compare your commute options, find a carpool, participate in seasonal challenges for the chance to win prizes, and track stats
- **Go Lloyd Commuter Rewards** (For Lloyd employees): Log your trips in Get There at least 2 days each month for a chance to win incentives for commuting without driving alone
- **WTA Commuter Kickbacks** (For Washington County Commuters): Log your trips in Get There at least 4 days each month for a chance to win incentives for commuting without driving alone
- **City of Portland Transportation Wallet** (Northwest and Central Eastside Parking Districts): A collection of passes and credits for use on transit, streetcar, bike share and scooter
- **BIKETOWN (Portland):** Electric bike share program
- **Interactive Online Bike Maps:** Dynamic, interactive online Portland bicycle map to plan routes
- **Paper Bike Maps (Order Online):** Free walk and bike maps, guides for taking active trips like walking, biking and transit, and tips for moving safely through the city no matter what mode
- **Carpool and COVID Safety:** Get tips on staying safe while carpooling
- **Transit and COVID Safety:** Get tips on staying safe while taking transit



