

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

**RESOLUTION NO. 02-007**

Adopting Policy Direction to Support Employee Commute Options and Parking Strategies

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:**

- a) On May 31, 2001 the Board of County Commissioners adopted Resolution 01-070 to create an Employee Commute Options-Parking (ECOpark) Review Committee to provide direction to guide future policies relating to employee commute options, parking and transportation.
- b) The ECOpark Review Committee has had countywide representation including representatives from the then Department of Sustainable Community Development Administration, Transportation, Fleet, and Facilities divisions; District 3 Board staff; the Chair's Office; the Sheriff's Office; the District Attorney's Office; Aging and Disability Services Department; Department of Community and Family Services; Department of Community Justice; Health Department; Library Department; and Support Services Department.
- c) Committee recommendations were reviewed and strengthened by involvement from Tri-Met, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, METRO, the Sustainable Project Exchange of the Oregon Natural Step Network, and the Sustainable Development Commission.
- d) The attached document, "Travel Smart Policy Recommendations", meets the direction outlined in Resolution 01-070 by supporting sustainable multi-modal commute alternatives and parking strategies for Multnomah County employees at all County facilities.

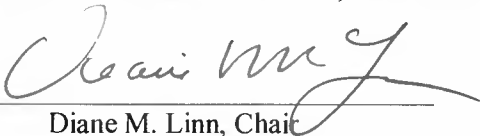
**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:**

1. To accept the recommendations of the ECOpark committee as outlined in the "Travel Smart" document dated December 28, 2001.
2. To direct the Department of Management and Business Services to implement recommendations that can be achieved within existing resources and develop a work plan for future implementation of recommendations with budgetary impacts.

ADOPTED this 10th day of January 2002.




BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

  
Diane M. Linn, Chair

REVIEWED:

THOMAS SPONSLER, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By   
Matthew O. Ryan, Assistant County Attorney

## ***Travel Smart Policy Recommendations***

December 28, 2001

Prepared by Amy Joslin and the ECOPark Committee: Lucy Baker (Aging & Disability), Steven Bullock (Community & Family Services), Delma Farrell (Chair's Office), F. Wayne George (DSCD Facilities), Tom Guiney (DSCD Fleet), Scott Marcy (District Attorney), Terri Naito (Commissioner District 3), April Siebenaler (DSCD Transportation), Tom Simpson (Support Services), Wes Stevens (Library), Richard Swift (Health), Kathy Treb (Community Justice), and Stephen Wright (Sheriff's Office).

### **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Multnomah County employees drive an estimated 12 million miles per year getting to and from County work sites. In addition, Multnomah County owns and operates over 500,000 square feet of parking area. Legislative requirements have set air quality and transportation goals for employee commute options that Multnomah County has yet to meet. Increased traffic volume and increased smog is resulting in decreased employee productivity, reduced quality of life, decreased job satisfaction, and increased recruitment difficulties. All of these factors impact the County's bottom line. In response, the following recommendations are provided to: reduce the need to drive, promote biking, promote walking, use transit, support carpooling, provide education, create incentives, manage parking, pursue funding, and measure progress.

<b><i>Saves County Funds</i></b>	<b><i>Low cost / No Cost</i></b>
Encourage ECO for business trips	Promote alternative work schedule.
Remove parking subsidies	Expand telecommuting
Do not provide parking beyond code	Expand fleet bike program
Do not lease parking beyond code req'ts	Promote health benefits biking/walking
Consider new pricing structure	Targeted walking program
Consider alternative uses for parking area	Offer bus tickets to visitors
Explore funding alternatives	Provide transit maps
Look for grants	Designate carpool spots
Change legislation	Expand emergency ride home
Explore County discounts	Partner with Carpool Match NW
	On-site transportation coordinators
<b><i>Requires Funding</i></b>	Provide biking assistance
Explore teleconferencing	Create a MINT site & include in orientation
Include on-site amenities	Host annual transportation fair
Provide more pool cars	Promote free bus passes
Provide more bike parking	Provide preferential carpool parking
Provide showers/lockers	Provide discounted bike helmets
Continue PASSport program	Have quarterly prize drawings
Provide vans for vanpooling	Include ECO in facility siting
Provide shuttles to transit	Monitor parking
Fund transportation FTE	Include good neighbor policies
	Promote park-and-ride at Hansen
	Survey all employees & measure progress

## II. BACKGROUND

In May of 2001, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a resolution to create an Employee Commute Options-Parking (ECOpark) Review Committee. This committee was tasked to develop countywide policy recommendations targeting sustainable multi-modal commute alternatives and parking strategies for Multnomah County employees. The committee was instructed to present its findings to the Board of County Commissioners.

Why does Multnomah County need to address employee commute options and parking policy? It's the law. Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR 340-030-0800) requires larger employers to provide commute options to encourage employees to reduce auto trips to the work site. Further, "employers must provide commute options that have the potential to reduce employee commute trips by ten percent within three years." Currently, the County has been unsuccessful in meeting this goal. In 2001, 83% of total trips by employees surveyed at East County locations were drive alone, 5% carpooled, 4% took the bus/max, 2% biked, 2% walked, less than 1% telecommuted and 3% utilized compressed work weeks.

But also consider the following forecast if we do nothing:

- For the Portland metropolitan region between 1994 and 2020, the number of person trips beginning & ending within the urban growth boundary is expected to ***increase by 56 percent, to 7.6 million trips per day***. As a result of significant increase in trips made in the region and without the implementation of new transportation projects or strategies, average motor vehicle speeds are expected to decrease from 25 mph in 1994 to 19 mph in 2020 with 37% of the region's freeway network experiencing congestion during the evening two-hour peak period. (2000 Regional Transportation Plan).

Traffic congestion costs the U.S. \$168 billion annually in lost productivity (Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development). Multnomah County managers from downtown locations already experience employee recruitment difficulties due to traffic congestion and parking fees. A survey conducted by AAA in 1999 identified that significant numbers of commuters would consider quitting jobs or moving to avoid worsening congestion.

Automobiles cause 30 – 40% of the air pollution in metropolitan regions (Arlington County, 2001). Automobile pollution causes severe health problems for many. Carbon monoxide and ozone from automobiles damage lungs of the children and elderly. Multnomah County fits in the "highest in the U.S." category by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for ambient levels of benzene. Benzene from automobiles can cause cancer including leukemia, eye, skin and respiratory problems. Pollution from autos is also a major contributor to global warming. In 1999 transportation accounted for 38 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions in Multnomah County.

Building a new highway or buying added parking spaces only provides short-lived solutions. Road funding and construction cannot keep pace with traffic volume. When pavement is laid in the form of more roads and increased parking – more vehicles will come. And with more vehicles comes more smog. Increased traffic volume and increased smog results in decreased employee productivity, reduced quality of life, decreased job satisfaction, and increased recruitment difficulties. All of these factors impact the County's bottom line.

The Board as well as the ECOpark committee has identified the need for a change in direction to address these issues. *Multnomah County currently has no policy re: provision of parking for employees, and there is no guide in place to support decision-making regarding commute alternatives and parking strategy.*

### **III. VISION**

Committee members agreed the following values should guide the committee in making recommendations on employee commute options and parking:

#### Vision & Values Statement:

Multnomah County is committed to a more sustainable, equitable commute and parking policy that meets regional air quality and transportation goals while supporting employee commute needs.

To these ends, the following values will guide the ECO Park Policy recommendations:

- Reduce Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOVs) employee commuting.
- Encourage employee use of available mass transit and multi-modal forms of transportation.
- Reduce dependency on fossil fuels and fuel emissions.
- Provide employee commute support and education.
- Design and site facilities to promote healthy commute options.
- Create programs that are socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.

### **IV. CONSTRAINTS**

There exist several constraints to significantly reducing single occupant vehicle (SOV) trips at Multnomah County. These include:

- Parking is generally inexpensive & easily available outside of the downtown core.
- East County infrastructure not as conducive to commute alternatives.
- Winter rainy season discourages walking and biking for some employees.
- Current budget constraints make it difficult to implement initiatives that cost money in the short term, even with financial savings in the long term.

## V. OPPORTUNITIES

However the ECOpark committee also recognizes that opportunities exist to promote employee commute options further.

- According to the 1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey, 50% of all trips are less than 3 miles, 40% are less than 2 miles, and over 25% are one mile or less. (City of Austin Pedestrian Plan Summary)

Existing conditions in the Portland metropolitan region also help. Multnomah County has a well-developed bike and transit system available to residents. The City of Portland was even recognized by Bicycling Magazine as the “Best Bicycling City” in the United States in 2001. This is due to Portland’s well-developed bicycling infrastructure. Multnomah County employees who live and work in Portland can certainly take advantage of this infrastructure. A well-developed public transit system exists within Multnomah County that employees can utilize at no cost. And finally, a regional rideshare program is being launched this fall of 2001 that should make carpooling even easier and provide additional resources to employees interested in carpooling.

## VI. APPROACH

*“ ‘Livable’ or ‘sustainable’ communities focus on people, rather than on cars. Creating sustainable transport systems that meet people’s needs equitably and foster a healthy environment requires putting the automobile back into its useful place as a servant. With a shift in priorities, cars can be part of a broad, balanced system in which public transport, cycling, and walking are all viable options.”*

*Marcia Lowe, Worldwatch Institute.*

The ECOpark committee believes the County serves as a model employer by reducing the use of single occupancy vehicles in the region. Coordination with other jurisdictions such as METRO, the City of Portland, City of Gresham and partners such as Tri-Met, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Bicycle Transportation Alliance and others can strengthen the development of policy in this area.

The developed recommendation utilized an integrated approach that considered land use planning & facility siting, transportation infrastructure, parking policies, and ECO goals.

The ECOpark committee also believed that the developed policy should focus on informed choices rather than mandates, and focus on incentives versus disincentives. Therefore, we focused on County employees that currently pay for parking because they are more motivated to change their transit method. The committee also focused on all commute modes: biking, walking, carpooling and transit. Surveys in other areas have found that 90% of people want information on two or more modes. Incentives that generated the most interest from County employees: compressed work week (31%), guaranteed ride home for personal emergencies (29%), and telecommuting (25%).

Finally, the committee recognizes that future program implementation as a result of this policy should consider a methodology to focus on the interested employees. Successful programs such as Australia's Travel smart program recognize that a segment of the population is not interested in changing their commute modes regardless of what is offered, and can be the most vocal opponents hampering progress.

## **VII. POLICY COMPONENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS**

A sustainable transportation system would not be dominated by cars, and would safely accommodate public transport, cyclists, and pedestrians. The committee recognized that some of the recommendations suggested below can be implemented immediately, where as other will require capital investment and staffing to implement over time. Low cost/no cost recommendations are identified with a √ . Recommendations that will require capital expenditures are identified with \$\$ . Recommendations that would save the County money and/or generate revenue are identified with a ☆ .

### **A. Reduce Need to Drive:**

1. √ Promote alternative work schedules including compressed workweek opportunities (9/80s and 4/10 schedule flexibility).
2. √ Expand implementation of County telecommuting program and provide support / information to employees and managers.
3. \$\$ Explore teleconferencing capabilities for County sites.
4. \$\$ Long Term: work to include more on-site amenities such as day-care, exercise facilities etc. in our buildings.
5. \$\$ Long Term: consider utilizing and/or developing telecommuting stations as alternative places to work.
6. \$\$ Long Term: provide additional County pool vehicles where practical to reduce the need for employees to drive personal vehicles to work to conduct County business.

### **B. Biking:**

1. √ Expand fleet bike program.
2. √ Promote the health benefits of biking.
3. \$\$ Provide long-term bicycle parking for County employees at all sites. Evaluate feasibility of bike stations near transit hubs in East County areas with County partners such as Tri-Met. Also evaluate options for downtown areas.
4. \$\$ Long Term: provide showers & lockers for employees who bicycle or walk to work.

### **C. Walking:**

1. √ Promote health benefits of walking
2. √ Target County employees who live within walking distance (<3 miles) of work or transit for walking promotion.

**D. Transit:**

1. ☆ Encourage use of alternative forms of transportation, including transit, for daily business trips when feasible and does not negatively impact employee productivity to reduce reliance on fleet cars.
2. ✓ Require County agencies to offer bus tickets to visitors who arrive by transit in any situation where the agency validates parking.
3. ✓ Provide appropriate transit maps at all County locations.
4. \$\$ Continue transit passport program.

**E. Carpool / Vanpools:**

1. ✓ Designate carpool spots at all County parking locations. Minimum numbers should be consistent with City codes with more added as needed.
2. ✓ Expand Emergency Ride Home Policy to include taxi and fleet vehicles use with supervisor approval.
3. ✓ Partner with Carpool Match Northwest to provide assistance to County employees to carpool.
4. \$\$ Long Term: consider providing vans for vanpools.
5. \$\$ Long Term: consider providing shuttles for facilities remote to transit (Yeon example).

**F. Education:**

1. ✓ Establish on-site employee transportation coordinators to assist employees with information on commute alternatives.
2. ✓ Provide biking assistance to address main obstacles people have to biking - unanswered questions re: parking, routes, rain, nighttime safety etc. Consider bike “buddy system” where bicycle enthusiasts are willing to assist co-workers in biking to work.
3. ✓ Make educational materials prominently available on the MINT and included in employee orientation materials for commuter info and ECO incentives. Examples of resources that should be readily available from a single MINT site location: bike & transit maps, Tri-Met trip planner, carpool forms, carpool match northwest, bus pass registration etc.
4. ✓ Host an annual transportation fair with participation by BTA, Tri-Met, local bike shops, and others to publicize transportation alternatives & provide information to employees.

**G. Incentives:**

1. ✓ Promote County’s free bus passes now available to County employees.
2. ✓ Provide preferential parking for carpoolers countywide.
3. ✓ Provide discounted bike helmets to employees. Also explore County employee discount at local bike shops.
4. ✓ Make it fun - have quarterly prize drawings for participating employees (one trip / week use of commute alternative). Encourage friendly competition between departments.

#### **H. Employee Provided Parking:**

1. ☆ Consider removing parking subsidies for employees parking. The committee defined parking subsidies as situations where the County is paying in part or in total for employee parking. Exemptions should be considered only where it could be demonstrated to be in the County's best financial interest. Target downtown and Multnomah building garage first.
2. ☆ For new construction, do not provide motorized vehicle parking beyond what is required by code for purposes of providing employee parking.
3. ☆ County shall not lease or purchase spaces for employee parking beyond what is required by code.
4. ☆ Consider commercial market rates as well as all costs when setting parking pricing structures (i.e., construction debt service, maintenance, monitoring/enforcement, taxes, and opportunity costs.) The State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has a formula that can be utilized to calculate parking costs.
5. ✓ Include in facility siting considerations availability of public transit, biking and walking facilities, as well as proximity to other County sites.
6. ✓ Make monitoring and enforcement of parking sites the responsibility of each site location.
7. ✓ Include good neighbor policies to address employee parking in surrounding neighborhoods.
8. ✓ Promote park-and-ride opportunities at the Hansen building. There are at least 10 spaces that could be made available to take advantage of this location's proximity to transit lines.

#### **I. Funding:**

1. ☆ Long Term: as free up parking spaces, consider alternative uses for property. Where parking is determined the highest and best use, then consider offering to additional County agencies and/or leasing to non-County agencies.
2. ☆ Explore funding alternatives such as Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) for equipment for teleworking, shuttles etc.
3. ☆ Take advantage of grants for fleet bikes, bike lockers etc. that may be available.
4. ☆ Long Term: evaluate changes in legislation to allow capital funding to be used for ECO projects. For example, Australia funds their Travel Smart program from infrastructure (road) funds as a cost-effective transportation project. The rationale is less expensive to reduce trips per day than to build highways to accommodate more trips per day. In effect, providing service rather than physical asset that has same net effect – gets people to their destinations.
5. ✓ Explore County employee discounts at local bike shops.
6. \$\$ Provide funding for dedicated transportation coordinator FTE position. A successful program require dedicated staff support to coordinate transportation fair, maintain website, provide personalized assistance,



organize prize drawings, survey employees, work with building coordinators, provide on-site resources etc.

**J. Progress Measurement:**

1. ✓ Survey annually all County employees for commute methods utilized.
2. ✓ Establish tracking methodology to measure progress with annual reporting. Example from City of Redmond: track measures in effect, results of surveys, # employees participating, and proposed modifications to improve.

## **VIII. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES**

The goal by adopting the above recommendations would be to change the mode of travel for the average employee once a week. The key result for the Department of Sustainable Community Development's Sustainability initiative is to reduce the single occupant vehicle trip rate for County employees from 85% to 82% for fiscal year 2002. This measurable result was chosen over vehicle miles traveled (VMT), as a more reliable indicator of the impact of employee commute options on employee's decision of commute method to travel to / from work.

The inclusion of education recommendations means that at the very least employees will have the information they need to make informed choices. The committee found that employees currently lack complete information on existing programs and options because such a resource does not exist. This lack of information hampers employee use of alternate commute methods.

The above recommendations also support the goals of the Local Action Plan on Global Warming adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in April 2001. This plan included goals to:

- Reduce per employee vehicle miles traveled in County administration vehicles by 20 percent by 2010 by promoting teleconferencing & availability of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and rideshare options for employees on County business.
- Enable 25 percent of County employees to telework or work compressed schedules to avoid commuting at least one day every two weeks by 2010 by promoting telecommuting & flexible hours policies & providing education to department managers to encourage consistent application of the policies.

While these goals are aggressive, the above recommendations are a step in that direction.

## IX. BENEFITS

The benefits of adopting countywide policy to encourage employee commute options are numerous.

### ❖ Social Sustainability & Promotion of Health & Wellness:

1. *Improved health through physical activity.* Surgeon General's Office says that everyone should get at least 30 minutes of moderate to intense physical activity several days a week. However, most adults (60% or more) do not get this much physical activity. Bicycling and walking are relatively low cost, easy to do for people of all ages, and enjoyable activities. When incorporated as part of the daily commute – easier to fit into busy schedules. (Vermont Bike & Ped News, August 1996)
2. *Reduced stress.* Bicycling and walking are also stress reducers compared to motorized travel, which actually increases stress.
3. *Improved employee productivity, attendance & morale.* Less local traffic and reduced traffic congestion allow employees to spend less time stuck in their cars getting to and from work. This lost time is time employees could be spending with their families or pursuing personal interests. There is also an associated reduction in the number of car crashes when more employee commute options are utilized. Car crashes are the number one cause of death for children nationwide.
4. *Reduced number of asthma attacks.* A recent study of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta suggest that reducing city-wide vehicle exhaust emissions may reduce the number of asthma related hospital admissions. During the 17 days of the Olympic Games, the city closed downtown Atlanta to traffic, altered delivery schedules and encouraged public transportation and telecommuting. During this period, daily peak ozone levels decreased 27.9% and the number of asthma acute care events decreased 41.6%. In Oregon, vehicles are the number one source of air pollution and 280,000 adults and children have asthma.

### ❖ Economic Sustainability:

1. *Increased financial savings.* The number one reason people will get out of their car: saves people money in both operating costs (fuel, maintenance) and ownership costs (insurance, depreciation). The American Automobile Association (AAA) estimated the average cost for driving in our region per year is \$7,344 (based on an average of 15,000 miles driven per year, in October 1999.) This translates into **the average family spending 15% to 20% of its income on automobile ownership and operation.** Put another way, the average American spends more on auto-related expenses than on food.
2. *Increased transportation alternatives.* Segments of our population cannot drive – children & senior citizens. Having an option gives people more flexibility in lifestyles, makes them less dependent on others and enhances overall quality of life. Increasing employee utilization and familiarity with

transportation options can have a ripple effect into these segments of our population.

3. *Decreased parking costs.* Parking is not free. In Portland it costs over \$5000 per space to construct a parking lot and about \$18,000 per space to build a parking garage. Parking management and promotion of employee commute options can reduce parking costs by decreasing demand - saving Multnomah County money.
4. *Decreased fuel consumption.* The economic and political vulnerability of a car-dependent society becomes painfully clear in the event of an oil crisis. The United States uses 43% of its petroleum to fuel cars and light trucks and imports half of all its oil. Even in a stable market, reliance on foreign oil weakens the economy.

❖ Environmental Sustainability:

1. *Reduced greenhouse gas emissions.* In 1999, transportation accounted for 38% of all greenhouse gas emissions in Multnomah County. By 2010, the forecast is for almost 43%. Clearly action is required if the County seriously intends to address greenhouse gas emissions. A car left at home once a week reduces carbon dioxide emissions related to global warming by 795 pounds per year.
2. *Reduced soil and water pollution.* Run-off from highways & parking areas contributes significantly to contamination of soil and water.
3. *Improved air quality.* Cars and trucks are the number one cause of smog in the Portland area. On a typical day, they pump over a million pounds of pollution into our air and contribute to global warming.
4. *Reduced loss of open space & scenic destruction.* Construction of additional highways to accommodate vehicular traffic increases, combined with the pollution they create has led to deterioration and reductions in Oregon greenspaces. Increased utilization of employee commute options can assist in deferred road expansion. Cars also kill more animals than hunting and animal experimentation combined.