

Lead Agency: County Management

Program Contact: Caren Cox

Program Offer Type: Existing Operating

Related Programs:

Program Characteristics: In Target

Executive Summary

The Bus Pass Program assists the County with satisfaction of Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Employee Commute Option (ECO) mandate via the TriMet Universal Pass Program. The program encourages employee use of alternative transportation for daily commuting and workday travel between work locations. Eligible County employees receive an annual transit pass subsidized by the County for bus, light rail, and street car transit in the TriMet service areas including limited use on C-Tran vehicles in Clark County Washington. This transit subsidy program is Multnomah County's primary contribution toward satisfaction of DEQ's Employee Commute Options trip reduction goals. Other County supported options include compressed work week and secure bicycle parking. Within 3 years, the combination of these employer incentives must have the potential to reduce commute trips to the worksite by 10%. The bi-annual DEQ Employee Transportation Survey measures progress toward this goal.

Program Description

The Bus Pass Program supports the County's sustainability goals to protect the environment, reduce air/noise pollution, and conserve natural resources by encouraging the use of mass transit for both daily work commute and workday travel between worksites. Since motor vehicles are the largest single source of air pollution in the Portland area, DEQ requires local employers to provide transportation alternatives designed to reduce the number of cars driven to work. Staff provides management of the County's transit pass program, including coordination of the mandatory bi-annual DEQ Employee Transportation Survey, oversight of an inter-governmental contract with TriMet, administration/distribution of individual annual transit passes to eligible County employees (all regular full/part time employees are eligible for transit pass), collection of passes from terminated or ineligible employees throughout the year, management of the Emergency Ride home program and training for Coordinators to administer the Emergency Ride home program, and pursuit of refund dollars available through the state's Business Energy Tax Credit program (which has recovered \$500K in the past two years helping to cover a portion of the program's cost).

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	Previous Year Actual (FY09-10)	Current Year Purchased (FY10-11)	Current Year Estimate (FY10-11)	Next Year Offer (FY11-12)
Output	Percent of purchased passes distributed	91.0%	85.0%	84.0%	90.0%
Outcome	Cost savings (in dollars per ee compared to purchasing retail Trimet Pass	629	670	615	650

Performance Measure - Description

Output: New bus pass year begins on September 1. Historically, participation increases throughout the bus pass year. Allocation is based on TriMet's interpretation of data gathered during the bi-annual DEQ Transportation Survey.

Outcome: The County's per pass cost using this program is significantly less than the retail cost of a Tri-Met pass. Annual pass cost savings are determined at the end of the bus pass year. Use of the Universal Pass Program to satisfy this labor requirement saves the County from paying the full individual pass price for each pass issued. The savings to the County for bus pass year 9/09-8/10 was \$2,272,577.00 (3613 passes issued with a savings of \$629 savings per pass). The County's savings to date for the 9/10-8/11 bus pass year is \$2,102,070.00 (3418 passes issued to date).

Legal/Contractual Obligation

Labor contracts require transit pass be provided by employer. OAR Chapter 340, Div 12 requires employers to make a good faith effort to provide incentives for employees to potentially reduce commute trips to worksites by 10% within 3 years. To meet this requirement, County assists DEQ with their bi-annual survey to determine current commute methods, then follows DEQ approved plan to meet target reductions. Compliance is based on submission/implementation of a sufficient plan and on whether employer has made good faith effort to achieve the target. Failure to comply is a Class II environmental violation carrying penalties ranging from \$500-\$2000 per day of violation.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds
Program Expenses	2011	2011	2012	2012
Materials & Supplies	\$0	\$1,305,967	\$0	\$1,270,421
Total GF/non-GF:	\$0	\$1,305,967	\$0	\$1,270,421
Program Total:	\$1,305,967		\$1,270,421	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Program Revenues				
Fees, Permits & Charges	\$0	\$1,030,967	\$0	\$1,270,421
Other / Miscellaneous	\$0	\$275,000	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue:	\$0	\$1,305,967	\$0	\$1,270,421

Explanation of Revenues

Program is funded via the benefits administration charge (0.90% of gross pay). Revenues are recorded in cost center 705210. The County pays for the program at onset of transit pass year (September) in order to receive a 5% discount on the annual program cost.

Over the past three years the County has been able to "sell" energy tax credits generated by this program to a tax paying entity through the Oregon Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) program. BETC requires an annual application and match to a tax purchasing partner is not guaranteed. At this time, it is believed that the State of Oregon will discontinue this program but if it remains in place we intend to continue to apply for the credit indefinitely.

Significant Program Changes

Last year this program was: #72006, FRM - Bus Pass Program