

# EPA's Transportation Partners Shortcuts

*Smart Moves*

*for*

*Healthier  
Communities*



## *What's Inside:*

### **News from Washington:**

**EPA's New National  
Ambient Air  
Quality Standards**  
*Page 2*

**EPA Releases New  
CMAQ Analysis**  
*Page 3*

**1997 Tax Relief Act Creates  
New Options in Employee  
Commute Benefits**  
*Page 4*

**Global Action Plan:  
Changing Travel Behavior  
Through the Community  
Lifestyle Campaign**  
*Page 5*

**Rail~volution '97 Transit  
Conference on  
Track For St. Louis**  
*Page 6*



## *PTI: Factors for Successful Traffic Calming*

In many American cities and towns, population growth and vehicle dependency are continuing to load local arterials with commuters. Neighborhood cut-throughs often become mini-freeways at the expense of local citizens and their safety. As a result, communities are forced to reclaim their streets from speeding drivers. Residents call it "traffic calming."

Traffic calming changes the physical characteristics of streets to make them more friendly to pedestrians, bicyclists, and residents. These changes can be as simple

as painting a center line or allowing on-street parking; or as major as reconstructing the road to decrease its width or adding speed humps. "Traffic calming is such a simple concept, it's hard to make it difficult," says Ian Lockwood, city transportation planner in West Palm Beach, Florida. "It's really community-based, intuitive, common sense stuff." Traffic calming design changes are self-enforcing, prompting motorists to instinctively slow down or take other routes.

Traffic calming has been successful in reducing traffic speeds and volumes,

*Continued on page 2*

## *Project Partner Profile:*

### *Tampa's Orangecycle Program*

The City of Tampa, FL has adopted an innovative idea that is catching on in a number of U.S. cities—making bicycles available for anyone who needs one. Modeled after Amsterdam's famous "Yellow Bike" program,



*Continued on page 2*



## EPA's New National Ambient Air Quality Standards

On July 16, 1997, EPA Administrator Carol Browner signed a set of new air quality standards that constitute a major step forward in protecting the public from the health hazards associated with air pollution. The new standards are the first update in 20 years for ozone and the first in 10 years for particulate matter. EPA estimates that each year, the new standards will prevent approximately 15,000 premature deaths and 350,000 cases of aggravated asthma.

EPA has developed an implementation package to help cities achieve the new standards through various ozone-reducing programs. By working to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), the Transportation Partners program will play an important role in helping areas achieve the new standards.

More information on these standards can be found on EPA's web site at <http://ttnwww.rtpnc.epa.gov/naaqsfm/>. Details on the new standards will be discussed in an upcoming issue of *Shortcuts*.

## PTI: Factors for Successful Traffic Calming

*Continued from page 1*

but it requires careful implementation. Concerns about slower police, fire, and ambulance response times must be addressed. A planning process that includes extensive neighborhood participation can help tackle specific needs of the community. Traffic calming has been most successful where local governments have established objective criteria for adopting traffic calming and created a variety of available options.

Traffic calming has been successful in reducing traffic speeds and volumes, but it requires careful implementation.

physical devices or technologies or controls that you can use," says James Matteson, Street Transportation Director. "We do the technical work free, but if they want physical devices installed, the neighborhood has to pony up half the cost." Phoenix has also developed guidelines for new subdivisions that now feature shorter, narrower streets, set-back sidewalks, and configurations that stymie cut-through traffic.

In Phoenix, neighborhoods work with the city's Neighborhood Traffic Management Team—six experts on transportation design and planning—to develop a customized traffic calming plan. "There are dozens of different

Public Technology, Inc. is developing a book of local government success stories on traffic calming. For more information, call Robert Hicks at (202) 626-2400.



## Tampa's Orangecycle Program

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Tampa's Orangecycles allow tourists, residents, and business people to hop on a bicycle and ride it from place to place around Tampa's city center area. The bicycles were donated from the Tampa police department's impoundment lot, stripped down to one gear, and recondi-

tioned with bright orange paint. Volunteers collect the bicycles and redistribute them around the downtown area.

The City has also established a Downtown Commuter Center, which houses showers, lockers, and repair facilities for use by

bicyclists. City officials estimate that the program will reduce VMT by 84,800 miles per year. In addition to Tampa, cities such as Portland, OR; Missoula, MT; Boulder, CO; St. Paul, MN; and Fresno, CA have also adopted free bicycle programs. ♦

## EPA Releases New CMAQ Analysis

*EPA has estimated that CMAQ can account for significant percentages of the emission reductions required by the new NAAQS.*

**R**ecent analysis by EPA suggests that the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program can play a major role in state and local plans for meeting the new National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The report, *The Emission Reduction Potential of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program—Preliminary Assessment* (May 19, 1997), estimates the emission reduction potential of the CMAQ program in two funding scenarios: (1) the current \$1 billion per year authorized by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA); and (2) the President's proposal for CMAQ as contained in the National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act (NEXTEA). The President calls for boosting CMAQ funding to \$1.3 billion per year.

### ***Preliminary Assessment Results and Methodology***

EPA has estimated that CMAQ can account for significant percentages of the emission reductions required by the new NAAQS. A study of 14 urban areas determined that compliance with the updated standards will require these areas to reduce volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by approximately 1,723 tons per day (tpd) by the year 2010. Based on conservative assumptions of where CMAQ funding would be allocated, EPA determined that current CMAQ funding levels could reduce emissions in these 14 areas by 430 to 640 tpd, or 25 to 37 percent of the reductions needed to meet the new standard. The President's CMAQ program could reduce VOC emissions by 520 to 780 tpd, or 30 to 45 percent of the amount needed.

State data submitted to the Federal Highway Administration were used to determine overall pollution reductions from CMAQ projects. Projects were divided into six categories, according to type of project. Projects ranking in the 50th and 60th percentiles were used as lower- and upper-bound values for estimating the potential long-term reduction. Ton reductions were then estimated by extrapolating investment patterns over time and aggregating the totals.

### ***Meeting the Nation's Goals for Healthful Air***

Many metropolitan areas continue to struggle with pollution from congested transportation networks. Under the President's proposal, CMAQ funding would be made available to new nonattainment areas to help them conform to the new air quality standards. Continued investment in pollution reduction projects can result in cumulative effects that allow substantial pollution reductions over time. Because CMAQ projects can yield air quality benefits for up to 20 years, CMAQ stands to play a major role in long-term strategies for air quality improvement.

The process of ISTEA reauthorization has focused a good deal of attention on CMAQ program funding. Additional information on ISTEA reauthorization can be obtained from the Federal Highway Administration web page at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reauthorization>. The new CMAQ analysis is available from the EPA web page at <http://www.epa.gov/oppe/tp/transpub.htm>. ♦  
September 1997



## 1997 Taxpayer Relief Act Creates New Options in Employee Commute Benefits

**O**n August 5th, President Clinton signed the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. This tax law enables employers to offer new choices in commute benefits. Since 1992, the tax code has included three tax-exempt commute benefits: parking valued at up to \$165 per month, transit passes of up to \$65 per month, and vanpool benefits of up to \$65 per month. Until now, however, employers who offered their employees a *choice* of free parking at work or its cash value as a subsidy for other commuter modes (carpooling, walking, biking, transit) lost their parking tax exemption, *just for offering the choice*. Not surprisingly, free parking has become the only employee transportation benefit for 90 percent of the nonfarm labor force.

### ***Commuter Choice is a Winning Strategy for Employees and the Environment***

The new tax law will change this situation for the better. Beginning with the 1998 tax year, employers can offer an expanded menu of commute benefits to their employees. With Commuter Choice, workers who prefer to commute by transit, carpool, biking, or walking may “cash out” their parking space and receive additional salary in lieu of their parking subsidy. Employees can use the income to finance commute alternatives such as vanpools and transit, increase their savings, or spend as they please. Employers finance the raise by ceasing to pay for the parking that the employee no longer uses.

Free parking at work leads to more driving at times of the day when most of us are already on the road. In addition to creating congestion, rush hour driving contributes significantly to the production of smog. Carbon emissions from

automobiles are a major source of greenhouse gases that warm the atmosphere and contribute to the threat of climate change. A study by Donald Shoup at the University of California at Los Angeles documented a 12 percent reduction in commute-time driving at eight Northern California firms attributed to Commuter Choice programs. That reduction is equivalent to removing one in eight rush-hour vehicles from the road.

### ***Commuter Choice Programs Can Lower Employer Costs***

The provision of the Taxpayer Relief Act related to Commuter Choice does not mandate employer or employee participation. In addition, the change to the tax code is designed so that Commuter Choice programs may achieve cost benefits to employers. Commuter Choice can help companies counter worksite parking shortages and reduce out-of-pocket costs for construction of new parking facilities. These programs may also be effective tools for employee recruitment and retention.

Transportation Partners is preparing outreach materials describing Commuter Choice and its potential to provide an unprecedented level of flexibility to both employers and employees. Commuter Choice programs provide new incentives for people to leave their cars at home and explore new commuting alternatives. Firms that offer a diverse set of benefits that include parking conversion may reduce their overall expenses by minimizing the need for on-site employee parking. Look for an announcement of a Commuter Choice Handbook in an upcoming issue of *Shortcuts*, or call the Transportation Partners Hotline for more information. ♦ September 1997

*Beginning with the 1998 tax year, employers can offer an expanded menu of commute benefits to their employees.*



# Global Action Plan: Changing Travel Behavior Through the Community Lifestyle Campaign

**H**abitual behavior, such as using a car for every trip, is often difficult to change when people have become accustomed to a lack of choices.

The Global Action Plan (GAP) has established the Community Lifestyle Campaign, which supports individuals as they seek transportation alternatives that improve their quality of life and benefit the environment.

The campaign is simple and strategic. Five or six neighborhood households—an EcoTeam—meet eight times over a four-month period, with the help of a step-by-step workbook and a trained volunteer coach. Choosing from a series of practical actions, team members support one another to reduce waste, use less water, conserve household energy, buy “eco-wise” products, and encourage other neighbors to participate.

An important focus of the EcoTeam is to develop energy-efficient transportation practices among its members. For example, through the EcoTeams, neighbors are cutting back on their driving by car-pooling, using public transportation, combining trips, walking, and riding bikes. These changes in travel behavior have led to measurable benefits, including auto emission reductions of about 15 percent per member household.

GAP has contracts with 6 municipalities (Woodbury, MN; Kansas City, MO; Bend, OR; Portland, OR; Chattanooga, TN; and Issaquah, WA) and is currently

negotiating with 10 to 12 additional cities. In addition, Oregon has committed its support to starting new programs in seven municipalities. GAP also tries to partner with local transportation systems in their project areas. In the case of Portland, OR, the regional transportation authority, TRI-Met, is providing free transit to all the participants of GAP EcoTeams. By partnering with the campaign, TRI-Met is increasing ridership and reducing single occupant vehicle use.

Part of the campaign’s success in promoting alternatives to the single occupant vehicle stems from teaching the public about the environmental impacts of transportation. People realize that driving cars pollutes the environment, but they may have only a vague notion of the broad environmental impacts and their existing transportation alternatives. The campaign educates participants and then provides the peer support necessary to make changes in transportation choices. To find out more about the campaign and how it might work in your community, contact GAP at (914) 679-4830. ♦

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The Campaign for Efficient Passenger Transportation recently produced *Dollars and Sense: The Economic Case for Public Transportation In America*, which discusses how public transportation contributes to the vitality of the American economy from small towns to sprawling cities. This publication is available at <http://www.ctaa.org/dollarsandsense.htm>.

EPA has published *Indicators of the Environmental Impacts of Transportation*, a document that describes and quantifies estimates of the magnitude or severity of various environmental impacts from highway, rail, aviation, and maritime transport.

The Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) has developed the *TDM Case Study Compendium*, which discusses employer-based trip-reduction strategies for ridesharing, telecommuting, guaranteed ride home programs, and parking cash-out.

The Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP) has created the *Directory of Transportation Reform Resources*, which contains a list of useful transportation publications and videos, as well as contact information for a variety of transportation planning experts and organizations.

For these and other publications, call the TP Hotline at (202) 260-6830.

# Calendar of Events



## TP CONTACTS

**TP HOTLINE**  
(202) 260-6830

**TP Web Site**  
<http://www.epa.gov/oppe/tp>

**TransAct Web Site**  
<http://www.transact.org>



## PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

**Association for  
Commuter Transportation**  
(202) 393-3497

**Bicycle Federation of America, Inc.**  
(202) 463-6622

**Center for Clean Air Policy**  
(202) 408-9260

**Environmental Defense Fund**  
(202) 387-3500

**International Council for Local  
Environmental Initiatives**  
(510) 540-8843

**Local Government Commission:  
Center for Livable Communities**  
(916) 448-1198 or  
(800) 290-8202

**Public Technology, Inc.**  
(202) 626-2400 or  
(800) 852-4934

**Renew America**  
(202) 232-2252  
or (800) 922-RENEW

**Surface Transportation Policy  
Project**  
(202) 466-2636



Date	Event
September 7-10	Cities for Climate Protection Campaign—U.S. Training Workshop on “Renewable Energy and Reducing Waste: Two Solutions for Climate Protection” in Atlanta, GA.
September 7-10	ACT Conference in Chicago, IL.
October 7-9	“Clean Airport Summit: Powering Operations with Alternative Fuels” in Denver, CO.
October 19-24	CCAP Policy Academy in Halle, Germany.
October 26-29	Rail~Volution '97 in St. Louis, MO.
November 14-15	Fourth Annual “Putting Our Communities Back on Their Feet” Conference in Los Angeles, CA.

## *Rail~Volution '97 Transit Conference on Track For St. Louis*

**A**rriving by plane, train, bus, car, and bike, people from cities across the nation will soon converge on St. Louis, MO for a national conference on transit and community development.

*Rail~Volution '97: Building Livable Communities with Transit* will be held October 26-29 at the St. Louis Hyatt Regency Hotel at Union Station in downtown St. Louis. This third annual Rail~Volution conference hosts members of the development and financial communities; leading transportation and community-development experts; state, regional,

and city officials; Members of Congress; and citizen activists who are interested in improving their communities through the use of transit and smart land-use policies.

As a conference partner, the Transportation Partners program will be presenting its second annual *Way to Go! Awards*, which honor local governments, civic organizations, and businesses that have enhanced their communities and environment through transportation improvements.

Please call 1-800-788-7077 for more information about Rail~Volution '97. ◆