

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/Ridesharing

Transportation demand management (TDM) strategies seek to increase higher occupancy travel, especially during week-day peak congestion periods. The goal of TDM actions is to shift travel to higher occupancy (transit, car/vanpool) or non-motorized (bicycle, walking) transportation modes, shift travel to less congested times of the day, and/or reduce or eliminate the need to travel (e.g., through telecommuting). TDM strategies include incentives/disincentives, service improvements, information dissemination and marketing activities, alternative work schedules and sites, and parking management.

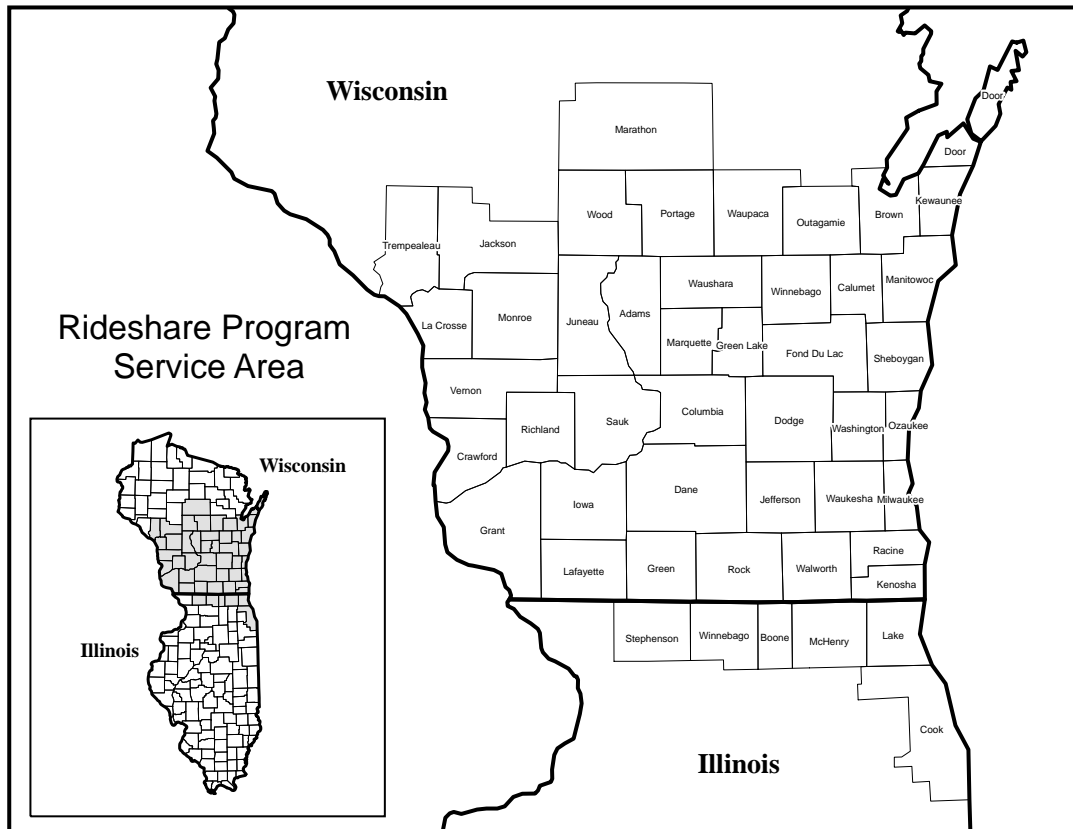
Current TDM Programs and Activities

The Madison Area MPO employs a full-time ridesharing coordinator whose responsibilities include coordinating public and private employer programs, ride-matching services, and staffing a Ridesharing Coordinating Committee, which coordinates the ridesharing and alternative transportation promotion activities of the various governmental agencies involved in such efforts. Along with the MPO, these include the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wisconsin Department of Administration, Metro Transit, UW-Madison, Dane County, and the City of Madison.

Madison Area MPO Rideshare Etc. Program

The Madison Area MPO sponsors the Rideshare Etc. program to implement on-site TDM/Ridesharing programs primarily at the larger public and private work sites in the Madison area. Information and assistance is provided to employers to tailor programming activities to their work site and to provide ongoing support. The program maintains a database of over 1,500 carpools, as well as information on Metro Transit bus routes, State Vanpool Program routes, Park-and-Ride lots, and bicycle facilities. In addition, marketing materials are distributed, including brochures, displays, and radio messages. In the fall of 2006, Web-based ride matching was added to provide an additional tool for commuters interested in interactively accessing information about alternative modes of transportation for commuting. The Rideshare Etc. program service area covers 48 counties in south central Wisconsin and Northern Illinois (see Figure 33).

FIGURE 33



The employer-sponsored programs generally consist of naming a company ridesharing coordinator, distributing in-house publicity, providing ride-matching services, and setting up a ridesharing booth to be used in conjunction with question-and-answer periods to assist employees to start ridesharing and/or utilize other alternative transportation. Employee surveys are sometimes conducted. Assistance and information is also provided on implementation of incentives/disincentives for employees to use alternative transportation.

Employer-based TDM programs are generally the most effective in reducing single occupant vehicle trips, and work trips are the easiest to shift to alternative transportation modes. TDM strategies can be chosen to meet the specific needs of the employees based upon the worksite characteristics and the employees' demographic and travel characteristics. In addition, a corporate "culture" can be created that reinforces the TDM message.

In 2005, it is estimated that the direct impacts of the Rideshare Etc. program resulted in a reduction of 18.9 million vehicle miles of travel (VMT), over 2,000 required parking spaces, and 47 and 38 tons of smog-producing nitrogen oxide (NOx) and volatile organic compound emissions respectively, and also resulted in savings by workers of over \$4.5 million in commuting costs.

Transit Incentives

Commuter Choice Program

Metro Transit offers a Commuter Choice Program whereby employers purchase bus passes or tickets from Metro for their employees. This allows employees to purchase the bus pass/tickets at a pre-tax rate. Employers have the option of subsidizing all or part of the cost of the pass/tickets. Employers benefit through reduced payroll taxes and can deduct the cost of providing the transit benefit as a business expense. Around 25-30 employers currently participate in the program, including the State of Wisconsin.

Group Unlimited Bus Pass Program

This is a program negotiated by Metro with the major universities and employers whereby the university or employer purchases heavily discounted passes for all of its students or employees regardless of whether they choose to participate in the program. The passes are then generally provided to students/employees for free or a modest cost. The price of the passes is based upon anticipated ridership considering the employer location, available bus service, etc. For small employers, the program could be negotiated with a transportation management association, if one were created for an employment site.

Metro has negotiated student bus pass programs with UW-Madison, Edgewood College, and MATC. In the case of UW and MATC, the schools then charge all students a semester fee for the bus pass, which allows unlimited use of all Metro bus routes. The UW program was expanded in 2002 to cover employees, including UW Hospital & Clinics employees. Metro has also negotiated an unlimited ride pass program with the City of Madison and Saint Mary's Hospital for its employees and is in the process of setting up a program for Meriter Hospital employees. Employees receive free bus passes. Metro has also begun discussions with Wisconsin Department of Administration (WisDOA) staff about a possible program for all state employees.



By providing free bus service for all students/employees, the unlimited ride pass program provides a large financial incentive for riding the bus. The incentive is much greater than with the Commute Choice program for employers. Passes are free or heavily discounted and passes are available for all employees versus only those who choose to participate as with the Commute Choice program. This may persuade some employees to try taking the bus, at least on some days. The bus pass programs have been hugely successful in boosting transit ridership.

Smart Commute Initiative

Smart Commute is a loan program that gives homebuyers the chance to qualify for a larger mortgage if they purchase a home along a Metro route. Participating lenders are able to add a portion of the homeowner's potential transportation savings (\$200 per month for one wage-earner households, \$250 per month for two wage-earner households) to their qualifying income. Program participants are also eligible for other benefits by program sponsors, including a trial membership to Community Car of Madison, a member-based, car sharing organization (see information on next page). There are four banks that currently participate in the program.

Guaranteed Ride Home Program

The Guaranteed Ride Home program provides taxi vouchers to support commuters that use an alternative mode of transportation so they are not stranded at work if an emergency comes up and they need to get home quickly. Research has shown that lack of access to transportation in an emergency has been a barrier to using the bus, carpooling, vanpooling, or bicycling to work.

The program is available to participants in the MPO's Rideshare Etc. Program and is jointly administered by the Madison Area MPO and the Dane County Highway & Transportation Department and funded by the Department. The program provides vouchers good for up to \$35 per ride for a maximum of three rides per year. UW-Madison Transportation Services has a guaranteed ride home program for UW employees who do not drive to work. Employees can get a taxicab ride or fleet vehicle escort (for those living more than 30 miles away) up to three times every six months. The Wisconsin Department of Administration also provides transportation home for vanpool participants in emergency situations.

State Vanpool Program

The Wisconsin Department of Administration administers a State Employee Vanpool Program to provide vanpool services to major employment sites. There are currently 72 vanpools in operation with most traveling to downtown and the UW campus. Other destinations include Hill Farms and the Fish Hatchery Road/Greenway Cross area. Riders pay a fare calculated to cover operating and capital costs. A minimum of one state employee is required on each van, but non-state employees are also welcome to ride.



UW-Madison Program

UW-Madison employs a TDM coordinator and has a comprehensive TDM program covering all alternative modes of transportation. The university provides free campus bus service, funds Metro Route 53, which provides park-and-ride service to campus from the UW Research Park, and contracts with Metro for unlimited ride pass programs for employees and students. Bus passes are free for employees, while students pay a low semester student fee (\$35 for 2006-'07) for the pass. The UW Medical School provides frequent shuttle service between the hospital and the East and West side UW clinics. UW also has a flex parking system for many lots whereby employees receive a refund for days they do not park on campus.

Bicycle Programs

Assistance is available to employers on how to facilitate the needs of bicycle commuters as well as how to promote and encourage bicycling. The Madison Area MPO ridesharing coordinator provides bicycle maps and other information as part of employer-sponsored programs and works with the City of Madison's Bicycle Program Coordinator. The Wisconsin Bicycle Federation is also available as a resource and has conducted employer programs in the past as part of grant projects. UW-Madison employs a Bicycle Coordinator to promote bicycling on campus. The university also has a bike ambassador program to promote bicycling and walking through a variety of avenues such as safety clinics, bike maintenance/repair classes, and bike tours. Dane County has a limited number of bicycle lockers available for rent downtown. The City of Madison has bicycles available for use by city employees. Metro Transit has bicycle racks on all its buses and they are very popular and heavily used.

Community Car Program

Community Car is a member-based car sharing organization that provides cars by the hour for individuals and organizations. Members share access to a fleet of high gas-mileage and hybrid gas-electric vehicles located in reserved parking spots in the central Madison area. Car sharing is for people who do not need a car every day and are able to walk, bus, bicycle, or carpool for the majority of their transportation needs.

Parking Management

Studies have shown that the availability of free parking is one of the most important factors in an employee's decision on whether or not to use an alternative mode of transportation to work. This was confirmed in interviews conducted with Madison and Milwaukee area employers as part of a 2002 WisDOT-sponsored study evaluating subsidized transit passes, pre-tax transit benefits, and parking cash-out programs in Wisconsin.¹¹

Managing parking supply and cost is most feasible downtown and on the UW-Madison campus due to limited land availability. It also may be possible at other high intensity activity/ employment centers with structured parking. However, parking management is a complex balancing act. Parking policies that discourage solo driving help to mitigate traffic congestion downtown and the quality of the neighborhoods. They also reduce the need for the city and university to provide expensive parking facilities, using up limited land. On the other hand, adequate provision must be made for parking that is not too expensive in order for the city to maintain downtown as a retail and employment center and for the university to attract and keep qualified employees.

Downtown Madison Parking

The City of Madison owns five downtown parking ramps and four surface parking lots with a total combined parking capacity of around 3,850 spaces. Dane County owns a downtown parking ramp with a capacity of 1,000 spaces and the State of Wisconsin owns the Monona Terrace Convention Center ramp with a normal capacity of around 550 spaces. In addition, there are numerous private parking facilities downtown that offer daily and monthly parking.

The most recent public parking capacity additions include the construction of the convention center ramp and the addition of 400 spaces in the State Street-Capitol (Dayton) ramp. A new mid-State Street ramp has been proposed on the Buckeye parking lot site off Gorham Street, but no agreement has been reached on project details. The City is also exploring the possibility of combining the ramp with a mixed-use development.

Around 10% of the parking spaces in the City of Madison ramps and lots are reserved. Monthly parking rates for these spaces vary by location from \$100 to \$133. The city also charges an extra \$15-\$23 per month to non-residents. By comparison, in 1980 the monthly rate was \$49. The rate for non-reserved spaces in the parking ramps is \$0.70 to \$1.10 per hour, depending upon the ramp. Three increases in parking rates have been instituted since 2002 in order to generate revenue for the planned reconstruction of the Government East ramp and construction of a planned mid-State Street ramp. There are waiting lists for the monthly spaces at the ramps, however the city has limited the number of monthly spaces as part of its policy to encourage downtown commuters to use alternative modes of travel. The parking rate at the Dane County ramp for non-employees is \$0.75 per hour. The parking rate at the Convention Center ramp for non-employees is \$1.10 per hour with a daily maximum of \$12.50. Qualifying state employees who do not receive an assigned parking space as part of their employment pay \$74 per month.

Rates at private parking ramps in the downtown area are comparable. Most of those on or near the Square (e.g., Block 89, U.S. Bank, ULI) have somewhat higher rates. However, many of the employers in these buildings subsidize parking for their employees.



¹¹Evaluation of Short-Term Transportation Demand Management Strategies, prepared by Cambridge Systematics for the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation (Oct. 2002).

The percentage of people using the City of Madison ramps that are long-term parkers (over 5 hours) varies from a low of 17% at the State Street-Capitol ramp to a high of 69% at the Capitol Square North ramp, according to a November 2002 survey. Overall, 31% of ramp users are long-term parkers. The State Street-Campus and State Street-Capitol ramps are heavily used by UW and MATC-Downtown Campus students. The Dane County ramp is used mostly by downtown workers, while the Convention Center ramp is used by state employees, other downtown workers, and people attending events there.

Occupancy rates for the non-reserved parking spaces at the City of Madison ramps varied from a low of 59% at the Civic Center ramp to a high of 97%-99% at the State Street-Campus and Government East ramps. The occupancy rates at the Capitol Square North and State Street-Capitol ramp were 83% and 86% respectively. The occupancy rates at the Civic Center and State Street-Capitol ramps have declined significantly since Alliant Energy Co. moved out to the American Center in the spring of 2002.

The City of Madison has a preferential parking and carpool program in all of its ramps. Under the program, persons on the waiting list for monthly parking spaces who are carpoolers are given priority when spaces become available.

The City of Madison has adopted a policy whereby it will enter into a long-term lease with property owners/employers for parking spaces in its public parking ramps on the condition that the employer implement a transportation demand management (TDM) program that includes financial incentives to use alternative transportation modes. The policy was created in response to a request by North Square Associates—which manages the new Mullins Office Building on the Square—to enter into a long-term lease of 60 parking stalls at two public ramps for use by Physicians Plus Insurance Corporation employees. Because the parking ramps have been funded with tax-exempt bonds, Federal law prohibits the city from leasing more than 10% of the spaces in the ramps. Since then, the Fiore Company, which owns the Network 222 building, has also entered into a long-term lease for 65 spaces in the Civic Center ramp.

The City has a residential parking permit program for central/UW campus neighborhoods in order to prevent commuter parking on residential streets. A permit does not guarantee a resident a parking spot, however, and several CBD permit parking areas have more permits issued than the number of on-street parking spaces available.

University of Wisconsin Campus Parking

There are close to 13,000 permitted parking spaces on the UW campus to accommodate 18,000+ employees. Demand exceeds supply and there is a waiting list for parking permits. There are also a limited number of spaces for students commuting from outside the transit service area. The number was just recently increased with the construction of the parking ramp next to Nielson Tennis Stadium. The university policy is to maintain the current ratio of spaces to employees.

A 2003 parking and traffic study for the growing West campus area found that current parking supply meets the demand, but that new construction (some of which will eliminate existing parking) will result in a parking deficit of around 1,200 spaces by 2011, assuming current parking demand ratios. This is based on a projected increase in employees (to 10,850) and a 77% increase in patient/visitors (to 2,300). To accommodate this demand, the university recently constructed a 1,285-space parking facility just east of Nielson Tennis Stadium near the UW Clinical Science Center.

Parking fees are used to provide funding for the construction and maintenance of parking facilities as well as subsidizing alternative transportation options and programs (e.g., free campus bus, free employee bus passes). The UW has increased its parking permit rates campus-wide in recent years in order to help fund new parking facilities and manage the demand for spaces. The cost for academic year permits for high-demand lots is \$695. Surface lot annual permits are \$445. Permits for gated lots and reserved parking for specific departments are \$1,035. Parking meters on campus are \$1 per hour. The flex parking in-car meter rate is \$0.75 per hour with a \$6 minimum daily charge.

