

Active transportation and your health

In light of the New Year, many of us are pledging to get in shape, lose weight, or stay active. This year, why not take a new approach to physical fitness? Recent research has shown a strong correlation between transportation options and individual health. There is increasing evidence showing that when people are dependent on their vehicles for the majority of their transportation, it can lead to a sedentary lifestyle, which is a significant factor in disability and deaths in the United States.

Using active transportation modes is an easy way to fit a workout into your daily routine. Active transportation is commonly referred to as "any method of travel that is human-powered," typically walking and bicycling. Incorporating active transportation into your daily routine has been shown in studies to be a more effective for improving health than exercise programs. When you participate in traditional exercise programs it requires you to alter your daily rou-

time to allow extra time for organized physical activities.

Vigorous, time-consuming physical activity is not required to obtain health benefits. For example, three short 10-minute walks per day can fulfill the 30 minutes of physical activity recommended by the Surgeon General. Walking can be easily incorporated into those short errands to shop for groceries, pick up your dry cleaning, or visit a friend. Instead of using the car for those short trips, using active transportation can improve your health.

Transit may not be thought of as an "active" transportation option, but combined with biking or walking, the trip to and from the bus stop can add up to daily exercise recommendations. The combination of walking or biking with transit is ideal for

Submitted by **Natalie Cannon,**
Metro Regional Travel Options Program Intern

longer trips. A study conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in November 2005 found that people who use public transportation spend an average of 19 minutes walking to and

from transit daily. In addition 29% achieve 30 minutes (or more) of physical activity, showing how easy it is to achieve the recommended amount of daily exercise.

So, for this New Year, you don't have to worry about paying for fitness classes, changing

your routine, or compromising your free time for exercise. Using active transportation for your commute, leisure, or errands is a simple and easy way to be physically active, without committing to a structured workout plan.



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Sunrise Corridor Update

The Sunrise Corridor was proposed as a new highway corridor that would provide a direct connection between I-205 and U.S. 26, the Mount Hood Highway. Two separate sections of the highway have been discussed over the



years: Unit 1, which would connect I-205 with Rock Creek Junction (the junction of Highways 212 and 224) to the east; and Unit 2, which would continue from Rock Creek Junction to U.S. 26.

The Sunrise project (I-205 to Rock Creek Junction) has been on the state's list of top priorities for at least 15 years because of congestion, safety and economic needs. The intersections of Highway 212/224 with 82nd Drive and I-205 have been among the state's most congested locations for many years. This

Submitted by **Cam Gilmour, Director**
Clackamas County Dept Trans & Dev.

is especially a problem because the Clackamas Industrial Area is one of the state's busiest and most critical trucking centers. In addition the recent expansion of the urban growth boundary to include the Damascus area has increased the need to improve the capacity of transportation facilities serving this part of Clackamas County.

This year, ODOT and Clackamas County project engineers have developed and refined potential project designs alternatives that will be studied within the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) and Policy Review Committee (PRC) approved the alternatives November 2005. The SDEIS will start late winter 2006 and is expected to be completed this summer (2006). It is expected that a decision on the preferred alternative will be made late fall 2006.

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RideWise

Travel training & education for seniors and those with disabilities

RideWise is a new program that helps older adults and people with disabilities travel safely and independently using public transportation. By providing information on transportation choices, personal trip planning and assistance learning to ride regular buses and MAX trains, RideWise helps you build the confidence and skills to use all the transit options available to you.



RideWise offers:

- Information on transportation services available in your area
- Help choosing the mode of transportation that best fits the type of trip you are making
- Personal and group orientation in boarding TriMet buses and MAX

Submitted by Kelly Betteridge/TriMet.

trains using vehicles not in service
 ·Personal and group travel training with a trained RideWise volunteer or staff member using in-service vehicles

·Follow-up support and training as needed

RideWise is a unique partnership between TriMet and Ride Connection, a non-profit community service organization.

There is no charge for most RideWise services, although donations are greatly appreciated.

For more information, call or email to start developing your individual transportation plan.

Phone: 503-226-0700 TTY: 1-800-735-2900 (relay service) Fax: 503-493-7431 ridewise@rideconnection.org

I-205 /Portland Mall Light Rail

Clackamas County looking forward to new transit option

Submitted By Elizabeth Davidson with TriMet Light Rail Project

The I-205/Portland Mall Light Rail Project, the first light rail extension to serve Clackamas County continues to move forward when the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recently approved a \$557 million dollar project and granted TriMet permission to begin the next project phase of Final Design.



The Final Design phase, which will be completed in the fall of 2006, will progress the design and engineering work from a current 30% level of completion to 100% completion in order to begin construction in early 2007. Over the course of the next year, citizen advisory commit-

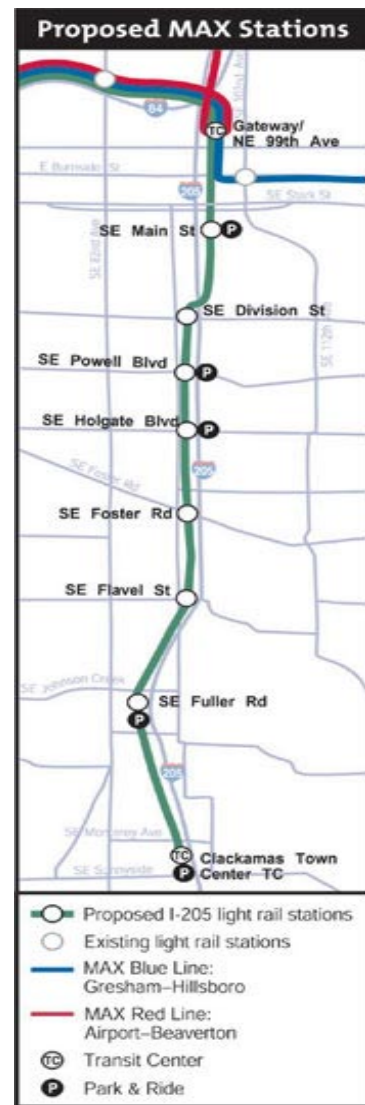
tees and public open houses will be held on a regular basis to share information and obtain public feedback about the project.

The I-205 Light Rail segment of the project, which will connect Gateway to the Clackamas Town Center will have eight station locations, two of which are located within Clackamas County. It is projected to open in September 2009 and will provide 15 minute light rail service most of the day.

If you are interested in staying informed about the project, simply sign up with your email address at trimet.org.i205 or call the project Hotline at 503-962-2156.

Thank you to our
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- Clack. Minuteman Press
- City of Happy Valley
- Bruce Erickson
- Portland Metro
- TriMet
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Don't miss out on potential tax savings

Business Energy Tax Credit available to businesses

Did you know that there are state and federal tax laws that reward businesses and their employees for using commuting alternatives? That's right – both you and your employees can save money on taxes when your business offers an employee transportation program that includes TriMet passes.

Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC)

When it comes to state business taxes, the Oregon Business Energy Tax Credit can really pay off.

BETC can allow your company to take 35-percent tax credit on your costs for transportation-related programs. Eligible costs can include:

- Subsidies your company pays for employees' monthly or annual transit passes
- Financial support for a Transportation Management Association (TMA)
- Purchase of equipment that allows employees to work from home
- Financial incentives for employees to carpool because of limited public transportation during shift hours.
- Facilities and equipment to store bicycles
- Purchase and operating costs for a vehicle to shuttle employees to a MAX station or transit center

How much can BETC save you?

When you purchase TriMet annual transit passes for your employees, BETC will save your business 35 per-

cent of the cost for each pass you buy – that's a savings of \$254.10 for every pass purchased.

Public entities and non-profit organizations that have no tax liability may use a pass-through option to transfer the tax credit to a company with a tax liability in exchange for a lump-sum cash payment.

Pre-Tax Savings

If your employees are paying for transit services, Federal and Oregon state taxes allow your business to set up a pre-tax transportation program that lets employees spend pre-tax dollars on transportation expenses.

Save on payroll taxes

Because pre-tax deductions lower the amount of an employee's taxable earnings, it also lowers the amount of FICA and unemployment taxes your company must pay on the employee's income.

Employees can save, too

Employees can have the cost of a TriMet pass deducted from their paychecks before taxes are calculated. That

Submitted by Kelly Betteridge/TriMet.

reduces the amount of tax they have to pay on their earnings. Pre-tax deductions for transit passes are a win-win for you and your employees!

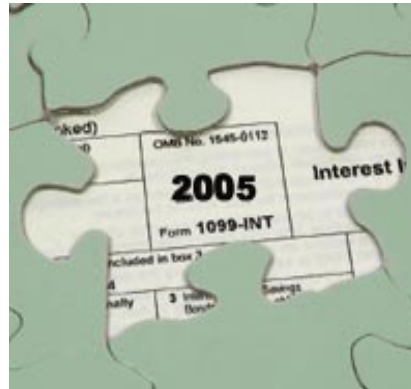
Flexible spending accounts

If your company isn't currently offering an employee transportation program, you can still provide some tax relief for your employees by establishing a flexible spending account (FSA) for pre-tax commuting expenses. This allows employees to purchase transit passes or tickets and get reimbursed with pre-tax dollars regularly deducted from their pay-

checks.

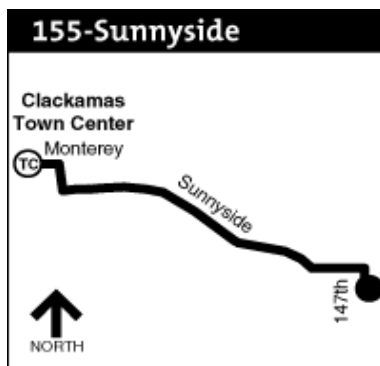
checks.

An FSA used for pre-tax commuting expenses is exempt from complex restrictions common to "cafeteria" plans and other pre-tax FSA's for more details about this special exclusion, check with your company's tax advisor and refer to the IRS Code 26 USC Section 132(f) – Qualified Transportation Fringe.



for bus schedules go to www.trimet.org/fares

Bus #155 Monterey Street, West of I 205, via Stephens Road to Sunnyside Road to 147th.



Bus #33 McLoughlin Blvd. Clackamas Community College to Oregon City TC to Portland Union Station.



Bus #79 Clackamas Town Center to Oregon City TC including South End Road one-way loop.



BTA looks to make Portland “Platinum”

Portland leads the county in bike-friendliness

After two years of research, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance released its report **Blueprint for Better Bicycling: 40 Ways to Get There**. The



report highlights 40 projects in the Portland Metro area that will help create safe transportation choices and ensure Portland as America’s bicycling hub.

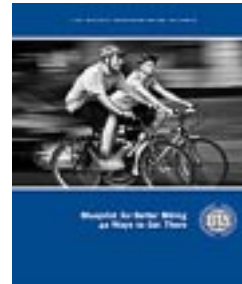
Fueled by a desire to be designed

the nation’s first “Platinum-rated” bicycling city and create a clear path for our future, the BTA is launching a campaign to focus the region’s decision makers on a set of forty tangible improvements.

This report provides a list of 40 priority projects that would help the Portland Metro area achieve a new level of success in bicycling. The BTA recommends innovative, popular, and realistic solutions to substantially increase cycling. These feature low-cost, high-return solutions and projects that fill serious gaps in the current network.

Included in the research are Solu-

tions for Suburbs, Top 40 Projects including I-205 Bike Path Crossings, Maintenance on Bikeways, Car-Free Events, and Safe Routes to School.



The report, in its entirety, is on the BTA website. A printable version is available. Details at www.btra4bikes.org

Is your business “transit” wise? Call today and have a transit fair at your place of business. You bring in the employees we bring in the options. Call 503-654-7777 to schedule a time.

- ◆ Get transit option information and more
- ◆ Learn about Tax incentives for businesses

TRANSIT FAIR

Friday February 17 7:30am - 9:00am

OIT Conference Center 7740 SE Harmony Rd.
503-654-7777 or www.yourchabmer.com

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