

DOWNTOWN: On the go!

A Program of the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber, City of Tacoma, & Pierce Transit

Downtown: On the Go! Unveils New Program for 2010: The Transportation Plan Program for Small Businesses

In order to further the downtown goal of at least 35% of employees using alternate commute options by 2015 (currently the rate is 23.8%), DOTG will now offer a *Transportation Plan Program for Small Business*. This program is focused on working with businesses with fewer than 100 FTEs and therefore unregulated by the state's Commute Trip Reduction laws. If you or your employer are one such business, then DOTG wants to work with you!

Currently, the program is in its pilot phase, and is seeking approximately 10 downtown businesses to kick-off the New

Year by taking a look at their employees' commute habits and their transportation policies. Involvement in the program is simple: the time commitment is relatively small, DOTG staff time and expertise are free, and the outcomes – potential cost-savings, increased employee morale, reduced carbon emissions and improved air quality – are well worth the effort!

The Program has already been initiated with both the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber and BLRB Architects. Although these businesses are currently at different phases in their respective processes, each would assure you of the bene-

fits of this program. References can be provided upon request.

If you would like to guarantee your place in this pilot program, or would like DOTG staff to speak to your organization's leadership, please phone Julia Petersen, DOTG Coordinator, at your earliest convenience at 253.627.2175.



Going to the Airport? Use a Sound Transit regional bus!

Tacoma won't be getting a Link to the airport in the near future, but did you know Sound Transit currently runs excellent bus service between Lakewood or the Tacoma Dome and SeaTac twice an hour? Why pay a ton for an airport shuttle or inconvenience a family member or friend, when you can easily take a \$2.50 ride to the airport that drops you off at a convenient location?

Transport to Seatac on a Sound Transit bus is ideal for

business travel, and a pleasant experience for those carrying few bags or small bags. Return travel is similarly easy, with buses leaving from Seatac (outside of baggage claim) at least twice an hour. Those traveling with especially large numbers of baggage should take note—there is no "underbus" storage, so large bags will be placed on seats.

For extensive details on Tacoma Dome to SeaTac bus travel, please request the

document *Green Business Travel between SeaTac Airport and Tacoma* from Downtown: On the Go!. The document covers in detail a round trip for business travel purposes. Feel free to distribute it broadly to fellow employees, friends, and family!

Questions? Contact Julia Petersen, DOTG Coordinator at juliap@tacomachamber.org, or check out the [ST website](#).

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Did you know?

- According to the Texas Transportation Institute, if all public transportation service were discontinued, Puget Sound area drivers would spend an average of 7 additional hours in traffic annually, with a cumulative congestion cost of \$261.4 million.

Upcoming Events

Environmental Legislative Workshop
January 9th, 9:30am-2:30pm
Seattle Pac Univ—Gwinn Auditorium
See pg. 2 for more details.

Quick Resources

www.piercetrips.com/
Trip logging, incentives and prizes, information, and resources.

[Pierce Transit Snow Guide](#)
Information on Pierce Transit snow routes and tips for winter riding.
www.piercetransit.org/alerts/





The ORCA Transit Card Roll-Out Gains Momentum

As of January 1st, 2010, the general public can no longer buy a Puget Pass—all bus passes must be loaded onto an ORCA card. And while you can still pay cash upon boarding, why hassle with change when the card provides ease of use and transfer?

ORCA offers a one-stop shop for all of your Puget Sound transit needs. As a regional fare system, it allows for easy boarding on the buses, trains, or ferries of 7 transportation agencies. Your ORCA products can be purchased online, your account can be managed (including cancellation of lost/stolen cards), and your balance easily viewed.

For the individual commuter working for a business that does not subsidize transit, ORCA cards can be obtained on-line at www.orcacard.com, or by visiting Pierce Tran-

sit's Bus Shops located at the Commerce St. Station or the Tacoma Dome Station. **ORCA cards are free only until February 1st, so get yours soon!**

For a business subsidizing transit for their employees, several business account options are available. If you are such a business, or if you are currently considering the addition of an employee transit subsidy, get more information on the ORCA business products by emailing: sstockwell@piercetransit.org.

For a complete update on the ORCA roll-out, please see www.piercetransit.org/alerts/orca_info.htm for everything you need to know!

www.orcacard.com

Transportation Choices Coalition Environmental Legislative Workshop An Opportunity for Improving Your Personal Lobbying Abilities

Care about the environment? Want to do something about it? Then learn how to access your legislators.

Transportation Choices Coalition (TCC), a non-profit organization seeking to increase transportation choices for Washington residents, will co-host a Legislative Workshop on Saturday, January 9th. Attend and learn about the 2010 Environmental and Transportation Priorities of TCC and its partners, and how you can take action to support them.

At the workshop, you'll be given tips on how to:

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper
- Call, email, Facebook, and 'tweet' your elected officials
- Set up and conduct a meeting with your local state senator or representative

Reserve your space by calling (206) 631-2642.

When: Saturday, January 9th, 9:30am-2:30pm
Where: Seattle Pacific University, Gwinn Commons
Cost: \$10 w/out lunch, \$20 w/ lunch, \$10 students w/ lunch

The Alternate Commute Case Study: BLRB Architects ~ Practicing What Their Designs Preach

Not every business has the opportunity to relocate to a new and improved office space—and rarely do they design it as well. But, that's just what BLRB Architects did when they moved from their prior location to Pacific Plaza, designing their office space to communicate the workplace ethos their leaders valued—community, comfort, and a blending of work and life spaces.

One such space closely considered by BLRB (though receiving far less attention than their state-of-the-art green roof)—the restrooms. BLRB took the design of this common space to a level beyond standard, supporting employee transportation choices outside of the transport standard, the car.

In order to encourage the alternate commute, each restroom includes a shower, changing area, and several lockers. The restrooms are located in a secluded section of the lobby, away from the entrance to the office so as to separate public and private functions.

If you build it, they will come? Not necessarily, and BLRB knows that, offering additional support for employees choosing transit, including a partial bus subsidy and 3 company vehicles for shared employee use.

And yet, even BLRB's leaders know that this is not enough. In an attempt to practice what their designs preach, they have partnered with Downtown: On the Go! to work through the

Transportation Plan Program for Small Business. BLRB wants to improve the numbers of employees choosing the alternate commute, and DOTG will help them do that by surveying employees and drafting a comprehensive employee transportation package.

Not every business can completely revamp their office space to support employees in their alternate commutes. But, every employer can revamp their transportation policies, offering increased support to employees who choose to get out of their single occupancy vehicles. If you are a business interested in following BLRB's lead, see page 1 article 1 for more information.



101 Reasons to Kick Your Car to the Curb

Reason #4: Congestion



Traffic—a source of frustration and heartache for many enduring a single-occupancy vehicle commute. Individual traveler's time, money, and energy are annually consumed in large amounts by vehicle congestion in the Puget Sound area.

The 2009 *Annual Mobility Report* by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) estimates the significant impact of congestion on the Puget Sound Region as follows*:



- Annual excess fuel consumed—50,541 gallons total and 30 gallons per traveler
- Annual delay—73,636 hours total and 43 hours per traveler
- Annual congestion cost—\$1,591 million total and \$938 per traveler
- Annual increase needed to maintain constant congestion levels: 87 lane miles added per year and 32 million transit riders or carpoolers each year.

These numbers are astounding, and demonstrate how your daily traffic delays add up to have a sizeable collective and personal impact. And while these seem to be an inevitable part of your commute, measures can be taken to reduce or eliminate delay and its associated costs and energy overconsumption. Here's how:

- 1) Consider alternate work arrangements. Check with your employer to see if your position is eligible for a telecommute or flexible scheduling option. In the longer-term, consider moving closer to your place of employment and biking or walking to work.
- 2) Carpool or vanpool. Access High Occupancy Vehicle lanes (HOV) when traveling with two or more in your vehicle.
- 3) Ride the bus (or train). Buses also travel in the much faster and more efficient HOV Lane, saving significant amounts of your time for other activities both during and after your commute.
- 4) Support bus access and service for your region's and city's residents. TTI estimates that if all public transportation service were discontinued, Puget Sound area drivers would spend an average of 7 additional hours in traffic annually, with a cumulative congestion cost of \$261.4 million.* While *you* may not choose to ride the bus, a fellow resident's choice to do so reduces the delays you experience on your commute.

The daily grind of feeling trapped in your car behind an endless line of vehicles significantly impacts your quality of life. Expensive, resource consuming, and annoying, congestion is just another reason to kick your car, or at least your lengthy commute, to the curb.

Source: *<http://mobility.tamu.edu/lums/>

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Have an alternate commute success story you would like to share? How about a poem, limerick, or otherwise creative tidbit tied to transportation? Email juliap@tacomachamber.org and your story may be published in next month's newsletter!

The Downtown: On the Go! Program

The Downtown: On the Go! Program is an active partnership between the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber, the City of Tacoma, and Pierce Transit. Leveraging their resources and relationships, these organizations work together with employers, commuters, and the Downtown: On The Go! Partnership to promote alternate commuting options. Together they aim to keep Downtown moving efficiently, growing in economic vitality, and improving in air quality.

In addition to the programs available through Pierce Transit, the Chamber offers resources and incentives specific to Downtown commuters and businesses. From informational presentations, individualized employee/ employer consultations, commuter rewards, socials, and more,

We're on the Web:
Downtown: On the Go!



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