

## Transportation

Canada's sheer size-and the vast distances between destinations-presents a truly daunting challenge for domestic, sustainable tourism. Some of the issues such as air travel are complex, and beyond the scope of this guide. (For a fuller discussion, check out the [Carbon Offsets](#) section.) In the meantime, you can do your part by encouraging your employees to switch to sustainable commuting methods, and by urging your clients to consider alternatives to motor vehicles for local transportation, if available.

### Quick Start



When transporting your clients, do you look at the full range of options or do you automatically reach for the car keys? Consider the possibilities-bus, train, walking, cycling, pedi-cab, water ferry. There are many to choose from, even if it's for only portions of travel within a tour or stay. Mix it up for your clients and help them to experience the area they are visiting from different perspectives.

### Zero Emission = Free Admission

[FortWhyte Alive!](#) offers environmental education and outdoor recreation programming on more than 240 ha of prairies, lakes, forest and wetlands in Winnipeg, MB. A network of trails links FortWhyte with the city's existing walking and cycling paths; to encourage visitors to use them, FortWhyte actively promotes an inventive "Zero Emission = Free Admission" policy. To wit: anyone who walks or cycles into the property enters for free. On its website, FortWhyte proudly connects the practice to its mandate of promoting and encouraging actions that lead to sustainable living.

### Walk the Talk

Assume for a moment that your customers have chosen your company over others based on your commitment to sustainable practices. Now imagine them arriving at your property and seeing employees arriving at work alone inside large vehicles. Then picture them arriving to see a full bike rack, employees walking in from the local public-transit stop, and preferred spots for carpools designated in your parking lot. These seemingly little things make a big difference; they prove that you are not only talking the talk, but also walking the walk.

## Tool: Decision Tree

Use this decision-tree tool to help your enterprise come up with some green commuting practices.

### Green Commuting Practices

**Active (human-powered) transportation:** Examples include walking, cycling, running, in-line skating, skateboarding, ice skating (e.g., on a canal). It can also involve combining active modes of travel, such as walking or cycling, with public transit for longer distances.

**Carpooling:** An arrangement in which several participants travel together in one vehicle. They also share the costs and often take turns as the driver. It can be an informal arrangement between co-workers, friends or neighbours, or a formal ridematching service provided at the workplace. Carpooling is an ideal cost-saving arrangement, particularly for those individuals who commute long distances to and from work each day, or who have limited access to public transit.

**Public transit:** While one of the most efficient forms of moving many passengers at the same time, it is restricted to areas with sufficiently large populations. Examples of public transit include buses, rail systems, trolleys, trams, ferries and water taxis.

**Telecommuting (or telework):** Allows employees to work remotely via computer, fax, telephone, videoconferencing, VOIP and other forms of digital communication. Some of these methods, such as videoconferencing, can be used in place of other work-related travel such as meetings, training and conferences.

#### 1. Are there pedestrian and cycling-friendly routes to your location?

If the answer is yes...

- a) Could you designate a sheltered, secure area for bicycle parking (indoor room, chain-link-fence cage, etc.)?

Yes: Affix bike racks inside the sheltered, secure area and restrict access with a key, combination lock or swipe-card entry. If employees typically pay for vehicle parking, a nominal monthly or annual charge could be applied to bike parking to help offset administration costs.

No: Approach nearby businesses or facilities to cost-share or access their bicycle compounds.

- b) Are showers and change areas available in your facility?

Yes: Allow those who use active modes of transportation access to showers and a change area to put on fresh work clothes.

No: Look at facilities around your location to see if access to a shower could be arranged for a nominal fee, such as a nearby gym or a larger employer with built-in fitness facilities.

I Don't Know: If you are located in an urban centre, check your city's website-try the transportation or public works section-for information on cycling or walking. Municipalities often include active transportation resources online, including maps, designated routes, links to commuter cycling groups, and so on.

2. Is employee parking provided at your location?

If the answer is yes...

a) Do you charge for parking?

Yes: Ensure that employees are paying the market rate so that the driving option is on a level playing field with sustainable forms of transport. For example, if a parking spot is available at the workplace and costs less than a monthly bus pass, it serves as a disincentive for employees to change their travel behaviour from driving.

No: If parking is free, consider a "transportation allowance" for green commuters. This should be equal in value to the subsidy provided to drivers through free parking.

b) Could you support carpooling by providing an information bulletin board for employees to find carpools in their area and/or by designating the most convenient or desirable parking spots for carpools?

Yes: Choose a visible bulletin board or spot near the lunchroom or another busy area and designate it as the carpool bulletin board. Encourage employees interested in carpools to post their location information to find other employees in their areas.

Pick the best parking spots in the lot and mark them visually with colourful signage to show they are reserved for carpools.

No: Check with employees to see if carpools already exist, or if anyone is interested in starting one. Word of mouth or e-mails can travel through a workplace quickly to develop employee interest in the option.

If the answer is no...

Consider making your place green-commuter friendly through physical infrastructure and policies that support using active modes of transportation, carpooling, public transit and reducing business travel through videoconferencing, webinars and other electronic forms of communication.

3. Is it possible for some of your employees to telecommute even occasionally? Do you and/or your staff travel to multiple work locations for internal meetings?

Telecommuting doesn't always mean working from home; it can mean phone or videoconferences instead of centralized meetings. Telecommuting can save valuable time for employees that would otherwise be spent driving or flying to and from meetings. Occasional days for employees to work from home can also be good for your employees' social and mental health, which can improve their productivity.

## Try This!

If you are located in an urban centre, incentivize your employees to use public transit. For example, you might consider subsidizing public transit passes. Many medium and large urban centres offer a discounted monthly bus-pass program for participating employers. A portion of the subsidy is often provided by the transit authority. Check your city's **transit website** under the **fares** section to see if they offer such a discounted monthly adult bus pass program for workplaces. For example, through its Employ-E Transit Discount, Edmonton Transit System will match a 12% discount with the employer, resulting in a 24% discount on the cost of an adult monthly bus pass at that workplace. At the current cost of \$59 for an adult monthly bus pass in Edmonton, this means the cost to the employer would be \$7.08 per month per employee. The rates vary by city, e.g., Winnipeg Transit's EcoPass program offers a sliding scale of discounts while the OC Transpo's ECOPASS program in Ottawa offers up to 15% savings annually through its transit pass payroll deduction program.

If the tourism operator provides subsidized parking to employees, the employer's portion of the cost to provide a discounted bus pass will be substantially less than the cost of providing parking.

Ensure your employees are aware of the federal tax credit available to those who purchase monthly bus passes. For details, check out the Government of Canada's [tax credit for public transit passes](#).

Be creative with your transportation allowance for active commuters. In lieu of cash, you might provide gift certificates to sports- and outdoor-equipment stores in an amount equivalent to the cost of employee-subsidized parking.

### 4. Can you offer flexibility in your shift schedules for work start and finish times?

Flexibility in shift schedules can work well to encourage employees to take public transit to and from work as they can fit their work schedule to coincide with transit schedules. Flexible work times can also be an advantage to active commuters as it can give them some extra time to walk or bike to work.

## Top Five Tips To Enable Sustainable Transportation

1. Support and encourage walking and cycling for your employees' commute by providing shower and/or change-room facilities and secure bike parking. Participate in an employer-subsidized bus-pass program, if appropriate and available.
2. Set up an informal carpooling program for your employees or sign up for a regional program, if appropriate.
3. Use videoconferencing and similar technologies to lessen the need for business travel for you and your employees.
4. When using motorized transport to move your clients, evaluate the purchase of hybrid vehicles (cars, vans, buses) or converting your vehicles to biodiesel power.
5. Offer your clients the chance to cycle, walk or ride public transit as part of their travel experience. Offer access to bicycles, helmets and locks, maps and other relevant information. Or form a partnership with a bicycle rental company that will deliver and pickup from your location.

## Further References

Check out these organizations for more great tips and information on making sustainable transportation choices for your business:

[Transport Canada's Commuter Options: The Complete Guide for Canadian Employers](#)

[The Canadian Telework Association](#)

[Commuter Connections](#)

[Public Health Agency of Canada: Active Transportation](#)

[Natural Resources Canada: Tips and Resources for Drivers](#)

[Natural Resources Canada: Purchasing a Fuel-Efficient Vehicle](#)