



TO: Department Directors

FROM: Marc A. Ott, City Manager

DATE: April 10, 2015

SUBJECT: 20 Percent Reduction in City Employees Commute Trips during Peak Hours

Last week, I announced a new Traffic Congestion Action Plan (Traffic-CAP) to combat congestion in our downtown core and throughout this city with a variety of efforts.

Obviously, one of the most effective ways to tackle traffic congestion is to reduce single occupancy trips during peak hours. We can do this by encouraging alternative travel options, alternative work schedules, or shifting travel out of the peak commuting hours. I have challenged employers to reduce their employee's single occupancy vehicle trips.

As one of the City's largest employers, we need to lead the way to prove this can be done. Therefore, I am directing Department Directors to reduce employee commute trips during peak hours by 20%. I am phasing in this requirement. We will begin with our employees commuting to and from our central Austin facilities. For this subset of your employees, you need to meet the 20% reduction by the beginning of our next fiscal year – October 1, 2015. A plan to reduce employee peak hour trips by 20% for your remaining employees must be submitted by October 1, 2015 with a goal of achieving those reductions by October 1, 2016.

There are a lot of tools at your disposal, including flexible work schedules, teleworking, free transit passes, reduced bike share passes for employees, and numerous ridesharing options. There are also last-mile solutions of Car2Go and Zipcar for transit riders available. I encourage you to avail yourselves of our internal resources in the Austin Transportation Department to help educate your workforce on their options.

Other than the obvious advantage of reduced travel during congested peak hours, there are benefits to our community and for our employees...reduced pollution, healthier lifestyles, and some personal time back for those who choose to commute via transit. I believe the benefits for our community and our employees far outweigh the short-term adjustment to new behaviors.

Implementation:

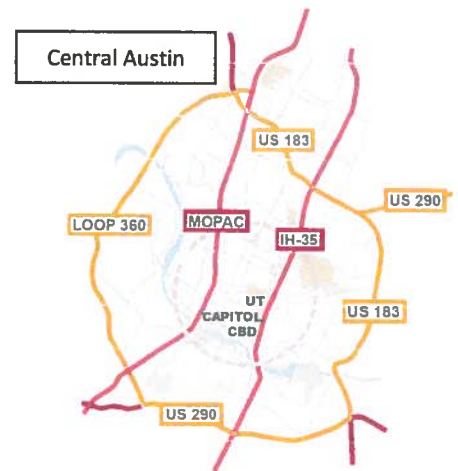
To assist in our consistent implementation of this directive, I've defined some terms below.

Central Austin – facilities within an area bounded by US 183/US 290/Loop 360 (see below).

Peak Hours - 7:00 am – 9:00 am and 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm. Monday through Friday.

Baseline Peak Hour Commute Trips - The baseline peak hour trip count is defined as follows: The number of peak hour trips is calculated by multiplying the number of your employees commuting to central Austin by 10 [5 days a week x 2 peak periods...morning and afternoon]. So, if you have 100 employees commuting to a central Austin facility, your baseline weekly peak hour trip count would be $100 \times 10 = 1,000$ peak hour trips.

Baseline Peak Hour Commute Trips 20% Reduction - Each director will be responsible for accomplishing at least a 20% peak hour commute trip reduction to their central Austin facilities. Using the example above, the 20% reduction requirement means that you need to shift or eliminate $1,000 \times 0.20 = 200$ weekly peak hour trips.



Peak Hour Commute Trip Reduction – There are several ways you can reduce your employee’s peak hour commute trips:

- *Shifting commute times.* An employee commute trip completed before the peak hour (7:00 a.m. or 4:00 p.m.) or started after the peak hour (9:00 a.m. or 6:00 p.m.) can be counted in your trip reduction totals. For example, if you have an employee with a regular work shift of 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, the five weekly morning peak commute trips can be counted in your weekly reduction totals because this employee’s morning commutes are completed before the 7:00 peak hour begins. On the flip side, if you have an employee with a regular work shift of 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, you can count the five weekly afternoon commute trips in your weekly reduction totals.
- *Commuting via alternative transportation.* An employee commute trip completed via a non-single occupancy vehicle can be counted in your trip reduction totals. For example, a peak hour commute trip completed via transit (bus, train, van pool, etc.) counts as a reduced trip. If your employee shares a peak hour commute trip (carpooling), meaning he or she is not commuting in a single occupancy vehicle, that trip counts in your reduction totals. Walking or biking to and from work during the peak hours also counts as a reduced trip.
- *Not commuting at all.* Obviously any peak hour commute trip NOT taken counts towards your reduction totals. So, if you have an employee who telecommutes on Friday. Those two peak hour commute trips not taken count toward your reduction totals. Some flex work shifts will reduce peak hour commute trips. For example 4 day, 10 hour/day shifts would eliminate at least 2 peak hour commute trips and perhaps more depending on when the 10 hour day shift begins and ends.

Tracking and Reporting Peak Hour Commute Trip Reduction – As each department director will be responsible for their department’s compliance, managers and employees should be required by their director to provide reliable information on commute alternative actions. Austin Transportation staff will be working to develop a uniform way to track commute trip reductions. In the meantime, I suggest that you start developing an interim tracking system because I am **asking you to report your progress as follows**: 1) Report your calculated baseline peak hour commute trips for your central Austin facilities by April 30th. 2) Report progress on your 20% central Austin peak hour

commute trip reduction by May 29th, July 31st, and September 30th. 3) Submit your plan to reduce employee peak hour trips by 20% for your remaining employees by October 1, 2015. 4) Submit the "commute to work" employee surveys (see below) by April 30th. All reports will be submitted to Austin Transportation's Mobility Coordinator, Pharr Andrews at Pharr.Andrews@austintexas.gov. Pharr will collate the reports and supply a city-wide report to me.

Next Steps:

- 1) Each director will assure all their employees take a **"commute to work"** survey that will be distributed and returned in April, so we can establish a baseline of reporting, tracking and educational needs. Austin Transportation will deliver this survey to you next week. The link to the survey is: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/COACommuteSurvey>
- 2) Each department will designate a primary "Mobility Coordinator" single point of contact. Please notify Austin Transportation's Mobility Coordinator, Pharr Andrews at 974-6476 with your designee by April 10th.
- 3) An on-going educational effort will be conducted within each department and across City facility sites to help employees with this transition. Internal experts in Austin Transportation, Sustainability Office, the Corporate Public Information Office, and Human Resources will assist with the educational process for employees. A tool kit of options will be shared with each department to use as best fits their needs. The City also has access to Movability Austin, a nonprofit organization, should your department require a unique solution.
- 4) Later this year, I will roll out our parking cash out program as another tool to incentivize downtown employees to reduce their peak hour travel or take alternative travel modes. I know you and your employees have questions about this program. Please be patient. That program is still being developed. As more information is confirmed, more details will be provided.
- 5) We will need to work further on supporting programs (potential van pools, emergency ride home program, etc.)

I know I can count on your support of this important priority initiative. Thank you in advance for your efforts to reduce congestion.

If you have specific questions, please direct them to Austin Transportation Director Rob Spillar or Mobility Coordinator, Pharr Andrews at 512-974-6476 or Pharr.Andrews@austintexas.gov.

XC: Assistant City Managers
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Elaine Hart, Chief Financial Officer
Anne Morgan, Acting City Attorney
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