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Changes Coming to Metro's Employee Transit Subsidy Program

- Change will save time; some will get a little more money
- [Sign-up schedule](#): Dates set for employees to sign up for the revised program

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 19, 2006) Changes are coming to Metro's Transit Subsidy Program that will save time for participating employees, but will add a bit of personal responsibility. Some employees also will save a little more money on their commuting costs.

Under the Transit Subsidy Program, employees who ride Metrolink or a municipal transit bus, or who participate in vanpools, have received money each month from Metro to offset all or part of their commuting costs.

In recent years, the subsidy program provided employees up to \$102 a month. Beginning with the September transit passes, however, the maximum monthly subsidy offered by Metro will rise to \$105, the most an employee can receive without being taxed.

Corporate Employee Transportation Coordinator Teresa Milliken, who has 22 years' experience in rideshare programs at Metro and other agencies, will oversee the changes in the Transit Subsidy Program.

Some 1,350 employees now participate in the program, but Milliken plans to begin a new effort this fall at Gateway and in the operating divisions to enlist more employees in Metro's various commuter and rideshare programs.

No more TransitChek lines

Beginning in late August for the September subsidy, Milliken says employees no longer will have to stand in line to receive a

Corporate Employee Transportation Coordinator Teresa Milliken will coordinate Metro's revised Transit Subsidy Program. This fall, she'll also launch a program to recruit more employees into Metro's commuter and rideshare programs.



Photo by Bill Heard

Headquarters Employees to get Online Survey

This year, instead of completing a paper survey about how you get to work, Headquarters employees will fill out the survey online. On Friday, Aug. 4, look for an e-mail with the link to the survey form.

The survey is important, according to Corporate Employee Transportation Coordinator Teresa Milliken, because it tells the South Coast Air Quality Management District how many employees use public transit or rideshare.

It also affects the commuter benefit received each month by many Metro employees. Metro's failure to comply can result in significant penalties.

TransitChek. Instead, a department, floor or division coordinator will distribute actual monthly passes to transit riders during the last week of each month.

Vanpool participants and employees who also receive transit subsidies from their cities will continue to receive TransitCheks.

During a signup period scheduled July 25 – 28, employees who qualify for the Transit Subsidy Program must complete a new application.

The deadline for submitting the application is July 31, says Sandra Blanco-Sanchez, a senior Human Resources analyst who helps administer the program, and employees who don't meet the deadline will not receive a September pass.

Payroll deductions

For some employees, the Metro subsidy will cover the entire cost of the monthly pass. Others, who must continue to pay out-of-pocket to cover the cost of their passes, will be required to submit a payroll deduction form along with the new application during the signup period. Payroll deductions will be made during the second pay period of each month.

The new transit subsidy system can accommodate employees who go on vacation, change work locations or have some other special circumstance, as long as they notify Milliken of the change.

Once the new program is established, says Milliken, it will be better for employees and Metro and "will lift some of the administrative burden from the TransitChek program."

Blanco-Sanchez says the program also will go a long way toward eliminating potential misuse of TransitCheks or monthly passes.

Signups Scheduled for Transit Subsidy Program

Metro Headquarters employees who qualify for the Transit Subsidy Program must apply later this month. Tables will be set up on the 3rd floor mezzanine at these times:

- Tuesday, July 25, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
- Thursday, July 27, 10:30 a.m. – 12 noon
- Friday, July 28, 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Eligible employees who don't work at Gateway can obtain an application from their Employee Transportation Coordinator. July 31 is the deadline for submitting transit subsidy applications in order to receive a monthly pass for September.
