

# On the Edge

## Commute Options and Transportation Equity in the Portland Metro Region's Northeastern Industrial & Commercial Area

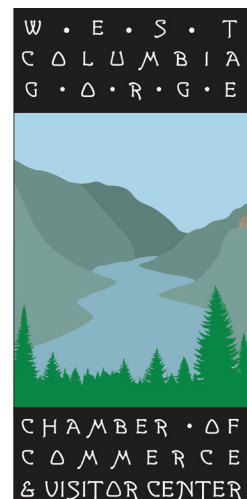
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West Columbia Gorge Chamber of Commerce



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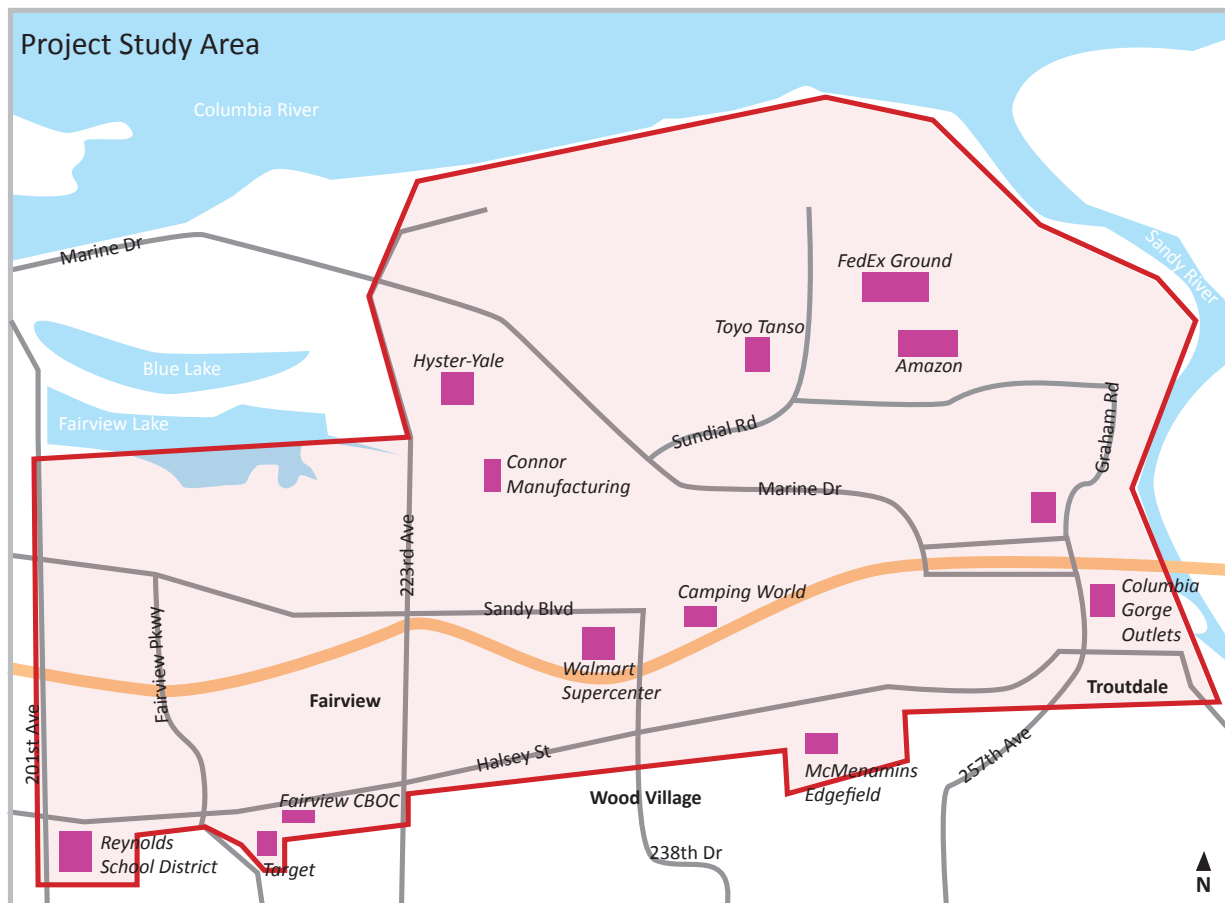


# On the Edge: Commute Options and Transportation Equity in the Portland Metro Region's Northeastern Industrial & Commercial Area

## Executive Summary

This study of the demand for commute options was led by the West Columbia Gorge Chamber of Commerce and funded by Metro through a Regional Travel Options grant. The purpose of the study was to examine transportation options in east Multnomah County in and around Troutdale Reynolds Industrial Park (TRIP), adjacent industrial areas, and along the Halsey corridor and recommend transportation-related strategies that will support further business development and infill. The assessment is intended to:

- Produce recommendations for improving transportation options in this area over time
- Identify opportunities to improve coordination and implementation of transportation options in east Multnomah County



The recommendations focus on large employers in the study area, many with more than 100 employees that are required to comply with Employee Commute Options (ECO) rules and reduce employee drive-alone commute trips. Additionally, the recommendations consider how the various strategies for enhancing transportation options in the region improve commute options for all employees. Incorporating government-provided services and facilities with employer-provided employee benefits has the potential to improve employee recruitment and retention, reduce transportation inequities, and enhance the quality of life in east Multnomah County.

### **Project Details**

Research, interviews, plan reviews, and surveys were used to collect data. The surveys explored employer operations; employee commutes, travel to work preferences, and transportation barriers; and transportation needs of MHCC students who do or would like to work in the study area. The studies were distributed electronically Fall 2017 and Winter 2018. Additional data from FedEx's July 2017 ECO survey and Amazon's October/November 2018 ECO survey supplemented data collected from the electronic surveys.

The study area is served by transit, and service extended into TRIP in March 2018. The area has long segments of shared-use paths that connect to regional trails, but generally the area has discontinuous biking and walking infrastructure. The roadway network provides an acceptable level of service to TRIP and other areas, and a number of trip planning tools are available to assist employees in planning their commutes.

A high-level summary of the results follows.

- A high number of employees in the study area trip chain; consequently, they do not exhibit a traditional commute pattern of leaving from home to work and returning home. Employees come from all directions, including Washington, but the fewest number of study area workers are from east of the Sandy River.
- Some people attend classes at Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC), and the college is an important destination on the way to and from the study area.
- Generally speaking, people commute to and from the study area somewhat before and during the a.m. peak period and somewhat before and during the p.m. peak period. There are nighttime shift changes and early morning shift changes for the two largest employers in the study area that occur outside these morning and evening peak travel times.
- The transportation-related barriers people experience include lack of a driver's license or car to use, the expense of transportation, access to commute options, and incomplete or insufficiently connected transportation options infrastructure.
- Ample free parking for personal motor-vehicles, incomplete infrastructure for transportation options, and businesses location at geographic edges makes employee use of non-drive-alone options to and from the study area challenging.
- Driving alone is the most used form of commuting (66% of respondents), which employees use considerably more frequently than carpooling (18% of respondents).
- Employees who drive alone to work consider saving time the most important reason to choose this mode.
- Employees who use modes other than driving alone consider saving money the most

important reason to choose this mode. A high portion of respondents who do not drive alone report they do not have a car to use or a driver's license.

Data support the hypothesis that there is an unmet demand for commute options in the study area, particularly for final-mile service from transit routes to large employment sites in TRIP. For other employers in the study area, particularly those along Halsey St, demand for options is less critical than for TRIP.

Abundant free parking within the study area, lack of infrastructure supporting travel options, a need for travel flexibility, and absence of incentives to encourage use of transportation options reinforces drive alone commute trips as the predominant commute mode. This pattern results in difficulty recruiting and retaining staff. The more commute options and incentives available to employees, the greater the use of non-drive-alone options.

A critical transportation inequity exists for TRIP employees and potential employees. The lack of transportation options essentially requires employees to drive. For those employees or potential employees who do not or cannot drive to access the mid-wage jobs available in TRIP, the obstacles to accessing employment are significant. These employees or potential employees must find carpools, use transit that may not coincide with their shift times or be available if they work weekends, and/or walk or bike on facilities in the dark that may feel neither safe nor comfortable even during the day.

No single entity is charged with facilitating implementation of the region's transportation program. Some recommendations may be implemented by public agencies, others by private businesses, and still others by partnerships among public and private entities. Consequently, a top recommendation for the region is a process to explore a collaborative approach to implementation that makes best use of the resources available through the region's public and private sources.

The recommendations are organized in three categories:

- **Organization, Coordination, Advocacy** – a process that leads to collaboration, prioritization, and implementation of recommendations
- **Transportation Options & Infrastructure** – a mix of business and government-provided facilities, services, and implementation
- **Motivation** – employer-provided incentives and community-based training with some agency assistance

Recommendation	Employee transportation burdens addressed				Recommended for			Public	Private	Partnership	Potential implementing entities	Cost	Implementation timeframe
	Cost	Time	Effort	Safety	FedEx/Amazon	TRIP	Halsey St						
<b>ORGANIZATION, COORDINATION, ADVOCACY</b>													
Initiate a process, such as Oregon Solutions, that compels relevant organizations to agree on an approach for prioritizing, coordinating, delivering, and monitoring improvement of transportation options					o	o	o	o	o	o	West Columbia Gorge Chamber of Commerce, Multnomah County, Amazon, FedEx, MHCC	\$	I, S
<b>TRANSPORTION OPTIONS &amp; INFRASTRUCTURE</b>													
<b>Carpooling</b>													
Incentivize and continue to support carpooling	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		all businesses	\$	U, I
Convert parking stalls to priority carpool parking		o			o	o	o		o		businesses or clusters w/ more than 20 employees	\$	U, I
<b>Vanpooling</b>													
Survey study area WA residents for interest in vanpooling	o	o	o	o	-	-	o			o	employers with 100+ employees, Halsey Corridor, COORDINATOR	\$	I, S
Implement vanshare for FedEx and Amazon from Gresham Central TC	-	o	o	o	o	-			o	o	FedEx, Amazon, Multnomah County, City of Troutdale, TriMet, COORDINATOR	\$	I
Ensure priority vanpool parking near employee entrances		o			o	-			o		FedEx, Amazon, COORDINATOR	\$	I
<b>Transit</b>													
Provide weekend transit/shuttle to Amazon/FedEx	-	o	o	o	o	-		o	o	o	Amazon, City of Troutdale, Multnomah County, TriMet, FedEx, COORDINATOR	\$\$	U, I
Align hours on Line 81 with shift change times	-	o	o	o	o	-		o		-	TriMet	\$\$-\$	U, I
Align hours on Line 77 with shift change times	-	o	o	o	o	-		o		-	TriMet	\$\$-\$	I

o: applies some to a lot  
 -: applies a little

U: underway I: immediate S: short-term  
 M: medium-term L: long-term

Recommendation	Employee transportation burdens addressed				Recommended for			Public	Private	Partnership	Potential implementing entities	Cost	Implementation timeframe
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<b>Transit</b>													
Align hours on Line 21 with shift change times at Townsend Park*	-	o	o	o	-	o	-	o		-	TriMet	-\$-\$	I
Extend Line 77 into TRIP at shift change times	-	o	o	o	o	-		o		-	TriMet	\$\$	I, S
Create north to south passage for transit vehicles on Graham Rd under I-84		o			o	o		o			ODOT, Multnomah County	\$\$\$	?, S, M
Improve transit shelters/bus stops			o	o	o	o	-	o	-		TriMet	\$	I, S
Coordinate shift change times among businesses	-	o	o		o	o	o	o	o	o	COORDINATOR	\$	I, S
<b>Active Transportation Facilities</b>													
Complete Port of Portland trail	-	o	o	o	o	o		o			Port of Portland	\$\$\$	U
Construct Sandy River trail	-	o	o	o	o	o	-	o			City of Troutdale	\$\$\$	M
Complete Gresham-Fairview Trail north of Halsey St	-	o	o	o	o	o	-	o			City of Fairview, Multnomah County	\$\$\$	
Complete bicycle improvements on 201st Ave	-	o	o	o	o	o	o	o			City of Fairview, Multnomah County	\$\$\$	
Complete bicycle/pedestrian improvements on Halsey St at Edgefield	-	o	o	o	o	o	o	-	o	o	McMenamins, Multnomah County	\$\$\$	
Complete bicycle/pedestrian improvements on 223rd Ave	-	o	o	o	o	o	o	o			City of Fairview, Multnomah County	\$\$\$	
Improve bicycle/pedestrian facilities between Line 77 terminus and Graham Rd improvements	-	o	o	o	o	o		o			City of Troutdale, Multnomah County	\$\$\$	
Complete pedestrian improvements on 257th Ave	-	o	o	o	o	o	-	o			City of Troutdale, Multnomah County	\$\$\$	
Plan for and construct Troutdale to Gresham trail	-	o	o	o	o	o	-	o		o	Metro, Multnomah County	\$\$\$	
Study connecting trail from 223rd to FedEx along abandoned Reynolds rail line	-	o	o	o	o	o	-	o		o	?	\$\$\$	

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<b>Safety</b>													
Improve lighting at Line 77 terminus to/from TRIP	-	-		o	o	o		o			Multnomah County, Port of Portland, City of Troutdale, TriMet	\$\$\$	S, M
Fully separate active transportation facilities from roads, especially roads with freight traffic		-	-	o	o	o	o	o		o	Multnomah County	\$\$\$	
<b>Bike Share and Scooter Share</b>													
Provide bike/scooter share at FedEx	-	o	o	o	o				o	-	FedEx, City of Troutdale	\$-\$	I, S
Provide bike/scooter share in TRIP	-	o	o	o	o	o		o	-	o	FedEx, Amazon, Port of Portland, City of Troutdale, Multnomah County	\$\$	S
Provide bike/scooter share in east Multomah County	-	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	-	o	Cities of Gresham, Fairview, Troutdale, Wood Village; Multnomah County, business sponsors	\$\$\$	S
<b>Micromobility</b>													
Provide quick mobility options between FedEx and Line 81 terminus	-	o	o	o	o			o	-	o	FedEx, City of Troutdale	\$-\$	I
<b>Telecommuting</b>													
Encourage telecommuting for relevant jobs/employers		o	o	o	-	-	o	-	o	-	all businesses	\$	U, I
<b>Compressed Workweek</b>													
Where relevant, encourage businesses to offer a compressed as a commute option	-	o	o	o	-	-	o	-	o	-	all businesses	\$	U, I
<b>MOTIVATION</b>													
<b>Carpool Matching</b>													
Encourage employees to use Drive Less Connect for carpool matching	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	-	o	-	all businesses	\$	U, I

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<b>Carpool Matching</b>													
Provide on-site ridematching software or message boards	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		o		all businesses	\$	U, I
<b>Commute Options Challenges</b>													
Promote employee participation in the annual Drive Less Challenge	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	-	o	o	all businesses, COORDINATOR	\$	U, I
Promote employee participation in other challenges, such as the Bike More Challenge	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	-	o	o	all businesses, COORDINATOR	\$	U, I
<b>Financial Incentives</b>													
Offer pre-tax payroll deductions	o	-	-		o	o	o		o	-	businesses, TriMet	\$	I
Offer a transportation subsidy	o	-	-	-	o	o	o		o	-	businesses, TriMet	\$	I
Offer an employer-provided transit pass	o	-	-	-	o	-	o		o	-	businesses, TriMet	\$	I, S
Offer shared mobility membership	o	-	-		o	o	o		o	-	businesses, TriMet	\$	I, S
Offer prize opportunities for non-drive alone commuters	o	-	-		o	o	o		o	-	businesses, TriMet	\$	I
<b>Emergency Ride Home</b>													
Implement an Emergency Ride Home program	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		o	-	businesses, TriMet	\$	U, I
<b>Supportive Employment Site Facilities</b>													
Provide as many supportive facilities as possible	-	o	o	-	o	o	o		o		businesses	\$	U, I
Add shower facilities and nap rooms	-	-	o	-	o	-	-		o		FedEx, Amazon	\$-\$-\$	S, M
<b>Parking</b>													
Continue to allow employees to park personal motor-vehicles at no charge	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		o		businesses	\$	U
Implement a personal motor-vehicle permit program	-				o	-	-		o		businesses, COORDINATOR	\$	I
Provide priority carpool and vanpool parking	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		o		businesses	\$	U, I
Provide covered/secure bicycle parking		o		o	o	o	o		o		businesses, COORDINATOR	\$	U, I
Provide on-site loaner bike locks	-			-	o	o	o		o		businesses	\$	I

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<b>New Employee Orientation</b>													
Inform employees of commute options during orientation	-	-	-	-	o	o	o		o	-	businesses, COORDINATOR	\$	U, I
Provide employees with blinky lights during orientation and annually before the Drive Less Challenge for interested employees	o	-	-	o	o	o	o		o	-	businesses, COORDINATOR	\$	I
Provide safety and use training for bicycling, walking, scooters, carpool, vanpool, and transit during orientation and periodically for employees who begin using these options after initial orientation	-	-	-	o	o	o	o		o	o	COORDINATOR, TriMet, Street Trust	\$	I
<b>Workforce Transportation Options Training</b>													
Develop and deliver transportation options training to people who live east of I-205 to reach FedEx and Amazon	o	-	-	-				-	-	o	COORDINATOR, Rosewood Initiative, IRCO, Human Solutions	\$-\$\$	I, S
Develop and deliver transportation options training for people enrolled in trades/workforce training programs	o	-	-	-				-	o	o	COORDINATOR, MHCC, Oregon Tradeswomen Inc, WorkSource	\$-\$\$	I, S
Develop and deliver commute options training for students enrolled in the region's community colleges and high schools in North Portland east of 60th Ave	o	-	-	-				o	o	o	COORDINATOR, MHCC, PCC, CCC, select school districts	\$-\$\$	I, S
Develop and deliver employment recruitment materials in regional travel options encouragement and training programs	o				o	o	o	o	o	o	COORDINATOR, Street Trust, OPAL, Community Cycling Center	\$	I, S

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Land Use													
In the study area and in proximity to the transit lines that serve the study area, locate affordable housing that accommodates a range of housing sizes	-	o	o	-			o	-	o	Cities of Troutdale, Wood Village, Fairview, Gresham, Portland; Rosewood Initiative, Human Solutions, Catholic Charities	\$\$\$	S, M, L	
Allow food carts in the study area, particularly near FedEx and Amazon		o	o		o	-	-	o	o	Port of Portland, City of Troutdale	\$	S	
Encourage the establishment of childcare accessible via the study area's transit lines and/or in association with affordable housing	-	o	o	-	o	o	o	o	o	Rosewood Initiative, Human Solutions, IRCO, Catholic Charities	\$\$-\$	S, M	
Consider other opportunities to mix uses in the study area that support employees and reduce the need to drive alone	-	o	o	-	-	o	o	o	o	Metro, Multnomah County, Cities of Troutdale, Wood Village, Fairview, Gresham; Port of Portland	\$\$-\$\$\$	S, M, L	

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