



Frequently Asked Questions

Bellevue Transportation Management Programs

July 22, 2016

1. What is a Transportation Management Program?

A Transportation Management Program (TMP) is a set of activities that a building developer must implement to reduce vehicle trips to or from the building. TMPs are typically established as a requirement of original permitting for a building and focus on recurring (daily) commute trips. By shifting a proportion of these trips to travel modes other than driving alone, the total impact of trips to and from the building is reduced and overall congestion on the transportation network is minimized.

For TMP-affected buildings, requirements may include:

- Posting information about transit and ridesharing options
- Designating a Building Transportation Coordinator
- Facilitating ridesharing for carpools and vanpools
- Designating preferential parking spaces for carpools and vanpools
- Providing a financial incentive to commuters using transit, carpool or vanpool
- Providing a guaranteed ride home for transit, carpool and vanpool riders who miss their regular ride.

Office buildings in Downtown have several additional required elements, including a performance goal for trip reduction over a period of 10 years following initial occupancy.

2. Why are TMPs required?

TMPs are a way to mitigate the transportation impacts of major development. Consistent with the [Washington State Environmental Policy Act](#) (SEPA), the City requires that major development projects exceeding certain size thresholds undergo environmental review to identify impacts and examine the extent to which identified impacts may be mitigated. Added travel demand associated with new development may be mitigated via capacity improvements to the transportation system (increasing the supply of roads) as well as by measures to reduce the number of peak-period vehicle trips (decreasing the demand for roads). TMPs focus on the second aspect, on shifting a proportion of recurring commute trip demand to travel modes that have less impact on the roadway system, including transit, carpooling/vanpooling, walking and bicycling.

The first TMP agreements in Bellevue date from the early 1980s and were individually negotiated as conditions of development pursuant to SEPA review. In 1987, the City adopted code provisions for TMPs, which provided for a more efficient development review process, as well as more consistency and predictability for TMP agreements. City code requirements for TMPs were subsequently revised in 1995 and have remained the same since then. There are currently 57 buildings in Bellevue with TMP agreements on file.





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3. Why is the City reviewing TMP requirements?

The current code was adopted in 1995, and some of the language does not fit well with current conditions or practices. In addition, the performance target specified for Downtown office buildings—a 35% reduction in commute trips made by driving-alone—has proven difficult to achieve in the 10-year timeframe specified by City code. By reviewing the Code requirements, there is an opportunity to assess the following:

- The extent of compliance with current TMP requirements
- Effectiveness of current TMP requirements
- Relationship between TMPs and other demand management activities, including Commute Trip Reduction requirements for large employers
- The perceived burden vs benefit of specific TMP requirements
- How any changes in overall conditions since establishment of the current code in 1995 may relate to current requirements
- How Bellevue requirements compare to requirements in other jurisdictions
- Whether different requirements would be a better fit for current conditions.

4. How does the City monitor compliance with TMP agreements?

Every two years, managers of TMP-affected buildings throughout Bellevue are contacted and asked to submit a report detailing how they are addressing the requirements of their TMP agreement. Analysis of the most recent implementation reports shows [overall compliance with requirements at 80%](#). (Note: The City routinely monitors compliance at buildings with employment. Some residential buildings have a TMP requirement to post information about transit and ridesharing; compliance at these buildings is not routinely monitored.)

For those buildings that have a performance goal for trip reduction (primarily office buildings in Downtown), the City provides building managers with a standard process to conduct surveys every two years.

5. Are TMPs effective in reducing traffic impacts?

TMP activities do appear to help reduce the rate of drive-alone commuting. Performance data is available for 14 TMP-affected office buildings in Downtown. Analysis shows an [average reduction in drive-alone commuting to these sites of 0.9% each year](#). This rate of reduction is somewhat *better* than overall measures of change in Downtown (US Census, [Bellevue Share Surveys](#)); it is also better than the overall rate of reduction measured at large worksites in Downtown affected by [Commute Trip Reduction](#) requirements. Although this does not establish any direct link (causality) between TMP agreements and trip reduction performance, it does indicate that the subset of buildings with TMP requirements is—on the whole—having a positive effect in mitigating impact on the transportation system.





6. How do TMPs relate to the Commute Trip Reduction requirements for large employers?

Both TMP and Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) requirements are intended to reduce commute trips to workplaces. At the most basic level, TMP requirements apply to buildings and CTR requirements apply to (large) employers (with 100 or more employees commuting during the AM peak hours). Some TMP buildings have tenants affected by CTR program requirements; others do not. The [actual implementation activities of the two programs](#) are generally similar and may include such elements as posting and distributing information on transit options, facilitating ridesharing for carpools, providing financial incentives and/or providing a guaranteed ride home for transit, carpool and vanpool riders who miss their regular ride.

There are a couple key differences in the structure of the two programs, however. Where the current TMP requirements are prescriptive, the CTR program framework (updated in 2008) allows employers great flexibility in choosing which activities and program features to implement. And, where the current TMP framework sets performance targets only at Downtown office buildings, CTR has a target for trip reduction at every worksite.

7. What if the City eliminated TMP requirements?

Conceptually, eliminating City code requirements for Transportation Management Programs could offer the benefit of reducing the burden on building managers (for implementation activities, measurement and reporting). And, if fewer new TMPs are established, it could reduce the burden on the City (in terms of staff time and budget) for ongoing monitoring.

However, as noted above (in the section “Why are TMPs required?”) the legal framework (SEPA) requires that large projects undergo review at the time of initial permitting to identify impacts. When impacts are identified, the framework indicates reasonable mitigation measures **must** be pursued. For large buildings, traffic and parking are nearly always issues that need to be carefully evaluated and, often, mitigated.

In the absence of a City code specifying what is expected of large buildings, the mitigation measures would become subject to negotiation between the City and project developers on a case by case basis. Implications of this approach include:

- Additional staff time (for City and developer) needed during the development review process to evaluate impacts and determine mitigation measures under SEPA.
- Less predictability for developers going into the permitting process.
- Monitoring and enforcement may be more difficult if requirements vary from building to building



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8. How do TMP requirements in Bellevue compare to requirements in other cities?

Local jurisdictions that have requirements for Transportation Management Programs include Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond and Seattle. [A review of requirements at these jurisdictions](#) indicates their requirements are broadly similar to Bellevue requirements. Areas of difference are,

- Other cities have a performance requirement—expressed as a maximum rate of drive-alone commuting to a building—to nearly all TMP sites. Bellevue currently has a performance requirement only for Office buildings in Downtown. Also, Bellevue sets performance targets differently, as a reduction (35% from an initial baseline) in the rate of drive alone commuting over time (10 years). Other cities typically set building performance goals at a specific target level (which applies within the first few years).
- Bellevue code requires a TMP at residential buildings with 100 or more units (the only requirement is to post information about transit and ridesharing options). Other cities require TMP agreements at residential sites only in limited or unique circumstances.

9. Will existing TMP buildings be affected by changes to TMP code requirements?

Any changes to TMP requirements would not necessarily change the TMP conditions for existing buildings. TMP requirements are established for each building at the time of initial development. It may be possible to establish a pathway for existing buildings with TMP requirements to elect to transition to a new set of requirements, but any change in requirements would be on an individual, case-by-case basis.

10. What is the next step in the TMP code review process?

An Online Open House regarding the TMP Code Requirements is underway until August 24, 2016. Feedback received in the Open House will inform the refinement and selection of a preferred option by the Transportation Commission in early September. This recommendation will be presented to the City Council in mid-September, who will provide direction for next steps. If the Council directs that revisions to current requirements be pursued, City staff and the Transportation Commission will identify potential revisions to City code language; this process would extend over several months and include a public hearing. Final consideration by the City Council of any changes to City Code would take place in 2017.

