

RIDESHARE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS: A REVIEW

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FOREWORD

This report was prepared in response to House Resolution No. 145, H.D. 1, which was adopted during the Regular Session of 1989. The report reviews the State's progress in promoting ridesharing in the public and private sectors and factors which may conflict with the promotion of and participation in rideshare programs. In addition, the report discusses available alternatives to single occupant vehicle commuting which focus upon ridesharing.

The Bureau extends its sincere appreciation to all those whose assistance and cooperation made this report possible. Special thanks are extended to the Automotive Management Division of the Department of Accounting and General Services; Energy Division of the Department of Business and Economic Development; Department of Taxation; Department of Transportation; Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization; University of Hawaii's Department of Urban & Regional Planning; the Department of Transportation Services of the City and County of Honolulu; Bedford Properties; Mililani Paratransit Services; Hawaiian Electric Company; Transhawaiian Services; and the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle's Metro.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

House Resolution No. 145, H.D. 1 (1989) (see Appendix A), requested the Legislative Reference Bureau to study the State's progress in promoting ridesharing in both the public and private sectors, and that of the private sector in offering rideshare alternatives to employees.

In 1986, the Legislature enacted Act 90, Session Laws of Hawaii 1986, which established a state policy encouraging ridesharing as an alternative to commuting by single occupant vehicles. Ridesharing was suggested as a mitigation measure for the traffic congestion expected to be caused by new developments in Central and Leeward Oahu.¹ The Legislature found that the benefits of ridesharing included reduced traffic congestion, cleaner air, savings in highway maintenance costs, and savings in energy.² Energy savings was viewed as an important concern in light of Hawaii's dependence on oil imports.³ Since then, little progress appears to have been made in promoting ridesharing among the public and private sectors, while traffic congestion continues to worsen. Further, House Resolution No. 145, H.D. 1, expresses special concern that despite the policy stated in Act 90, some state policies are actually in conflict with the state rideshare policy.

Traffic congestion on Oahu has accelerated at an alarming rate. The daily commute into the downtown area has become a battle of fraying nerves and explosive tempers. In general, traffic congestion is a result of too many vehicles traveling on the same roads at the same time. The number of motor vehicles registered on Oahu has increased 35 percent, from 424,892 in 1977 to 571,738 in 1987.⁴ The number of passenger vehicles registered on Oahu has increased 29 percent, from 367,398 in 1977 to 475,140 in 1987.⁵ However, the problem does not stem so much from the number of vehicles themselves, but from the vast number of vehicles with only one occupant. Approximately 78 percent of Oahu's work force commutes to work in private vehicles.⁶ Out of those vehicles, 85 percent are occupied by just one person, 12 percent are occupied by two persons, and 3 percent are occupied by three or more persons.⁷

Ridesharing is generally defined as a range of alternatives to single occupant vehicle commuting. Therefore, ridesharing can include: carpools, vanpools, and public and private mass transit. Ridesharing is part of a broader concept known as transportation systems management (TSM) which uses low cost, short range transportation strategies to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of existing transportation facilities.⁸ TSM strategies include carpool lanes, ridesharing, road-pricing, staggered work hours, and one-way streets.⁹ Since traffic congestion generally results from too many vehicles on the same roads at the same time, the number of vehicles must be reduced to alleviate congestion. The promotion of ridesharing is a logical way to achieve this goal.

Hawaii's statutory provisions have more than one definition of ridesharing. According to section 26-19, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the state Department of Transportation is responsible for developing and promoting rideshare programs which include "carpool and vanpool programs" and "informal arrangements in which three or more persons ride together in a motor vehicle for four or more days a week to or from work or school". Section 279G-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, further defines ridesharing arrangements as "the transportation of persons in a motor vehicle where that transportation is incidental to another purpose of the driver" and includes "carpools, vanpools, and buspools". Lastly, section 279G-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, states that is the policy of this State to "encourage commuting to and from work by means other than a motor vehicle occupied by one person". In light of the different definitions of ridesharing, it is difficult to determine what exactly is encompassed by the term "ridesharing".

The National Task Force on Ridesharing defines ridesharing as "two or more persons traveling by any mode of transportation, including but not limited to: carpooling, vanpooling, buspooling, shared-ride taxis and jitneys, and public transit".¹⁰ For the purposes of this study, the term "ridesharing" is limited to commuting to and from work during the morning and afternoon rush hours, by means other than single occupant vehicles, including carpools, vanpools, and public and private transit.

Once ridesharing has been defined for the purposes of this study, the next step is to determine what problem needs to be alleviated by ridesharing. House Resolution No. 145, H.D. 1, focuses primarily on the traffic congestion experienced on Oahu by residents who must commute to and from their downtown area work place on a daily basis. Rush hour traffic congestion, an ongoing problem for many years, has increased drastically in the recent years. As traffic conditions continually worsen, Oahu is rapidly speeding towards gridlock.

There are many goals behind the idea of ridesharing. Properly implemented rideshare programs can alleviate various problems, including traffic congestion, pollution, and energy consumption. This study focuses on what ridesharing can do to alleviate the primary cause of traffic congestion or the number of single occupant vehicles on the road at one time.

Organization of the Report

This report is organized as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces the report.

Chapter 2 discusses the progress of the state government in promoting ridesharing in both the public and private sectors and the factors which may have conflicted with the promotion and participation in rideshare programs.

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 discusses the state agencies, beside the Department of Transportation, which may be able to promote ridesharing.

Chapter 4 discusses the available alternatives to single occupant vehicle commuting which focus upon ridesharing, including examples of TSM alternatives implemented by other states.

Chapter 5 contains findings and recommendations, followed by an appendix.

ENDNOTES

1. House Standing Committee Report No. 681 on Senate Bill No. 2512, Thirteenth Legislature, 1986, State of Hawaii.
2. Senate Standing Committee Report No. 277 on Senate Bill No. 2512, Thirteenth Legislature, 1986, State of Hawaii.
3. Ibid.
4. Hawaii, Department of Business and Economic Development, The State of Hawaii Data Book 1988 - A Statistical Abstract (Honolulu: 1988), p. 467.
5. Ibid., p. 468.
6. Arthur Young, Promoting & Implementing Paratransit on Oahu: A Plan of Action (prepared for the Department of Transportation, State of Hawaii) (1987), p. 5.
7. Ibid.
8. Gordon G.W. Lum, "More can be done about traffic," The Voice of Business, July 31, 1989, p. 2.
9. Ibid.
10. U.S., Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Ridesharing: Meeting the Challenges of the '80s: The Report of the National Task Force on Ridesharing (Washington, D.C.: 1980), p. 30.

Chapter 2

THE STATE RIDESHARE PROGRAM

The State's Progress in Promoting Ridesharing

According to section 26-19, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the Department of Transportation (DOT) is required to "develop and promote ridesharing programs which shall include but not be limited to, carpool and vanpool programs, and may assist organizations interested in promoting similar programs, and arrange for contracts with private organizations to manage and operate these programs". The statute further states that rideshare programs include "informal arrangements in which three or more persons ride together in a motor vehicle for four or more days a week to or from work or school".

In 1982, the Legislature enacted chapter 279G, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which defined rideshare arrangements and limited the liability of employers who participated in rideshare programs. Act 90, Session Laws of Hawaii 1986, amended chapter 279G to establish a state policy which encouraged commuting to and from work by means other than by single occupant vehicles, or ridesharing. The Legislature found that the benefits of ridesharing were many, including reduced traffic congestion, cleaner air, savings in highway maintenance and construction costs, and savings in energy.¹ However, the State has not experienced much progress with its efforts to significantly develop and promote rideshare programs in the public or private sectors.

The DOT is close to completion of its Rideshare Report. The report basically states the DOT's position on ridesharing and goes on to enumerate its strategies, objectives, tasks, and recommendations. The DOT focuses upon the state rideshare program's two major objectives: (1) to take a leadership role in planning, developing, coordinating, and implementing policies and programs to more efficiently manage the transportation demand on Hawaii's highways during peak commuting periods; and (2) to encourage and assist government agencies, neighborhood and community groups, private employers, schools and other organizations to establish carpool programs, and to adopt other transportation systems management (TSM) strategies.²

In the past two years, the DOT has worked towards implementing a statewide rideshare program. It has obtained rideshare program funding from what are referred to as "Exxon overcharge funds" and the Oahu Metropolitan Organization (OMPO).³ The Exxon funds were used for operating expenses of the program and support of community based programs.⁴ Additional funds were contributed by OMPO for consulting services of a rideshare coordinator.⁵

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In 1988, an Interagency Committee on Ridesharing was established to develop policies which would promote ridesharing.⁶ The committee consisted of key representatives from state departments, public employee unions, the Legislature, the Department of Transportation Services of the City and County of Honolulu (City), and the University of Hawaii.⁷ The committee investigated various areas relating to ridesharing, including: parking control, subsidized bus passes, and the motor pool fleet.⁸ The DOT believes that more work is necessary and intends the committee to continue its work to promote the rideshare program.⁹

The DOT has been supportive of the Legislature's actions to promote ridesharing. The DOT testified favorably in support of rideshare legislation enacted this year, including legislation to reduce the requirement for high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes from three to two occupants per vehicle, and to broaden and clarify the DOT's responsibilities with regard to various TSM programs.

Act 29, Session Laws of Hawaii 1989, was enacted to encourage motorists to use the existing HOV lanes by reducing the minimum vehicle occupancy requirement from three people to two people. Although the requirement had been reduced to three people, it was commonly believed that the HOV lanes were still not being used efficiently. According to the DOT, the main purpose of the HOV lanes is to encourage more than one person per vehicle.¹⁰ Therefore, as long as there is an increase in the number of people using the HOV lane that does not adversely affect any time savings projected, lowering the requirement from three people to two people will be beneficial in encouraging people to use the lane and improving the traffic flow. In addition, the DOT has requested the HOV lane operating hours to be extended from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. to service late commuters.¹¹

Whether the change has had a positive effect on those using the HOV lanes and whether HOV lane violations will continue are yet to be determined. Currently, enforcement is virtually nonexistent due to the lack of space to pull over violators coming into downtown from the Leeward area.¹² Enforcement procedures must be implemented in order to deter violators and encourage people to rideshare.¹³

Act 31, Session Laws of Hawaii 1989, was enacted to require the DOT to plan, develop, promote, and coordinate various TSM programs, including alternative work and school hours programs, bicycling programs, and rideshare programs. The DOT has included in its budget funds for a rideshare coordinator, marketing specialist, and program evaluation specialist to perform the statewide implementation of its rideshare program.¹⁴

The DOT's rideshare program includes developing a network of rideshare coordinators, including community, school, and large employer coordinators. As part of its work with rideshare coordinators, the DOT has developed a computer carpool matching software package which it has made available to the Hawaii Kai and Mililani rideshare programs, the University of Hawaii, and the counties of Maui and Kauai.¹⁵ Along with providing the computer carpool

program and necessary hardware, the DOT has been instrumental in developing a rideshare program for the University of Hawaii at Manoa.¹⁶

The DOT has worked together with the State's two pilot rideshare programs, Hawaii Kai's SMART (Save Money and Ride Together) and Mililani Paratransit Services in order to educate state employees on the rideshare alternatives available from these programs. The response to the presentations has been far from enthusiastic and the DOT recognizes that new methods must be implemented to get a better response from state employees.¹⁷ With that goal in mind, the DOT recommends that each department designate a rideshare coordinator to work together with the DOT rideshare staff.¹⁸

The DOT has supported the establishment of park and ride facilities. In 1988, the DOT's rideshare coordinator, together with the Waikiki Improvement Association, set up and operated the park and ride lots for the summer Waikiki block party.¹⁹ The park and ride lots were extremely successful and moved over 6,000 people to and from the block party while taking hundreds of vehicles off the roads.²⁰ Currently, facilities are being planned in Mililani and Wahiawa and the DOT recommends that coordination with the City be implemented to develop a network of facilities.²¹

Recently, private commuter express bus systems have been established to service commuters from outlying areas into the downtown area. The DOT is highly supportive of the private buses to reduce traffic congestion, but has been unable to find ways to assist the private bus providers.²² An option suggested by the DOT is for the City to consider contracting out to the private sector for express bus services.²³

The "Beat the School Jam" program is a month long campaign to alert motorists that fall classes are resuming and advise them to adjust their daily commutes. Primarily, the program is geared towards informing the public of the different options available to avoid traffic congestion. The program has completed its third year and due to its success the DOT intends to continue the program next summer.²⁴

The DOT has produced roadway signs and promotional materials which publicize the availability of rideshare services. The signs inform the public of rideshare programs in Hawaii Kai, Mililani, and the University of Hawaii, along with the DOT's own rideshare hot line used for island-wide assistance and information.²⁵ Additional promotional material has been developed including comprehensive carpool matching brochures, general rideshare brochures, and carpool and rideshare posters.²⁶ The DOT plans to distribute rideshare materials and information at major areas, including banks, shopping centers, and grocery stores.²⁷

TSM strategies, including transportation management associations (TMA) are rapidly becoming popular. A TMA is an institutional arrangement among private and public entities to facilitate the implementation of coordinated transportation programs.²⁸ The DOT is supportive of the TMA concept to coordinate and promote rideshare services, and the first TMA is planned

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for the Leeward and Central Oahu area.²⁹ The DOT recommends the establishment of additional TMAs in the Downtown, Waikiki, and Ala Moana areas.³⁰

In its Draft Rideshare Report, the DOT concludes with five recommendations which should be implemented to develop the State's rideshare program:³¹

- (1) The State must set the example,
- (2) The public must be educated,
- (3) Commute alternatives must be offered,
- (4) A rideshare focal point, such as a TMA, must be established, and
- (5) Additional measures to encourage ridesharing must be enacted.

State Policies Which May Conflict with the Promotion of Ridesharing

According to the DOT, there are approximately 55,700 employees who work within the area bordered by River Street, the H-1 Freeway, South Street, and the ocean.³² Out of the estimated 55,700 employees who work downtown, 10,000, or approximately 18 percent are state employees.³³ The State is the largest Downtown area employer and the DOT believes that it must take the lead in promoting ridesharing and serve as an example for the private sector.³⁴ However, many believe that the State is not doing enough to promote ridesharing.

Various policies have been implemented, but usually on a piecemeal basis and without proper promotion or enforcement. Thus, although the policies were implemented to encourage ridesharing and reduce traffic congestion, little if any success has been experienced. In addition, many of the existing state policies have had a negative effect on the promotion of ridesharing. Members of the public have expressed concern that certain state agency policies actually conflict with or inhibit the promotion of ridesharing, such as:

- (1) Provision of parking for state employees at very low rates compared to those charged in private parking facilities;
- (2) Plans for additional parking facilities to accommodate increasing state employee needs;
- (3) Failure to provide tax incentives for employers and employees to participate and promote ridesharing programs; and

- (4) The State's piecemeal, uncoordinated effort to encourage ridesharing, which leaves participation to the discretion of agency administrators and lacks incentives for those administrators to commit to participation including:
 - (a) Unstructured flexible work hours program; and
 - (b) The lack of support by department administration for ridesharing presentations.

Parking rates for state employees have been extremely low as compared to those of private parking facilities. Most employees who are fortunate to obtain state parking do not pay more than \$30 per month.³⁵ Many believe that the low parking rates encourage state employees to drive and parking rates must be raised if the State is truly serious about promoting ridesharing. State employees argue that the State does not pay as well as the private sector and that many private employers subsidize most or all of their employees' parking fees. The Automotive Management Division of the Department of Accounting and General Services (Automotive Division), which is responsible for parking control, has looked into the possibility of adjusting the parking rates. However, it has not determined what the parking rates will be if new rates are implemented. It is certain that the proposed raise in parking rates will be strongly opposed by state employees and their unions.

The Automotive Division also is responsible for the construction and maintenance of parking facilities. Plans are being discussed to construct additional parking for state employees who will be relocated to the new state building.³⁶ A study is being conducted to determine the best alternatives to the parking shortage which is sure to occur once the relocation is completed.³⁷ The construction of additional parking facilities appears to be incongruous to the state policy of promoting ridesharing, encouraging employees to drive rather than rideshare. However, the Automotive Division believes there is a valid need for additional parking, especially in the case where a new state building is being constructed with parking facilities which is severely inadequate to accommodate the demand.³⁸ Further, the Automotive Division believes that reducing the amount of parking is not viable unless there are alternatives available to employees.³⁹

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) has been criticized for failing to provide economic incentives to taxpayers by allowing employees to exempt from their gross incomes the value of benefits provided by employers for participation in rideshare programs, and employers to exempt the amount of cost of providing these benefits. Proponents believe that the tax exemptions for employees who receive benefits from employers for participation in rideshare programs and for employers equal to some percentage of expenses incurred for subsidizing rideshare programs would help to promote rideshare programs. However, the DOTAX usually has been reluctant to use the tax system to promote social goals. The DOTAX's position is consistent with accepted principles of good tax policy.

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During the Regular Session of 1989, House Bill No. 120 was introduced, but not passed. The purpose of House Bill No. 120 was to provide economic incentives to employers and employees to participate in ridesharing arrangements by exempting the value of the benefits provided by employers from employees' gross incomes and by providing a partial exemption of the cost of the benefits for employers. The Tax Foundation of Hawaii clearly summarized the argument that the tax system is not the proper venue to promote social goals, as follows, "utilizing the tax system to achieve social goals is an inefficient use of the system as the tax structure exists primarily as a means to generate funds for government programs and projects. Where the burden of taxes is beyond the ability of the taxpayer to pay, tax relief is provided. The incentives proposed in this measure do not meet that criteria but serve merely as economic incentives to participate in a particular program."⁴⁰

In addition, the DOTAX believes that the state tax law is not the method to use to effect change in a specific area.⁴¹ Thus, if the state rideshare program is geared toward alleviating traffic into the Downtown Honolulu area, a change in state tax laws would have a more far reaching effect since it would affect all taxpayers, not just those who commute into the Downtown area.

Furthermore, the federal tax law does not appear to be particularly supportive of rideshare programs. The Internal Revenue Code allows an exclusion from gross income of the fair market value of employer-provided free or reduced cost parking which is on or near the business premises of the employer.⁴² The exclusion applies as well to an employer's reimbursement to employees for renting parking spaces on or near the business premises of the employer.⁴³ On the other hand, a transit pass provided to employees free or at a reduced cost may be excluded only up to an amount of \$15 per month.⁴⁴ Thus, under the federal tax law, employers are encouraged to subsidize parking, but not bus passes for their employees.

These provisions in the federal income tax law make it far less beneficial to try to promote ridesharing through change in the state income tax law for the following reasons:

- (1) The state income tax law is designed to conform to the federal tax law, which simplifies bookkeeping for taxpayers. To the extent that the federal and state codes diverge, the bookkeeping becomes more complicated.
- (2) Because of the greater tax implications of the federal income tax law, tax planning is more likely to focus on the federal income tax law rather than the state law. To the extent that this is the case, special benefits to promote ridesharing which exist only in the state law run the risk of being more of a windfall to employers who would have provided the benefits anyway, rather than an actual inducement to provide the benefit.

In many instances, the underlying problem experienced in promoting a statewide rideshare program appears to be a lack of coordinated effort in any of the policies. For

example, a possible method of reducing the number of vehicles on the roads at the same time is to implement a flexible work hour program which would spread out the time that employees arrive at and depart from work. However, the Legislative Reference Bureau's 1985 study entitled The Flexible Working Hours Program For State Employees listed as one of the factors that tended to inhibit state employee participation in a flexible work hours program that the ultimate promotion and scheduling rested with the supervisors of the various departments and no single, coordinated program existed.⁴⁵ Thus, although state employees reacted favorably to flexible work hours, state departments did not actively promote participation in the program.⁴⁶ Without the total support of all the departments, a flexible work hours program would not cause the planned effect of reducing traffic congestion.

Another example of the lack of a coordinated effort to promote ridesharing is illustrated by the rideshare presentations which were held to educate state employees on the two pilot rideshare programs, Hawaii Kai's SMART and Mililani Paratransit Services. State employees were invited to the presentations to learn more about rideshare alternatives. Unfortunately, few employees actually attended the presentations. Out of 175 employees invited, only 33, or approximately 19 percent employees actually attended the presentations.⁴⁷ The poor turnout was attributed to apathy of the employees as well as their department heads. In one situation, none of the employees turned up for the presentation due to the department head's failure to notify anyone of the presentation.⁴⁸

In the past, the State has appeared preoccupied in finding "the solution" to the traffic congestion problem. However, research has indicated that a comprehensive rideshare program which implements different alternatives is the preferable method to alleviate traffic congestion. The 1985 Legislative Reference Bureau study concluded that in order to effectively reduce traffic congestion, the implementation of various alternatives, including flexible work hours, HOV lanes, ridesharing, and public transportation marketing, would be necessary.⁴⁹

The DOT recognizes that there is no one solution to the congestion experience by commuters daily.⁵⁰ In addition, the DOT stresses the importance of offering various alternatives to single occupant vehicle commuting.⁵¹

ENDNOTES

1. Senate Standing Committee Report No. 277 on Senate Bill No. 2512, Thirteenth Legislature, 1986, State of Hawaii.
2. Hawaii, Department of Transportation, Draft Rideshare Report (Honolulu: 1989), chapter 4 (unpaginated) (hereinafter cited as Draft Rideshare Report).
3. Ibid., chapter 5. In March 1986, the State of Hawaii received approximately \$14.5 million from the United States Department of Energy as a result of the United States District Court decision on oil pricing violations by the Exxon Corporation. All Exxon overcharge funds must be expended under federal programs authorized by Congress (source: Carilyn O. Shon, Energy Conservation Program Manager, Energy Division, Department of Business and Economic Development, State of Hawaii).

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4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Interview with Erwin Paschoal, Rideshare Coordinator, Transportation Planning Office, Department of Transportation, State of Hawaii, August 24, 1989.
11. Draft Rideshare Report, chapter 5.
12. Interview with Gordon G.W. Lum, Executive Director, Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization, August 29, 1989.
13. Ibid.
14. Testimony of the Department of Transportation on House Bill No. 127, February 8, 1989.
15. Draft Rideshare Report, chapter 6.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., chapter 5.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., chapter 6.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Paschoal interview.
25. Draft Rideshare Report, chapter 6.
26. Ibid.
27. Paschoal interview.
28. Draft Rideshare Report, chapter 6.

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29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., chapter 7.
32. Ibid., chapter 2.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., chapter 1.
35. Hawaii Administrative Rules, section 3-30-8 (Department of Accounting and General Services).
36. Telephone interview with Alexander M. Hirota, Division Chief, Department of Accounting and General Services Automotive Management Division, State of Hawaii, October 4, 1989.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Tax Foundation of Hawaii, Legislative Tax Bill Service, House Bill No. 120, January 30, 1989, pp. 27-28.
41. Interview with Christina Uebelein, Department of Taxation, State of Hawaii, September 6, 1989.
42. Internal Revenue Code of 1986, §132.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Karl K. Motoyama, The Flexible Working Hours Program for State Employees, Legislative Reference Bureau, Report No. 4 (Honolulu: 1985), p. 46.
46. Ibid., p. 56.
47. Draft Rideshare Report, chapter 5.
48. Interview with Letitia Uyehara, Transportation Coordinator, SMART, Bedford Properties, July 11, 1989.
49. Motoyama, pp. 56-57.
50. Draft Rideshare Report, chapter 7.
51. Ibid.

Chapter 3

STATE AGENCIES WHICH MAY BE ABLE TO PROMOTE RIDESHARING

Department of Accounting and General Services

The Automotive Management Division of the Department of Accounting and General Services (Automotive Division) is responsible for parking control and maintenance of the central motor pool.¹ Responsibilities at state facilities include traffic control, parking lot assignments, and collection of parking fees.² Other responsibilities include the maintenance of state owned vehicles in a central motor pool.³ The Automotive Division controls vehicle assignments within the motor pool and establishes policies and regulations to ensure driver and vehicle safety.⁴

Because of its authority over the parking on state lands, the Automotive Division is in a position to have a major impact on the rideshare program. According to the administrative rules governing state parking, the Automotive Division may allocate to each of the agencies a given number of parking spaces, provided the agency can prove its need exists.⁵

State employees who form carpools of three or more permanent employees automatically are allocated parking and have their first choice of parking location.⁶ If the lot in which the carpool has chosen for parking is full, accommodations will be made until a space can be found, but generally, the carpool will get its first choice immediately.⁷ However, carpools which desire parking at the State Capitol may wait longer to obtain their parking due to the high demand for parking there and the fact that each parking space is assigned to one individual.⁸ Currently, the Automotive Division is planning to change the carpool requirement of three to two permanent employees in order to encourage employees to carpool.⁹

A feeling of resentment has been perceived among members of the public concerning the extremely low rates for parking for state employees. Parking rates have not been raised for many years and are far below the current market rate for private parking. Parking rates per month for state employees on Oahu are as follows:¹⁰

Covered areas	\$30
Covered tandem areas	24
Open reserved areas	18
Open theater areas	12
Motorcycle parking	9

The Automotive Division has been studying the possibility of adjusting the parking rates for parking maintenance and capital improvement projects.¹¹ A survey was conducted earlier this year to determine whether new parking rates would be supportable, but no decision has

been made as yet.¹² Public hearings will be held regarding the proposed new rates.¹³ However, in order to appease criticism, parking rates would have to be raised substantially. It is likely that a substantial increase would lead to significant opposition from state employees and their unions. The Automotive Division believes that merely raising parking rates for state employees will not alleviate the problem unless employees are offered other alternatives.¹⁴

The Automotive Division also is responsible for capital improvements and coping with the demand for additional parking. Plans are being developed for accommodating the shortage of parking that will occur when the new state building to house the Legislature is completed and the Capitol is closed for asbestos removal and renovation.¹⁵ The Automotive Division is conducting a study to determine the best alternatives to that parking problem.¹⁶ Limiting parking will help the traffic problem only if there are other alternatives available to employees. An alternative to the construction of additional parking facilities would be to consider restricting the amount of parking for new buildings, but offer carpool matching services to tenants, and permit a limited amount of parking for carpools and vanpools.¹⁷

The Automotive Division is responsible for the state motor pool. The motor pool provides state agencies with vehicles when they are necessary for employees to perform official duties.¹⁸ State agencies may be assigned vehicles for use on a daily or monthly basis and are billed by the motor pool.¹⁹ State employees may obtain authorization from the comptroller to take state owned vehicles home daily under certain conditions.²⁰ However, personal use of state owned vehicles is restricted to direct travel between employees' homes and their work places and to stopovers which are incidental to driving to and from work.²¹

Department of Taxation

Many proponents of ridesharing believe that the Department of Taxation (DOTAX) should establish tax incentives to encourage taxpayers to rideshare. These incentives include tax deductions for employees who received benefits from an employer for participation in a rideshare program, and tax credits for employers equal to a percentage of expenses incurred for subsidizing rideshare programs. Currently, section 235-110.7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, gives taxpayers a capital goods excise tax credit which may be used for employers to purchase vans for employees in order to implement vanpools. Generally, the DOTAX has been adverse to implementing tax credits to encourage social goals, such as ridesharing. The DOTAX believes that the state tax law is an inefficient and ineffective means to remedy situations which pertain to certain, limited sectors.²²

Assuming that the focus of the rideshare program is primarily on the traffic congestion which occurs during the commute into and from downtown, the DOTAX's premise is accurate. A state tax law which promotes ridesharing by allowing credits or deductions would affect everyone, not just those who commute to downtown Honolulu everyday. An additional problem with trying to modify taxpayers' behavior with credits and deductions is that the credit or

deduction must be of a magnitude that would make an impact on taxpayers, and thus, would be a costly alternative for the State.²³

It should be noted, however, that if any changes to state tax policy are to be made, the changes would need to come from the Legislature rather than the Department of Taxation.

The State Legislature

Recently, ridesharing has gained popularity in the Legislature once again. The rapidly accelerating traffic congestion on Oahu is a matter of great concern to all who commute during rush hour. Legislators, perhaps urged by concerned constituents, have joined the voices of those extolling the benefits of ridesharing. During the 1989 legislative session, seven bills and resolutions relating to the mitigation of traffic congestion were passed.

Act 29, Session Laws of Hawaii 1989, was enacted to encourage motorists to use the existing high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes by reducing the minimum vehicle occupancy requirement from three to two people. The Legislature determined that the HOV lanes were not used to their full capacity and it was necessary to lower the requirement to encourage more motorists to use the lanes.

It has been contended that lowering the requirement conflicts with the intent of ridesharing, and the next step would be the total elimination of HOV lanes. However, proponents of the change believe that the goal is to deter single occupancy commuting and even two people per vehicle better serves rideshare goals than just one. So far it appears that the HOV lanes are being used more widely since the change. It is yet to be proven whether the additional use will increase up to the point where there is no longer any benefit from using the HOV lanes. At that point, the Legislature must determine whether the HOV lanes should be abolished altogether or the requirement should be raised again.

Act 31, Session Laws of Hawaii 1989, was enacted to allow the DOT to explore low-cost transportation alternatives by emphasizing transportation systems management (TSM) programs. In addition, the Legislature made an appropriation for the creation of permanent positions for a TSM program coordinator and a permanent support staff position, along with funding for the operation of TSM programs. The TSM program includes the planning, development, promotion, and coordination of various programs including rideshare programs, alternate work and school hours programs, and bicycling programs. With the high costs of construction, scarcity of available land, and other significant social, economic, and environmental concerns, TSM techniques offer low cost solutions to traffic problems without resorting to traditional methods as creating new or expanding existing roadways.

Act 260, Session Laws of Hawaii 1989, was enacted to remove impediments to the participation in and promotion of ridesharing by extending the exemption from liability to

include the State, counties, schools, community organizations, private nonprofit organizations, and rideshare coordinators. There was a concern that these organizations needed to be exempt from liability in order to effectively continue their efforts in the promotion of rideshare programs. This Act eliminates much of the liability of promoters of rideshare programs; however, the liability remains for entities that provide owned, leased, or contracted vehicles for rideshare purposes.

A number of current cases hold that employees are not within the course of their employment, for either workers' compensation purposes or employer liability, if they are injured while traveling to or from their place of employment, unless transportation is furnished as an incident of employment either through a vehicle, a conveyance and driver, or payment of expenses.²⁴ Other cases hold that although the vehicle was owned by the employer, the employee was not within the course of employment where, among other factors, the employee did not conduct business from his home, was not on a special mission from his employer, or the vehicle was not an integral part of the employee's work.²⁵

Although none of the above mentioned cases involved rideshare programs, it is important for employers and other rideshare promoters to recognize the possible liability which may stem from providing vehicles for rideshare purposes. It is unclear whether Act 260 will exempt from liability employers who merely compensate employees for using their own vehicles for rideshare purposes. However, unless the Legislature decides to eliminate all liability for promoters of rideshare programs, those who provide vehicles for rideshare purposes may still be liable to some extent for injuries incurred by passengers and third parties.

Other legislation has been enacted this year which does not specifically deal with ridesharing, but is aimed at reducing Oahu's traffic problems. Act 255, Session Laws of Hawaii 1989, was enacted to initiate a year long demonstration project with off-hour road work on areas of heavy congestion of the H-1 freeway, exempting emergency projects or those which cannot be undertaken safely at night to determine the effect of the change on traffic congestion. Act 340, Session Laws of Hawaii 1989, was enacted to enable the chief executive of the State or a county to modify the established business hours and days in their respective jurisdiction, in part to reduce traffic congestion. Senate Resolution No. 234 requested the Legislature to recognize the problem of mass transit and to express support for the City and County of Honolulu's effort to solve the problem.

Although legislation establishing the Telework Center Demonstration Project (Telework Center) had been enacted earlier, the Telework Center formally opened in the Mililani Technology Park on July 14, 1989.²⁶ A total of nine public sector and eight private sector employees who live in nearby communities are participating in the year long project.²⁷ The project planning was accomplished by a task force comprised of public and private sector executives and University of Hawaii faculty.²⁸

STATE AGENCIES WHICH MAY BE ABLE TO PROMOTE RIDESHARING

By eliminating the need for employees to commute into the Downtown area, the Telework Center is touted as a "ride elimination" project which will complement the State's rideshare program.²⁹ The DOT is optimistic that the project will be successful and is advocating the establishment of additional telework centers in outlying areas of Oahu and even on the neighbor islands.³⁰ The hope is that private companies will be encouraged to open branch offices or new locations outside of the Downtown Honolulu area.³¹

Although the DOT has the ultimate responsibility regarding the State's rideshare program, other state agencies have the ability to play important roles in promoting the program. All agencies need to participate actively in and support the program for it to be successful.

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Chapter 4

ALTERNATIVES TO SINGLE OCCUPANT VEHICLE COMMUTING

Rideshare Alternatives

For years the media has extolled the advantages of ridesharing, including the amount of money saved, decreased wear and tear on vehicles, decreased stress on commuters, and energy conserved. The general public is aware of all the concerns of single occupant vehicle commuting and the benefits of ridesharing. However, for one reason or another, the majority choose to drive alone. In many cases it is a conscious decision made in light of all alternatives to driving alone. In other cases, it is a choice made by necessity and governed by factors not usually in the commuters' powers to change. For the former group, reeducation is probably the only way to make a major impact on their attitudes and behavior. With the latter group, the availability of additional alternatives is the key to changing their behavior.

In 1987, Arthur Young prepared a report for the state Department of Transportation entitled Promoting & Implementing Paratransit on Oahu. The report indicated that "the most important solution to the traffic problem on Oahu is to change attitudes of individuals regarding how they get to work".¹ However, actually getting people to change their minds is extremely difficult. As clearly indicated in the case of the high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, people would rather risk a traffic violation than carpool with others.² In order to educate people on their responsibility for reducing traffic congestion and change their attitudes on commuting, the Arthur Young report endorsed a two-part plan which would:³

- (1) Develop and implement a coordinated, ongoing promotional campaign to raise general awareness of what individuals and groups can do; and
- (2) Develop targeted promotional materials and programs for selected segments who may sponsor rideshare programs: employers, public and private schools, and community groups.

Both recommendations must be implemented in order for an education program to make a significant impact on the public.⁴ Thus, initially the campaign would be used to raise the public's awareness of what can be done to alleviate traffic congestion and then more direct efforts will be used for employers, schools, and community groups.⁵ For example, Seattle's Metro researches the needs of commuters in various communities and tailors its programs to fit those needs.⁶

Along with a public education program, alternatives to commuting alone must be made available to the public. There are various alternatives which, if implemented, would make a

positive impact on single occupant vehicle commuting. The following alternatives all have a common factor: a goal of reducing the number of vehicles on the roadways.

Public Mass Transit (TheBus). Public mass transit has been the traditional means of ridesharing. The expansion of the existing bus service has been discussed together with the City and County of Honolulu's (City) proposed light rail rapid transit system. Hawaii has a very high bus ridership, approximately 204,000 riders travel on TheBus each day.⁷ However, the major percentage of riders are captive and have no other choice than to use the bus service.⁸ In addition, most of the ridership is concentrated on few routes.⁹ At the price of \$15 for unlimited use for a month, TheBus' monthly bus pass is a bargain and does not cover its operational costs.¹⁰

However, if additional funding were available, the City's Department of Transportation Services (DTS) believes that only certain routes would be expanded.¹¹ Expanding the bus services would not guarantee that ridership would increase, and in many cases, there would be the same amount of riders spread over the additional buses.¹² In order to be effective and attract the most ridership, the bus service must be inexpensive and save time, while routes must be conveniently located with frequent time schedules.¹³ Since mass transit must also be cost efficient, some compromise is necessary and not all of these concerns can be met all the time. Since the majority of the ridership is captive, any expanded bus service must focus on those who ride the bus by choice. The DTS believes commuters must be enticed out of their cars before they will choose to ride the bus.¹⁴

Subsidized Bus Passes. The Department of Transportation (DOT) has discussed the possibility of subsidizing bus passes for state employees. Certain private employers have already implemented subsidized bus passes. At Straub Clinic and Hospital, 480 out of 1,960 employees currently buy the \$15 passes for \$10.¹⁵ Queen's Hospital also subsidizes the purchase of bus passes for 980 of its employees as part of the benefit package.¹⁶ With respect to state employees, however, the low rates for state parking virtually assures that those employees with parking will not give them up in order to qualify for free or subsidized bus passes.

Light Rail Rapid Transit System. The City has promoted a light rail rapid transit system (rail system) as a way to alleviate Oahu's traffic problem. The estimated \$1 billion rail system has been the subject of controversy for many years.¹⁷ The proposed rail system would travel approximately 15 miles from Waipahu to Moiliili, with branches to Waikiki, the University of Hawaii, and the airport.¹⁸ The City's existing bus system would be used to feed riders to the rail system.¹⁹ The City has recently submitted to federal transportation officials a draft environmental impact statement and alternatives analysis documents including, a "No-Build" alternative which implements a modest expansion in the bus system by the year 2005, but no major transportation programs; a "Transportation Systems Management" alternative which

implements transportation systems management (TSM) strategies along with an expanded bus system; and a rail system alternative.²⁰

However, recent studies by the United States Congress, United States Department of Transportation, and others have revealed unfavorable results on rail systems. These studies have found that ridership projections have been too high, construction and operating cost estimates have been too low, and that some form of conventional bus system might have been a better choice.²¹ Rail systems in New York, Pennsylvania, and California have actually caused declines in public transit ridership as transit riders return to their cars.²²

Additional studies state findings that implementing a rail system together with expanded bus services would significantly increase the amount the public must pay to subsidize those services, but would not reduce the existing traffic congestion.²³ At least one study has favored a fixed rail system due to the geographic configuration of Oahu as "a linear city with almost all of its employment centers, government offices, commercial areas, educational and religious institutions, cultural and entertainment activities and most housing in a narrow 20 mile corridor between Pearl Harbor and Hawaii Kai."²⁴ Although the studies are split on the ideal mass transit alternative for Oahu, they confirm the prevailing view that Hawaii must think very carefully and be completely convinced of the success of any rail rapid transit system before undertaking such a major capital expenditure. Further, even if a consensus existed today on the need for and a willingness to build a particular rail system, that system would not be operational for some years to come.

Private Commuter Bus Services. Transhawaiian Services (Transhawaiian), a private tour bus operator, began commuter services in March 1988.²⁵ Transhawaiian offered commuters guaranteed seats in comfortable, air conditioned motor coaches to downtown Honolulu from Kaneohe and Mililani. The Kaneohe route did not attract many riders, due in part to the absence of HOV lanes to and from the Windward district which would allow transit riders to shorten their commute times versus single occupant vehicles, and was discontinued in April 1988.²⁶ The Mililani service is still operational, but has been reduced to one motor coach per day.²⁷ Approximately 30 commuters staunchly support the service which has the capacity to transport 50 or more people.²⁸

In addition, Transhawaiian is offering a shuttle service to Makaha teachers which begins at Lanakila Elementary School and ends at Makaha Elementary School.²⁹ The one month trial is to ascertain whether the service will help to keep teachers from transferring from Makaha to schools that are closer to their homes.³⁰ Other private transportation operators are offering subscription bus services to private schools in the downtown area such as Iolani, Mid-Pacific, Punahou, and Maryknoll from both Mililani and Hawaii Kai.³¹

Commuters who have taken advantage of the private commuter bus services have generally favorable comments on the service.³² Common complaints of public transit riders are eliminated since riders are guaranteed seats and the buses are comfortable, air conditioned

motor coaches used for tour operations.³³ Of course the cost of the private bus service is substantially more than that of public mass transit. A City bus pass currently sells for \$15 for unlimited use for a month. Current rates for the Transhawaiian commute from Mililani and Waipio to downtown and Waikiki is \$65 per month.³⁴ Rideshare proponents stress that the cost, though more than public transit, is still much less than the cost of single occupant vehicle commuting.

State Ferry Project. In view of the limited amount of land in Hawaii, future construction of additional roadways appears limited as well. Thus, the State has been looking into alternate ways to support the growing number of commuters. Ferry service is not a new idea for Hawaii, but the State is planning to establish a commuter ferry service. The State is touting the ferry service as a cost-effective method in which to help alleviate the traffic congestion.

The State has contracted with San Diego Shipbuilding and Repair, Inc. to build and operate a fleet of ferries at no cost to the State and provide the State \$7,200 over the first 8 years.³⁵ In return, the State will provide the dock facilities and allow the company to operate an interisland route during off peak hours.³⁶ The dock landing will cost the State approximately \$1 million, which the DOT views as a bargain compared to the estimated \$100 million need to widen Kalanianaʻole Highway.³⁷ Beginning in 1990, the proposed route will link Barbers Point and downtown in an estimated 27 minutes.³⁸ The fare would be kept to \$2.50 each way.³⁹

The DOT had also planned to link Hawaii Kai and downtown, but it has had difficulty in obtaining approval for this proposed route. The Honolulu City Council has rejected the Hawaii Kai proposal as a result of concern that the dock construction and ferry service would have a negative impact on the bay environment.⁴⁰ Along with the concerns on the environmental impact of the ferry service, many are skeptical about the success of the operations. Opponents of the service say that most commuters would take TheBus before using the ferry service.⁴¹ Notwithstanding the critics, the State appears determined to continue with the proposed ferry service.

Carpools and Vanpools. Carpooling is one of the most familiar method of ridesharing. Individuals in a group take turns driving to and from work while sharing in the gas and parking expenses. The group can be linked by origin, people in the same neighborhood, or by destination, people working for the same employer. Hawaii has a high percentage of carpools, comprised primarily of family members.⁴² A major reason for this phenomenon is the high cost of living in Hawaii which often necessitates that both spouses work.⁴³ As the cost of housing continues to increase and people are forced to live further and further from their work places, the distance of their daily commutes will increase as well.

Copies of the DOT's computer carpool matching program have been distributed to the Hawaii Kai and Mililani paratransit programs, the University of Hawaii, and the counties of Maui

and Kauai.⁴⁴ A major component of a rideshare program is an extensive database of all the potential ridesharers. The software program is being used to maintain the rideshare databases of the Hawaii Kai and Mililani paratransit programs.

Hawaiian Electric (HECO) allows employees at its Ward Avenue operations center to use company vehicles to drive to and from work, provided that they do so in groups of three or more people.⁴⁵ HECO charges the groups according to their length of commute, the average charge is around \$120 per month, including gas and parking at its Ward Avenue facility.⁴⁶ Although HECO has about 20 cars available for employee use, only 10 are used regularly.⁴⁷

Vanpools are much harder to operate efficiently since it is much harder to find the requisite amount of riders needed to fill a vanpool than a carpool. Vanpools were actively promoted in Hawaii during the energy crisis, but not many have continued operations since the 1970's. Research indicates that owner operated, company based, and third party vanpools have experienced success, but require subsidies and commitments from employers.⁴⁸

Metro's Vanpool program in Seattle has been extremely successful and is the largest publicly owned and operated vanpool program in the nation.⁴⁹ Currently Metro's riders pay for all capital costs, all operating costs, and about 45 percent of the direct administrative costs of the program.⁵⁰ The average commute for vanpool riders is approximately 59 miles each day.⁵¹ In addition, Seattle has many large employers who can support vanpool services. Unfortunately, the commute distances in Hawaii are relatively short and there are relatively fewer large employers who could support vanpool services. These factors can limit the success of a vanpool program in Hawaii.

Park and Ride Facilities. Currently, there are many park and ride facilities (park and ride) all over the United States. The basic purpose behind the park and ride concept is to provide a central and convenient location for commuters to park and shift to carpools, vanpools, and public and private mass transit. Hawaii's first park and ride was established in Hawaii Kai. During the year, approximately 80 or more cars use the Hawaii Kai park and ride which has a capacity of 139 stalls, while during summer, the number decreases to approximately 60 cars.⁵² Additional park and rides are planned in Mililani and Wahiawa and the DOT suggests the coordination with the City to develop a network of park and rides.⁵³

Variable Work and School Hour Schedules. The concept of variable or staggered hours for both work and school schedules has surfaced frequently in the recent years. The fact that many people begin work and school during a limited time period has been cited as the reason for morning and afternoon traffic peaks. Various studies have been conducted to determine whether staggered hours would make a measurable effect on traffic congestion.

In 1981, the study done by Alan M. Voorhees & Associates, entitled Honolulu Work and School Hour Change Study, to determine the feasibility of implementing alternative work and

school hours in Honolulu.⁵⁴ However, the Voorhees study also concluded that simple implementation of a staggered work hours program would not make any significant effect on traffic congestion.⁵⁵ Thus, the study recommended that a special bureau be established along with the program for administration purposes which also would be responsible for other related programs including ridesharing, transit marketing to employers, and parking management coordination.⁵⁶

In 1985, the Legislative Reference Bureau (Bureau) conducted a study entitled "The Flexible Working Hours Program For State Employees". This study appeared to focus more on staggered hours as a means of improving productivity and enhancing the morale of state employees. The Bureau found that "although flexible work hour programs can improve the quality of work life, the ability of such work programs to reduce traffic peaking and congestion in the State, specifically on Oahu, is very limited".⁵⁷ The Bureau further found that flexible work hour programs "must be implemented in conjunction with other transportation systems management alternative, e.g. school hour change, high occupancy vehicle lane construction, ride-sharing, public transit marketing, etc., in order to significantly reduce traffic congestion".⁵⁸

Unlike the other studies, the Lieutenant Governor's Staggered Work Hours Demonstration Project in Honolulu actually implemented a mandatory staggered work hours project, reported the project's impact on traffic conditions and employee commute time, and examined employee experiences and attitudes regarding the project. During a four-week period, the official hours for state and city and county employees were shifted from 7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. - 5:15 p.m.⁵⁹

An estimated 6 percent of the downtown work force participated in the project.⁶⁰ The project concluded that staggered work hours can have a beneficial effect on traffic congestion, but the effect is small and generally does not outweigh the costs incurred with a mandatory program.⁶¹ In addition, the project stated that staggered work hours is only one of many of the TSM strategies and the most effective way to reduce traffic congestion to use various strategies in concert with each other.⁶²

Rideshare Coordinators. In the past, developers were not overly concerned about the effect of development on existing roadways. Now developers are taking more responsibility for alleviating traffic problems caused by new developments. Currently, Mililani Paratransit Services in Mililani and SMART (Save Money and Ride Together) in Hawaii Kai have been established to promote ridesharing.

As part of the conditions to development, Bedford Properties, formerly known as Kaiser Development, has established SMART as a community service for residents in Hawaii Kai. SMART's transportation manager provides transportation alternative information, maintains a computer data base for carpool matching, organizes private bus services for work and school,

and provides other rideshare services.⁶³ In addition, Bedford provided a site and contributed to the construction cost for Hawaii's first park and ride facility.⁶⁴

Currently, SMART has approximately 230 names of commuters in its computer data base which is used to provide carpool matches.⁶⁵ An executive bus service was established for riders to be picked up at one central location (Hawaii Kai Park and Ride) and dropped off at their destinations.⁶⁶ Although mass mailing and heavy advertisements were used, there was little response and the program was discontinued after a few months.⁶⁷ SMART has been more successful with its private school bus program in which students are picked up at the park and ride and dropped off at their respective schools.⁶⁸ SMART handles all of the administrative work on the rideshare programs, including billing, complaints, and contracts with individual bus companies.⁶⁹

In Mililani the Mililani Paratransit Services (Mililani) offers computer matching services, personalized transportation assistance, a resource center for transportation information, and other rideshare services.⁷⁰ Mililani's transportation coordinator also writes a commuter news column in a community paper which informs residents on rideshare services and programs.⁷¹ Mililani has worked diligently to promote the Transhawaiian commuter express which takes Central Oahu residents to downtown and back.⁷² In addition, Mililani has worked with the City to redo TheBus' routes to better serve Mililani residents. Mililani has established a successful private school bus service in which private contractors bus students to school.⁷³ Unlike SMART, Mililani does not do any administrative work and operates primarily as an intermediary for commuters and private contractors.⁷⁴

Transportation Management Associations. Transportation management associations or organizations (TMA's) are arrangements between the public and private sector to coordinate the implementation of transportation programs.⁷⁵ The goal of TMA's is to reduce traffic congestion by the promotion of TSM strategies.⁷⁶ The TMA concept has gained popularity in Los Angeles where the major part of the residents commute long distances to work daily.⁷⁷ At the present, eight major developers have met to discuss implementation of a TMA for Central and Leeward Oahu, but no formal organization has been established.⁷⁸ Mililani Paratransit Services which provides rideshare services to the surrounding area, is using its experience to help establish the Central and Leeward Oahu TMA.⁷⁹ In fact, the TMA concept has been likened to "a broadened Mililani Paratransit" or a collection of paratransit coordinators.⁸⁰

Transportation Systems Management Alternatives Implemented by Other States

Various states have implemented TSM strategies which promote ridesharing in response to the growing problem of traffic congestion.

Arizona. The Arizona legislature has enacted legislation to meet federal Clean Air Act standards which reduces single occupancy vehicle commuting.⁸¹ Approximately 200 of the major employers with 500 or more employees at one work site will be required to develop carpool plans by September 30, 1989.⁸² Ultimately, all employers with 100 full time employees at one work site will be required to develop carpool plans.⁸³ Fines of \$100 to \$200 per day will be imposed on employers who do not develop a plan by the deadline.⁸⁴

California. In 1984, Pleasanton, California passed a measure which gave developers and major employers four years to cut the number of peak hour, single occupant vehicle trips to and from their facilities by 45 percent from the number it would be if everyone drove alone.⁸⁵ The measure has been successful, as some businesses achieved reductions of 30 percent by 1986.⁸⁶

Due to its long running battle with smog, California has been foremost in corporate rideshare requirements. In 1987, local officials in Los Angeles passed a regulation which required all companies with 100 or more employees to promote employee rideshare programs.⁸⁷ The business supported regulation is expected to affect approximately 8,000 companies employing 1.5 million or 40 percent of the Los Angeles area work force.⁸⁸

In 1988, California established the Office of Traffic Improvement (OTI) to work with all state agencies to develop plans which would reduce the number of trips made by state employees during peak commute times by 10 percent.⁸⁹ Ultimately, the OTI intends state employees to commute with at least two persons per vehicle in the urban areas.⁹⁰ In addition the OTI will work with major employers to increase participation in ridesharing and traffic reduction programs.⁹¹

Washington. Seattle's METRO has implemented a Guaranteed Ride Home Program to encourage single occupant vehicle commuters to use alternative modes of travel by providing a low cost backup ride home and eliminate the fear of being stranded without a vehicle.⁹² Employees in specific work areas who commuted by carpool, vanpool, or mass transit would be provided with vouchers which would be used for reimbursement of taxi fares for limited travel.⁹³ Thus, participants who needed to travel outside of their regular commutes would be able to use the vouchers for emergency situations.⁹⁴

In 1984, Metro implemented an innovative telephone hot line called the HERO Program which accepts reports on improper use of the HOV lanes.⁹⁵ The program was established to educate and deter the public from using the HOV lanes improperly and to provide the public a way to participate in the enforcement of the HOV lanes.⁹⁶ Metro works cooperatively on the program with the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Washington State Patrol.⁹⁷ After calls are made to the hot line to report HOV violators, the owner of the vehicle is identified, the violation report is processed, and the owner is contacted.⁹⁸ An average of 610 calls per month report an average of 950 individual HOV violators.⁹⁹ Data indicate that

just over 5 percent of the violators are reported a second time and less than 1 percent are reported three or more times.¹⁰⁰

The time has passed for easily available federal funding for highway construction. Even if the funds were obtainable, there is a limit to the amount of new roads that can be built. Development has spread rapidly to outlying suburban areas. As urban growth continues, more and more cities and states will be forced to implement innovative policies and programs to alleviate traffic congestion.

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Chapter 5

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The State Rideshare Program

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is close to completion of its Rideshare Report which states its position on ridesharing and enumerates its strategies, objectives, tasks, and recommendations. The two major objectives of the state rideshare program are to:

- (1) Take a leadership role in planning, developing, coordinating, and implementing policies and programs to more efficiently manage the transportation demand on Hawaii's highways during peak commuting periods; and
- (2) Encourage and assist government agencies, neighborhood and community groups, private employers, schools, and other organizations to establish carpool programs, and to adopt other transportation systems management (TSM) strategies.

The TSM concept uses low cost, short range transportation strategies to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of existing transportation facilities. The DOT has implemented various TSM strategies and continues to work towards a statewide rideshare program. Although the DOT has the primary responsibility in promoting the State's rideshare program, all state agencies must actively participate and support the program. In fact, many agencies have the ability to play important roles in promoting the rideshare program.

As the largest employer in the Downtown area, the State must take a leading role in the promotion of ridesharing. However, in the past years, the State appears to have done little in the way of actively promoting ridesharing. Various policies or programs have been implemented, but on a piecemeal basis without much implementation or enforcement. In fact, some existing state policies have been viewed as conflicting or inhibiting to the promotion of ridesharing, including low parking rates for state employees, the construction of new parking facilities to accommodate state employees, the absence of tax incentives or subsidies to encourage rideshare programs, and the lack of coordination with any of the policies implemented.

The DOT recognizes that there is no one solution to Oahu's growing traffic problem. In its Draft Rideshare Report, the DOT stresses that the State must take the lead in promoting ridesharing and the importance of offering various alternatives to commuting alone.

State Agencies Which May be Able to Promote Ridesharing

The Automotive Division of the Department of Accounting and General Services is responsible for parking control and maintenance of the state motor pool. The Automotive Division has the ability to have a major impact on a statewide rideshare program due to its authority over the parking on state lands.

State employees who form carpools of three or more permanent employees automatically get their first choice of parking location. In locations where parking is at a premium, the Automotive Division will make the necessary accommodations to ensure carpools get priority parking. Currently, the Automotive Division has plans to change the carpool requirement from three to two permanent employees in order to encourage carpooling.

A feeling of resentment has been perceived among members of the public concerning parking rates for state employees which have been much lower than rates at private parking facilities in the Downtown area. The Automotive Division has conducted research into the possibility of adjusting state parking rates. Public hearings will be held to discuss the proposed new rates.

It is unlikely that a major increase in the state employee parking rates will bring about a measurable decrease in the number of employees who drive to work. Many people pay substantial rates to obtain parking in the private sector and the high rates have not deterred them from driving. Unless state employees are more cost conscious than private sector employees, the higher rates alone will not keep many from driving. Furthermore, a substantial increase in parking rates is likely to be aggressively opposed by state employees and their unions. In order to effectively deter people from driving, any change in the parking rates must be accompanied by the offering of various alternatives which can be used by employees to commute to work. Alternatives include providing employees with subsidized bus passes or allowing employees to use state vehicles for carpools or vanpools.

The Automotive Division also handles the need for additional parking. Plans are being developed to accommodate the parking demand necessitated by the closure of the State Capitol for asbestos removal and renovation. The Automotive Division believes that raising parking rates or limiting parking will not help the traffic problem unless there are other alternatives available to employees, many of whom, particularly during the time the Legislature is in session, will be required to work extended and irregular hours.

The Automotive Division's motor pool provides state agencies with daily and monthly assignments of state owned vehicles when employees need vehicles to perform official duties. State employees may obtain authorization to take vehicles home daily under certain conditions, but personal use is restricted to direct travel between employees' homes and work.

Many believe that the Department of Taxation (DOTAX) should establish tax incentives for employers and employees to promote and participate in rideshare programs. Currently, section 235-110.7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, provides the only tax incentive for ridesharing and allows employers to purchase vans for employees for vanpool purposes. The DOTAX has been adverse to using the state tax law to encourage social concerns, especially in limited situations such as ridesharing in the Downtown area. In addition, to effectively modify taxpayers' behavior, tax incentives must be substantial and would be a costly alternative for the State.

The Legislature has recently enacted legislation to mitigate Oahu's growing traffic problem. During the 1989 regular session, legislation was passed to lower the HOV minimum vehicle occupancy requirement from three to two people, allow the DOT to explore low cost transportation alternatives by emphasizing TSM programs, exempt from liability substantially all actions taken by entities to promote ridesharing other than actually providing vehicles for ridesharing, and study the State's progress in promoting ridesharing.

Alternatives To Single Occupant Vehicle Commuting

Ridesharing is not a new concept. For years people have been constantly reminded of the advantages of carpools, vanpools, and public and private mass transit. However, the majority of commuters still continue to travel to and from work alone. In 1987, Arthur Young prepared a report entitled Promoting & Implementing Paratransit on Oahu, which indicated that the most important solution to the traffic problem was changing people's commuting attitudes. The Arthur Young report recommended a two-part plan which would implement a coordinated, ongoing promotional campaign to raise the public's awareness of what can be done to alleviate the traffic problem and then more direct efforts would be targeted for selected segments which could sponsor rideshare programs.

Along with educating the public on what people can do to alleviate traffic congestion, rideshare alternatives must be made available to help encourage people to rideshare. One of the more traditional ways to rideshare is by using public mass transit. The expansion of the existing bus services has been discussed as an alternative to the City and County of Honolulu's (City) proposed light rail rapid transit system (rail system). Because Hawaii's ridership is concentrated in various routes, the City's Department of Transportation Services (DTS) believes that only certain routes should be expanded. However, in order to attract riders, the bus service must be inexpensive, timely, and conveniently located.

The DTS believes that in order for people to choose to ride the bus, they must be first enticed out of their cars. One method which has been implemented by Straub Clinic and Queen's Hospital is subsidized bus passes. However, state employees will be hard pressed to give up their parking even for fully subsidized bus passes unless parking rates are increased substantially.

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The City's proposed rail system has been promoted as a significant way to alleviate Oahu's traffic problem. The proposed route would travel from Waipahu to Moiliili, with branches to Waikiki, the University of Hawaii, and the airport. The City's existing bus service would feed riders to the rail system. Any rail system, however, is a massive undertaking which, even under the best of circumstances, would not be available in Hawaii's immediate future. Evaluation of any proposed rail system is beyond the scope of this study.

Private commuter bus services offer riders guaranteed seats in comfortable, air conditioned motor coaches. Transhawaiian Services offers commuter services for Mililani. Other private transportation operators offer commuter services for private school students in the Downtown area. Although the cost of private bus service is substantially higher than public mass transit, rideshare proponents stress that the cost is still much less than that of single occupant vehicle commuting.

In light of the limited amount of land in Hawaii, the State is planning to establish a commuter ferry service. Beginning in 1990, the proposed ferry route will link Barbers Point and the Downtown area. The DOT has planned similar service for Hawaii Kai, but has run into resistance from Hawaii Kai residents. Many who oppose the ferry service are concerned about the negative impact it may have on the environment and are skeptical about the success of its operations. In any case, the State is planning to go ahead with the proposed ferry service.

Carpooling is another traditional method of ridesharing. Hawaii has a high percentage of carpools, comprised primarily of family members. The DOT has developed and distributed copies of its computer carpool matching program to various rideshare coordinators and counties. Employers can promote ridesharing by allowing employees to use company vehicles to commute to and from work provided they form carpools.

Vanpools are harder to operate efficiently due to the difficulty in finding the required amount of riders. Recent research has indicated that owner operated, company based, and third party vanpools have experienced success, but require subsidies and commitments from employers. Unfortunately, the commute distances in Hawaii are much shorter than that of other states and there are few large employers which could support vanpool services.

Park and ride facilities, popular throughout the United States, provide commuters with a central and convenient place to park and shift to carpools, vanpools, and public and private mass transit. The DOT has recommended that it should coordinate with the City to develop a network of park and rides.

Variable work and school hour schedules have been frequently discussed in the recent years. Various studies have been conducted to determine whether variable hours would be successful in alleviating traffic. The studies indicate that although variable hours can make a

positive impact on traffic congestion, a variable hours program should be implemented with other rideshare strategies to significantly reduce traffic.

As part of the conditions to development, developers, at least in certain instances, have been required to contribute to the alleviation of the increased traffic caused by the new developments. Currently, Hawaii has two community rideshare programs, Hawaii Kai's SMART and Mililani Paratransit Services. Both programs have transportation coordinators who work hard to promote and provide rideshare services, including carpools, public transit, and private transit.

A natural progression from the community rideshare programs are transportation management associations (TMA). The goal behind the TMA concept is to reduce traffic congestion by the promotion of TSM strategies. Currently, a TMA is being planned for Central and Leeward Oahu.

Different states have implemented various TSM strategies in response to the growing nationwide traffic problem. Arizona has required major employers to develop carpool plans for their employees. California has implemented similar measures, and established the Office of Traffic Improvement to work with all state agencies to reduce the number of peak hour trips made by state employees. Washington's Metro has implemented two innovative ideas to encourage ridesharing. The Guaranteed Ride Home Program provides commuters who rideshare (carpool, vanpool, or use public or private mass transit) a low cost backup ride home to eliminate the fear of being stranded without a vehicle. The HERO program provides motorists with a telephone hot line in which to report improper use of the HOV lanes.

Recommendations

Traffic congestion on Oahu continues to worsen. Steps should be taken to alleviate or at least minimize the rate at which the problem is escalating. The Department of Transportation has recognized that the State must take the lead and set an example for both the public and private sectors.

It is therefore recommended that the Department of Transportation:

- (1) Continue to follow through on its plans to establish a coordinated and comprehensive statewide rideshare program. As part of this program, it is recommended that the Department implement certain recommendations endorsed by the 1987 Arthur Young report for the Department entitled Promoting & Implementing Paratransit on Oahu, including:

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- (a) Working to change the public attitudes toward commuting by establishing a coordinated, ongoing promotional campaign geared toward commuters, employers, schools, and developers.
 - (b) Offering and encouraging various alternatives to commuting alone, including carpools, vanpools, public and private transit, and bicycling. Additional alternatives include programs which offer subsidized bus passes and a coordinated staggered work hours schedules.
 - (c) Designating rideshare coordinators in each state agency or location for total coordination and support of the statewide rideshare program. In addition, conduct promotional activities to alert employees of various alternatives and programs offered.
- (2) Establish a program in which the DOT rideshare staff contacts private sector employers of a given size in order to promote rideshare services and help employers establish rideshare programs.
 - (3) Provide for the strict enforcement of HOV lanes. If a method in which violators can be pulled over and cited is not viable, then implement another program in which violators can be deterred. Seattle's Metro has implemented an innovative program in which people call a hot line to report HOV violators. Under such a program, the DOT would work with the Honolulu Police Department to identify the owner of the vehicle, process the violation report, and contact the owner regarding the violation.
 - (4) Develop a plan in conjunction with the Hawaii Housing Authority and the Housing Finance and Development Corporation to establish in the State's own housing developments some of the programs being established by private housing developers, such as hiring rideshare coordinators who promote ridesharing and offer various rideshare services to residents of those development projects.

The Department of Transportation, or the Department of Accounting and General Services, or both, should:

- (1) Offer various alternatives which can be used by employees to commute to work other than by private vehicle. Alternatives include providing employees with subsidized bus passes or allowing employees to use state vehicles for carpools or vanpools. To the extent the State wishes to defray the cost of subsidizing bus passes, parking rates in state facilities could be raised to shift the burden of the subsidy from the general public to state employees who commute to work in single occupant vehicles.

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- (2) Widely publicize the Automotive Division's policy of priority parking for carpools and the reduction of carpool member requirements from three to two permanent employees (when the change has been implemented). This could be accomplished in part through the designation of rideshare coordinators.
- (3) Expand the availability of vehicles from the motor pool for employee use. Currently, employees are allowed to take state owned vehicles home daily under certain conditions. A logical extension of this policy would be to establish a system which allows employees to use state owned vehicles to commute to and from work as long as they form carpools, as implemented by Hawaiian Electric. The motor pool could charge employees according to the length of commute. The liability factor must be taken into consideration. It may be possible for employers to circumvent some liability by compensating employees for using their own vehicles for rideshare purposes, but even then it is unclear whether the State as employer would be exempt from all liability.
- (4) Reduce the amount of construction of new parking facilities. Offer employees needing parking carpool matching services and restrict a certain amount of parking for carpool or vanpool parking as recommended by the Arthur Young report. This recommendation would work in conjunction with the previous recommendation.
- (5) While the lack of specific tax incentives to encourage ridesharing might be seen as a state policy which conflicts with the State's goal of promoting ridesharing, the use of the tax system to promote specific social goals is contrary to good tax policy. A more appropriate alternative to tax incentives would be direct grants or subsidies to employers who establish and operate rideshare programs. See recommendation (2) for the Legislature.

It is recommended further that the Legislature:

- (1) Provide private commuter bus operators furnishing services to select communities with subsidies for a specific length of time as recommended by the Arthur Young report. It is difficult for people to give up their parking privileges without a guarantee that the commuter bus services will continue. Thus, by subsidizing private commuter bus operators who provide services to select communities, the State encourages people to use the services and not commute alone.
- (2) Appropriate funds for direct grants or subsidies to employers who establish and operate ridesharing programs for their employees. The funds would be administered by the DOT's rideshare program which would establish criteria and monitor the programs.

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- (3) Require large private sector employers to implement rideshare programs which set specific goals, for example to reduce single commuters by a specified percentage.

HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING A STUDY ON RIDESHARING.

WHEREAS, traffic congestion continues to be an exasperating problem on Oahu; and

WHEREAS, with the decision over an appropriate mass transit system for the island still pending and the continuation of new developments, especially in the leeward and central districts, there appears to be no immediate relief for residents who must commute daily to work; and

WHEREAS, Act 90, Session Laws of Hawaii, 1986, was enacted by the Legislature declaring that it is the policy of this State to encourage ridesharing as an alternative to commuting by single occupant vehicles; and

WHEREAS, more than two years have elapsed since the enactment of Act 90 and there appears to be little progress in the use of ridesharing; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature is especially concerned that despite the policy statement in Act 90, some state policies conflict with the stated ridesharing policy or inhibit participation; and

WHEREAS, some examples of conflicting or inhibiting state policies are:

- (1) The provision of parking spaces to state employees at very low rates or at no charge;
- (2) Plans for additional parking facilities to accommodate increasing state employee needs;
- (3) The unstructured flextime and staggered work hours policy which leaves participation to the discretion of agency administrators and lacks incentives for those administrators to commit to participation; and
- (4) The system of assigning parking spaces which does not provide incentives to car pooling;

and

WHEREAS, if ridesharing is to be an effective means of mitigating traffic congestion, state government should be at the forefront with an effective ridesharing program for its employees, should actively promote ridesharing in the private sector, and should provide direct and comprehensive assistance to public and private employers to facilitate efforts in providing ridesharing alternatives to their employees; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Fifteenth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 1989, that the Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to conduct a study on the progress of the state government in promoting ridesharing in both the public and private sectors, and of the private sector in offering ridesharing alternatives to employees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include, but not be limited to:

- (1) Examination of the progress of the Department of Transportation in implementing the policy articulated in chapter 279G, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- (2) Identification of those state agencies, besides the Department of Transportation, which may perform functions relating to ridesharing;
- (3) Identification of those state policies and programs which are in conflict with the promotion of ridesharing; and
- (4) Identification of the factors hindering the increased use of ridesharing in both the public and private sectors to include an assessment of the liability of promoters of ridesharing programs;

and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations not later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 1990; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the recommendations include, but not be limited to:

- (1) Policy changes required to implement a comprehensive and effective ridesharing program to facilitate the

offering of ridesharing alternatives in both the public and private sectors, including the changing of existing policies which are in conflict with the ridesharing policy in chapter 279G, Hawaii Revised Statutes;

- (2) Implementing actions for the state agency or agencies involved in ridesharing functions to more aggressively perform those functions; and
- (3) Proposed legislation and funding required to effectively promote ridesharing in both the public and private sectors;

and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation and all other state agencies with ridesharing functions be requested to cooperate fully with the Legislative Reference Bureau in the conduct of this study; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau and the Director of Transportation.