
Potential Research Topic:

Encouraging sustainable travel behavior through employer-based commute incentives.

Research stream (suggestive): Sustainable mobility, active mobility, travel demand management, behavioral sciences

Research Brief:

Commuting by sustainable modes can bring both tangible and intangible benefits to both employees and employers. Through transportation demand management outreach to employees and encouraging alternative transportation modes such as walking, cycling and public transport, organizations can contribute to both the local and global environment.

City authorities have realized the benefits of sustainable commuting and substantially invested in building better networks and improving facilities for walking, cycling and public transport. Despite these developments, there exists no commuter benefit for employees. Incentivizing commuting options by employers will encourage more people to start using alternative options of commuting to work, stay active (in case of walking and cycling) in addition to promoting a clean environment and reducing the environmental impact of their commutes.

This research topic suggests developing a holistic toolkit for organizations (both private and public) to adopt and encourage sustainable travel behavior within their establishment through employer-based commute programs and incentives. The framework may be part of the company's overall green strategy and a large part of the program may center around making commuting by alternative transportation modes more convenient for the employees and providing commute benefits. The employer-based trip reduction program may also involve a broad set of incentives to increase their effectiveness.

The toolkit may include information including, but not limited to:

- Why consider offering a commute program
- What are the steps to consider when building an employee commute program
- What commuter benefits should be considered
- How to engage with employees around the program, including marketing and implementation
- What resources should be made available as one moves through this process

The toolkit may further detail out steps taken when designing a commute program such as:

1. Engaging with employees to understand their wants and needs with respect to transportation to and from work.
2. Identifying the level of resources the organization can make available for a commute program.
3. Considering the existing nearby resources that one can take advantage of.
4. Selecting a package of commute program elements that are in demand at the organization.
5. Launching a commute program and refining based on employee feedback and changing needs.
6. Ensuring communication between employees and implementing staff about the program.

The scope of research may include the market-based incentives such as vouchers, shops incentivizing its customers for adopting sustainable commute modes etc. The toolkit may also give insights on guidelines that public agencies (like BMTCL/ BMRCL) can adopt to increase sustainable travel behaviour. The toolkit may guide on commuter benefits to be considered based upon the potential impact of each commute program based on local transport and land use factors.

The toolkit may also detail out in great depth the various initiatives that organizations need to adopt such as offering a secure place for cycle storage and parking, providing on-site amenities for shower, change or store clothing, guaranteed ride home (due to bad weather, employee illness), other incentives etc. In addition, the communications strategy may detail out engagement with employees to market the commute program (such as organizing a Cycle-to-Work Day) and suggest methods of communication to ensure adequate promotion and understanding of the commute program across staff.