Establishing, Revising and Administering Local Trip Reduction Ordinances—An Overview

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Trip Reduction Ordinance (TRO) Definition
A regulation passed by local government which requires developers, property owners/managers or employers/work sites to participate in transportation management efforts.
Impetus for TRO Creation

• Pursuant to state growth management laws
• Comply with regional air quality management district programs
• Address traffic congestion at an urban, corridor or highly localized level
• Accommodate more business activity in the downtown

Examples of Common TRO Goals

• To reduce traffic and emissions
• To alleviate the need for new roads and parking
• To promote traffic safety and increase pedestrian access
• To maintain an area’s competitiveness as an employment center
• To foster coordinated transportation system management among local government, employers, and service providers
TRO Typical Contents

• Specifies TRO applicability, based on work site location, or work force size.
• Defines geographic boundaries within which work sites are subject to the TRO requirements.
• For employees who commute to and from a worksite subject to the TRO, specifies participation in one or more trip reduction activities.
• Identifies trip reduction programs or support services, some or all of which an employer must provide to employees.

TRO Typical Contents

• Specifies a managing entity and funding source for administration
• Defines time periods for which travel reduction activities are aimed (a.m. and/or p.m. peak periods).
• Specifies a performance measure, such as a reduction in vehicle trips (VTR), or vehicle miles traveled (VMT), or reduction in the mode share for single occupant vehicles (SOV) for a work site.
• Requires work site baseline conditions be measured and periodic follow-up for comparison purposes
TRO Typical Contents

• Establishes a performance target.
• Sets time frames for work site compliance.
• Must submit an annual report
• Establishes local government response to work site non-compliance with the TRO.

Examples of Localities with Employer-based TROs

• Seattle, WA
• Spokane, WA
• Oakland, CA
• Los Angeles, CA
• Montgomery County, MD
• Pima County, AZ
• Durham County, NC
Merits of an Ordinance Approach

- Has force of law to achieve goal
- Employer gains
  - More person trips → more vibrant commerce
  - Frees limited parking for visitors, shoppers, clients
  - Employee benefits
- Societal gains

Risks of an Ordinance Approach

- Mandatory requirements can create adversarial relationship between public and private sector
- Ill-crafted requirements can stymie private sector resourcefulness
- Unrealistic expectations of trip reduction activities can hurt morale and confidence of public/private sector
- Administration costs
What Results Can We Expect from a TRO?

- Success depends on current mode split, mix of programs, incentives and disincentives, employer support, availability of regional services
- Realistic average annual change on the order of 2 to 7 percent reduction in vehicle trips

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