

Sustainability Newsletter Week 53: Aug. 18-22, 2008.

Topic: Revamping Your Transportation Options



Aside from fuel-saving practices for your car, there are more options to save money and reduce environmental impacts, especially for work-related activities.

1. A (hu)man with a plan:

If you aren't sure you can commit to public transportation exclusively, start small with a goal of taking public transportation at least one day a week until you figure out the system. Obtain timetable and route-maps for your journey to know what to expect in advance (available in the Planning Dept., online, and at the Municipal Service Center). Many municipal public transport systems now have free online databases that will take your starting point and destination and calculate the fastest times and best route for your trip. The MTU's Interactive Riders Guide should be working and can be accessed through a tab at: <http://www.cityoflacrosse.org/index.asp?nid=19>. You can also plan to walk or bike to work. Check weather forecasts and expect it to take a little longer (usually).

2. Come fly with me:

Reduce the number of plane trips you take and try not to use a plane for any trips under about 620 miles. Plane trips are a lot more environmentally destructive than automobile trips.

3. Get on the bus:

La Crosse is currently prepared to purchase biodiesel for the MTU, school district, and WWTC if the price proves to be cost-effective. This will reduce the CO2 emissions generated, reduce dependence on imported oil, and biodiesel engines actually run cleaner and more efficient than regular diesel.

4. Try the bus or train for longer trips:

Buses, trains, light rail and ferries generally have dedicated travel paths that are quicker than sitting alone in your car. These other modes of transport often also cut down travel times.

5. Walk to school:

Most children live close enough to walk school, but few do. Instead of driving your children the few blocks, walk with them or allow them to take the school bus. Idling in the car waiting for the school bus also wastes gas and pollutes the air. Pretend it is Safe Routes to School week, every week!

6. Catch a taxi:

These are a form of public transport because you don't own them, and when you don't need the service they are made available for others to use. Look out for hybrid or pedi-cab taxis for an even greener option.

7. Telecommute:

Don't drive to the office, or fly to that conference, if you can arrange to complete your work/presentation electronically, or via video conferencing. Video conferencing can reduce 99% of the energy used for a trans-continental flight.

8. Buy fare-saver tickets:

Return, weekly/monthly, or off-peak bus/train tickets are often considerably cheaper than single ride tickets, which will encourage you to use the bus/train more often. MTU fares can be found at: <http://www.cityoflacrosse.org/index.asp?NID=155>. ***All non-represented City employees can ride the bus for free.*** Also, the first Monday of the month is free for all passengers.

9. Don't own a car:

If you are moving, plan to live near your work, or on a public transportation route, and also where you can get to all needed services without the use of an automobile. If you own more than one car, assess your current usage and determine if you really do need two or three. La Crosse is in talks to start a community car-sharing program, which would allow members to use a car for as little as an hour or a couple days, any time of the day and week. Check out what Madison is doing: www.communitycar.com .

10. Buy carbon offsets for your trips:

There are several new groups out there offering carbon offsets to cover a variety of your carbon concerns. Use sites such as TerraPass (<http://www.terrapass.com/>) to calculate your carbon footprint from different modes of travel, and then purchase offsets.



(Source: http://www.treehugger.com/files/2006/10/how_to_green_yo_1.php).

Announcements:

NATURAL STEP STUDY CIRCLES FOR FALL 2008

When/where will TNS Study Circles meet?

•**Paddy Circle (8 weeks):** Will be held Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 in the Community Room at the People's Food Co-op (second floor). The first meeting will be on Tuesday, September 16. Lynn Paddy is the sustainability coordinator for 12 Wal-Mart stores in the area.

•**Strohm Circle (4 weeks):** Will be held Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 in the Community Room at the People's Food Coop (second floor). The first meeting will be on Thursday, September 18. Barbara Strohm is a retired UW-La Crosse teacher.

In addition to the above dates, a joint introductory meeting for both circles will be held 6:30-8:00 p.m., Thursday, September 11, at First Supply, 106 Cameron Avenue.

Also, those signing up for a Fall Study Circle will receive an invitation (along with their significant other or friend) to attend the first annual **Local Harvest Dinner** at Myrick Park on Wednesday, Sept. 17, put on by by the Coulee Partners for Sustainability board members, in which all past and current TNS Study Circle participants (and their significant others or friends) will be invited. The cost is \$14 per person for a locally and organically grown meal prepared by Erin Varney, owner of One Sun Farm & Bakery.

Who can participate?

Anyone! Because of limited space, TNS Study Circles will be filled on a "first-come first-served" basis. Additional study circles will be offered again in early 2009. Participants will purchase the book, *The Natural Step for Communities* (about \$20) – copies may also be available for borrowing.

How do I enroll?

Please register by emailing Vicki Miller (vicki@vsm5.com). Be sure to indicate which study circle you are interested in joining.