

News Release Communiqué

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GOVERNMENT OF CANADA HELPS CALGARY WORKERS GO GREEN

CALGARY — The Government of Canada will partner with the City of Calgary, Calgary Economic Development and the Calgary Regional Partnership to support a new telework initiative, “WORKshift — Think Outside the Office,” the Honourable Rob Merrifield, Minister of State (Transport), announced today.

WORKshift will receive a contribution of up to \$800,000 under Transport Canada’s ecoMOBILITY program. The initiative will develop a plan that supports telework programs throughout the Greater Calgary area by raising public awareness of the benefits of teleworking, and providing businesses with specific guidance and support in planning, designing and implementing telework programs.

“Our government supports innovative ways to deliver results for the environment while stimulating the economy,” said Minister Merrifield. “Telework initiatives like this will benefit employees, businesses and all Calgarians by cutting commute times, increasing productivity and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

“WORKshift will change the way Calgarians work, where they work and how they work,” said Ms. Diane Colley-Urquhart, Deputy Mayor of Calgary. “By reducing traffic and infrastructure pressures, pollution levels and our overall environmental footprint, Calgarians and their employers will be able to improve their productivity and consequently their bottom line, while making more time to enjoy our city’s one-of-a-kind lifestyle.”

“WORKshift will give Calgary businesses the necessary tools, support, research and best practices to successfully design telework solutions for their organizations,” said Mr. Bruce Graham, president and chief executive officer of Calgary Economic Development. “Through the WORKshift initiative, we will continue to foster Calgary’s reputation of innovation, global competitiveness and sustainability.”

The ecoMOBILITY program works with provinces, municipalities and regional transportation authorities to help develop initiatives that encourage commuters to choose public transit or other alternatives to personal vehicles. Through the program, the federal government is taking action to find ways to meet transportation needs, reduce costs to Canadians and protect the environment.

A backgrounder with more information about ecoMOBILITY and WORKshift is attached.

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Backgrounder

TRANSPORT CANADA'S ecoMOBILITY PROGRAM AND WORKshift

ecoMOBILITY

The Government of Canada's \$10-million ecoMOBILITY program seeks to cut urban passenger transportation emissions by helping Canadians choose public transit or other sustainable transportation options like walking, cycling and carpooling. By working with municipalities and regional transportation authorities across Canada, this initiative helps develop programs, services and products that improve transportation choices and quality of life for Canadians in their communities.

While respecting provincial and territorial jurisdictions and planning priorities, the government is committed to finding ways to work together more effectively to improve transportation and mobility for Canadians in urban areas.

Funding is available to municipalities and regional transportation authorities as part of the contribution program. Examples of the measures that the ecoMOBILITY program encourages include:

- *policies* such as land use guidelines that complement increased use of sustainable transportation options (e.g. development approval policies that mandate access to transit services);
- *programs* to raise awareness and motivate changes in personal travel choices (e.g. workplace-based commuter options programs that engage staff and market new incentives to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips to and from work);
- *services* that offer individuals a tangible benefit related to the use of particular travel modes (e.g. guaranteed ride home programs for carpool members or reduced parking rates for carpool vehicles); and
- *products* that make sustainable transportation more convenient (e.g. enhanced transit information services or online ride matching systems for workplaces).

The ecoMOBILITY program complements ongoing efforts to address air emissions and congestion from all transportation sectors. It is an important element of the Government of Canada's ecoTRANSPORT Strategy, which aims to improve the health of Canadians and the environment by reducing the environmental impacts of transportation; secure Canada's future prosperity and competitiveness by making critical transportation infrastructure sustainable both economically and environmentally; and promote an efficient transportation system that supports choice and the high quality of life that Canadians expect.

For more information about the Government of Canada's environmental agenda and the ecoMOBILITY program, visit www.tc.gc.ca/ecomobility.

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WORKshift

The Calgary Regional Telework Initiative, known as “WORKshift,” will develop an integrated telework action plan that supports workforce mobility throughout the Greater Calgary area. WORKshift will develop a three-year plan to encourage businesses and commuters to adopt telework programs by raising public awareness of the benefits of teleworking, and providing businesses with guidance and support in planning, designing and implementing telework programs.

The plan is made up of six key components:

1. Awareness and Community Engagement — This component will address awareness and understanding of telework, targeting both employers and employees in the Greater Calgary area.
2. Competency Development — This aspect will design and deliver a series of telework skills programs for Calgary-based employees and managers.
3. Program Planning and Implementation — This component will provide local organizations with guidance and support in planning, designing and implementing telework programs.
4. Impact Assessment and Reporting — This element will establish measurement standards and tools for data capture, analysis and reporting.
5. Telework Distributed Work Centres — This component will partner with local real estate and technology providers to develop an integrated network of third workplaces.
6. Public Policy — This part of the plan supports measures to encourage the public sector and employers in the region to adopt teleworking.

There are many benefits to teleworking. For individuals, teleworking can enhance the quality of life by improving work-life balance and reducing travel costs associated with commuting. Businesses that offer employees the option to telework may increase their ability to recruit and retain employees, as well as reduce costs through a decreased need for commercial real estate and lower employee rates of absenteeism. Less strain on public infrastructure and less traffic congestion are advantageous to the community. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions from cars benefit the environment.

WORKshift will provide information that can easily be used in other communities across Canada. Calgary plans to share information about the plan and its results with other cities interested in implementing their own regional telework initiatives.

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