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Planners back Smart Commute Week

Smart Commute Week is about more than making the trip to work easier. Its point is to reduce air pollution, promote energy independence, improve public health, and save time and money.

So tune up your bike, find the bus schedule, call your carpool buddy and get ready to participate.

Smart Commute Week takes place from May 15-21. The national movement, also referred to as Green Commute Week, is held in conjunction with Bike-to-Work Week. The goal is to promote alternative ways of getting to work and around town.

Smart commuting includes carpools, vanpools, public transportation (where available), walking, biking, telecommuting and working a flexible schedule. Even if you have a short commute or don't commute at all, you can use these principles for many of your daily travels.

During Smart Commute Week, the Nashua Regional Planning Commission will offer activities for employers as well as the general public. The goal of these activities is to encourage people to try an alternative means of commuting at least once during the week and to inspire a long-term change in commuting behavior that lasts beyond the week.

NRPC has partnered with the Milford Recreation Department to hold a Smart Commute Week kick-off event on Saturday, May 15, from 3-6 p.m. at Kaley Park, 442 Nashua St., Milford, behind St. Joseph Hospital.

This event will be held in conjunction with the Milford Recreation Department's Grand Opening celebration for Kaley Park. NRPC will offer raffles, informational booths and materials to help plan. The park grand opening will also feature food, music, guided river walks, horse carriage rides and tethered hot air balloon rides. Admission is free and donations support the park.

Parking at Kaley Park will be very limited.

Satellite parking will be available at the Hampshire Dome, 34 Emerson Road, Milford, which is just over a mile away. Free bus service will be available from the Hampshire Dome to Kaley Park. The bus will depart the Hampshire Dome every half hour beginning at 2:45, and will depart Kaley Park every half hour beginning at 3. The last bus will leave Kaley Park at 6. As an incentive to utilize this service, all bus riders will be entered into a prize raffle.

In addition to the events at Kaley Park, the Nashua Regional Planning Commission and the Bike Walk Alliance of New Hampshire are sponsoring three guided bike rides through Milford and the surrounding communities on May 15. The rides will start and end at the

Hampshire Dome, 34 Emerson Road, Milford. The rides are a 5 mile, starting at 2; a 10 mile, starting at 2; and a 30 mile, starting at 1:30. Route maps and additional information are available at www.nashuarpc.org/smartcommute/events.html. If you are interested in participating, contact Jill Longval at jill@nashuarpc.org.

A second public event will be Friday, May 21, from 7-9 a.m. in front of Nashua City Hall, 229 Main St. This event will serve as the culmination of Smart Commute Week and participants are encouraged to arrive at the event en-route to work using Smart Commute methods. Activities will include free breakfast, raffles, informational booths and educational materials.

To learn more about Smart Commute Week, visit www.nashuarpc.org/smartcommute. There you will find information on planned activities, resources for commuters and employers, and useful links. You can also log any Smart Commute trips that you make between May 15 and 21 and be entered into a prize drawing.

Submitted by Jill Longval, public outreach coordinator for the Nashua Regional Planning Commission.

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