



Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC) Program

What is the program?

The Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Efficiency Act of 2006 authorizes local governments to designate employment and residential centers as Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers (GTECs) and to establish a transportation demand management program in the area (RCW 70.94.528). The program's purpose is to increase the state's transportation system efficiency in areas with high concentrations of jobs and housing, while supporting local goals and policies to direct growth and economic development into urban centers.

What are some of the GTEC program strategies?

GTECs plan for an array of strategies to meet their goals. As part of GTEC development, regional and local agencies are identifying associated changes to the built environment and transit services. Some of the strategies include:

- Capital investments in non-motorized and transit amenities identified in transportation management plans, local comprehensive plans, or the local CTR plan, such as:
 - Signage and travel information
 - Bicycle lanes
 - Sidewalk improvements
- Trip reduction incentives for commuters and/or residents, such as:
 - Incentives for ridesharing, using transit, telecommuting, biking, and walking
 - Transit passes
- Engaging and working with small employers to support:
 - Incentives
 - Employer training
 - Promotions and education
- Policy and funding initiatives:
 - Parking management
 - Multimodal concurrency
 - Investments in increased transit services designed to meet commuter needs

How does the program help reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)?

CTR is focused on commute trips, which are between 18 percent and 33 percent of all trips on the transportation system. The GTEC program – when compared to CTR program – expands the proportion of the travel market that is influenced by demand management strategies by:

- working with smaller employers than the CTR program
- working with residents
- addressing other trip purposes, such as trips to school

Each GTEC's drive-alone and VMT per capita reduction goals must be incorporated into local comprehensive plans. The VMT per capita reduction goals established by the GTECs are more aggressive than the CTR goals and support the new VMT per capita reduction goals in statute.

The long-term focus of the GTEC program is to build private and public sector partnerships that integrate land use and transportation decision-making. The GTEC planning process brings together the private sector, transit agencies, local governments and others to implement a common vision of commercial and residential development tied to transportation goals. As growing communities implement successful demand management and transportation-efficient land use policies, there will be improved access to jobs, less demand for new parking, more room for commercial and residential development, and less greenhouse gas emissions.

What's happening now?

In 2007, 14 cities from the central Puget Sound, Vancouver and Spokane urban areas volunteered to develop GTEC plans and applied for funding from the Governor's Commute Trip Reduction Board. The board selected seven GTECs, using the \$2.4 million one-time funding provided by the legislature in the 2007-2009 transportation budget. Three additional cities are implementing their plans without state funding support.

Currently, the state's designated GTECs are:

- Downtown Seattle
- Downtown Bellevue
- Redmond/Overlake
- Downtown Tacoma
- Kirkland/Totem Lake (not funded)
- Tukwila (not funded)
- Puyallup South Hill (not funded)
- Downtown Olympia/Capitol campus
- Downtown Vancouver
- Downtown Spokane

Each of the GTECs have voluntarily set goals to reduce drive-alone trips and VMT per capita and have identified transportation and land use strategies to meet the goals. These GTECs are presently implementing their plans by establishing baseline measurements, reaching out to target populations, and developing new services and policies. Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is supporting the ten GTECs with measurement support and technical assistance.

WSDOT estimates that if these ten GTECs were to meet their 2011 goals, about 14,000 drive-alone commute trips to key employment destinations would be reduced. Commute VMT per employee in the GTECs would be reduced by an estimated 13 percent from 2007 levels. In 2009 and 2011 WSDOT will measure the progress of the GTECs toward their goals.

What can we be doing with existing resources to enhance the program's ability to reduce VMT?

Current funding supports implementation of GTECs through June 30, 2009.

What could we (or should we) be doing with additional resources? (i.e. where are the opportunities for growth/enhancement?)

The GTEC program is still in its start-up phase and there will be many lessons learned during implementation. Additional resources are needed to provide technical support, data collection and marketing to support GTEC programs, as well as state and regional leadership in land use policies, such as parking management and multimodal concurrency.

The legislature has directed WSDOT to provide a report by 2009 on the initial program and recommendations on future funding levels. WSDOT's preliminary recommendation would fund a total of 18 GTECs (8 new GTECs with funding for these plus the original 10 GTECs) with

50 percent local match for a projected reduction of 14,000 drive-alone trips (above and beyond the CTR program) by 2011.

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