



Park and Ride Program

What is the program?

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is currently developing a formal park and ride program. Limited capacity at park and ride lots is constraining the efficiency of the transportation system. A state role is critical in developing financial partnerships to expand capacity and maintain a safe and reliable park and ride system.

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

The park and ride system is a crucial piece of infrastructure in providing transportation choices. Park and ride lots provide the location where commuters transfer from single occupancy vehicles to carpools, vanpools and transit, thus each parked vehicle represents some amount of reduced vehicle miles traveled. Overcrowded lots indicate there is unmet demand. At occupancy levels above 70 percent, the risk of not finding a parking space becomes an issue for potential users and discourages expanded use of ridesharing and transit.

The most crowded lots are located along the most congested corridors including I-5, I-405, State Route 520, and I-90. Many of the park and rides are full throughout Puget Sound, Clark County, and Spokane.

Park and ride demand and the development of new park and ride capacity are critical to implementation of transportation demand strategies and vital for increasing transit market share. Efforts to promote transit and ridesharing are hampered by insufficient capacity at many commuter park and ride facilities.

What is happening now (current status/activities)?

There is no dedicated state funding for park and rides. Park and ride lots in Washington are built, owned, and operated by transit and governmental agencies. Washington's park and ride network has developed incrementally based on partnership opportunities, funding availability, and need. By the end of 2000, there were roughly 350 park and ride lots in Washington offering more than 45,000 parking spaces.

WSDOT is developing a comprehensive statewide park and ride program to plan, coordinate, develop, and implement partnerships for park and ride facilities. WSDOT intends to update the statewide park and ride inventory, establish an investment policy, and develop a needs assessment for the park and ride system by December, 2008.

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

The Regional Mobility Grant program has contributed funding for the park and ride program in the past. The Regional Mobility Grant program could amend the funding criteria to prioritize VMT reduction.

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

WSDOT is developing short-term strategies for improving the park and ride system, such as leasing lots (from churches, grocery stores, and other parking suppliers), adding safety and security amenities to boost utilization of unpopular lots, and providing enhanced traveler information so that commuters know before they arrive at a lot whether there are spaces available.

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