



## **Transportation Demand Management Strategies for Schools Study**

### **What is the study?**

In 2007, the Washington State Legislature asked the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to conduct a study, develop strategies and make recommendations to reduce auto congestion around schools. The legislature is interested in finding ways to effectively address congestion associated with high traffic flow created by students and parents commuting to school. In the case of elementary and junior high schools, parents driving their children to school can create high traffic flows in surrounding neighborhoods. High schools and universities generate congestion from students driving themselves.

WSDOT's Safe Routes to Schools program provides technical assistance and resources to cities, counties, schools, school districts and state agencies for engineering, education, encouragement and enforcement, improvements that will get more children walking and bicycling to school safely. The Safe Routes to Schools program is the primary state grant program to address trips to kindergarten through 8th grade schools.

This transportation demand management strategies for schools study is looking at other opportunities to address trips to school (kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) and colleges universities). The study's recommendations are due to the legislature by January 2009.

### **How does the study help reduce VMT?**

Schools represent a significant generator of trips, and communities can benefit from reducing traffic impact on surrounding roads. Considerable number of vehicle trips is generated by taking students to school. Educating students and parents about alternative modes of transportation can have major long term effects on the reduction of drive-alone vehicle trips. Reducing the emissions associated with vehicle trips further fits with the overarching goals of the Governor's Climate Change Challenge. The strategies for schools study will help determine the potential for inclusion in Washington's Commute Trip Reduction (CTR program).

### **What is happening now (current status/activities)?**

WSDOT has divided the study into two phases. To help guide the study, WSDOT assembled an advisory group of various experts on schools and school transportation issues. The advisory group helped the study team focus on the most significant issues affecting travel to school and suggested potential models for study.

Phase 1 of the study included a literature review summarizing the level of knowledge about the subject and helps to identify models and strategies. The models that were identified guided the statewide search for potential programs of interest to examine and learn from in Phase 2. These programs of interest include:

- Safe Routes to Schools in urban and small city elementary schools
- The use of fare-free transit
- An introduction of mobility education curriculum in high schools
- A mandatory universal pass program at a university
- A ride sharing Web site
- The inclusion of a school in a growth and transportation efficiency center under the state's CTR law

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

Legislative direction has focused the study on relieving congestion around schools. Recommendations from the study are due to the legislature by January 2009.

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

Additional funding would provide expansion of the study to a program based on the final study results.

**Study Contact:**  
**Keith Cotton**  
**Urban Programs Manager**  
**Washington State Department of Transportation**  
**360-705-7910**  
[cottonk@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:cottonk@wsdot.wa.gov)  
[www.wsdot.wa.gov/tdm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/tdm)