CTR REPORT
TO THE WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE

2011

Washington State
Commute Trip Reduction Board

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Report prepared by the CTR Board with support from the Washington State Department of Transportation, Public Transportation Division, January 2012.

This report is available electronically at www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit.

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December 30, 2011

To: Washington State Legislature

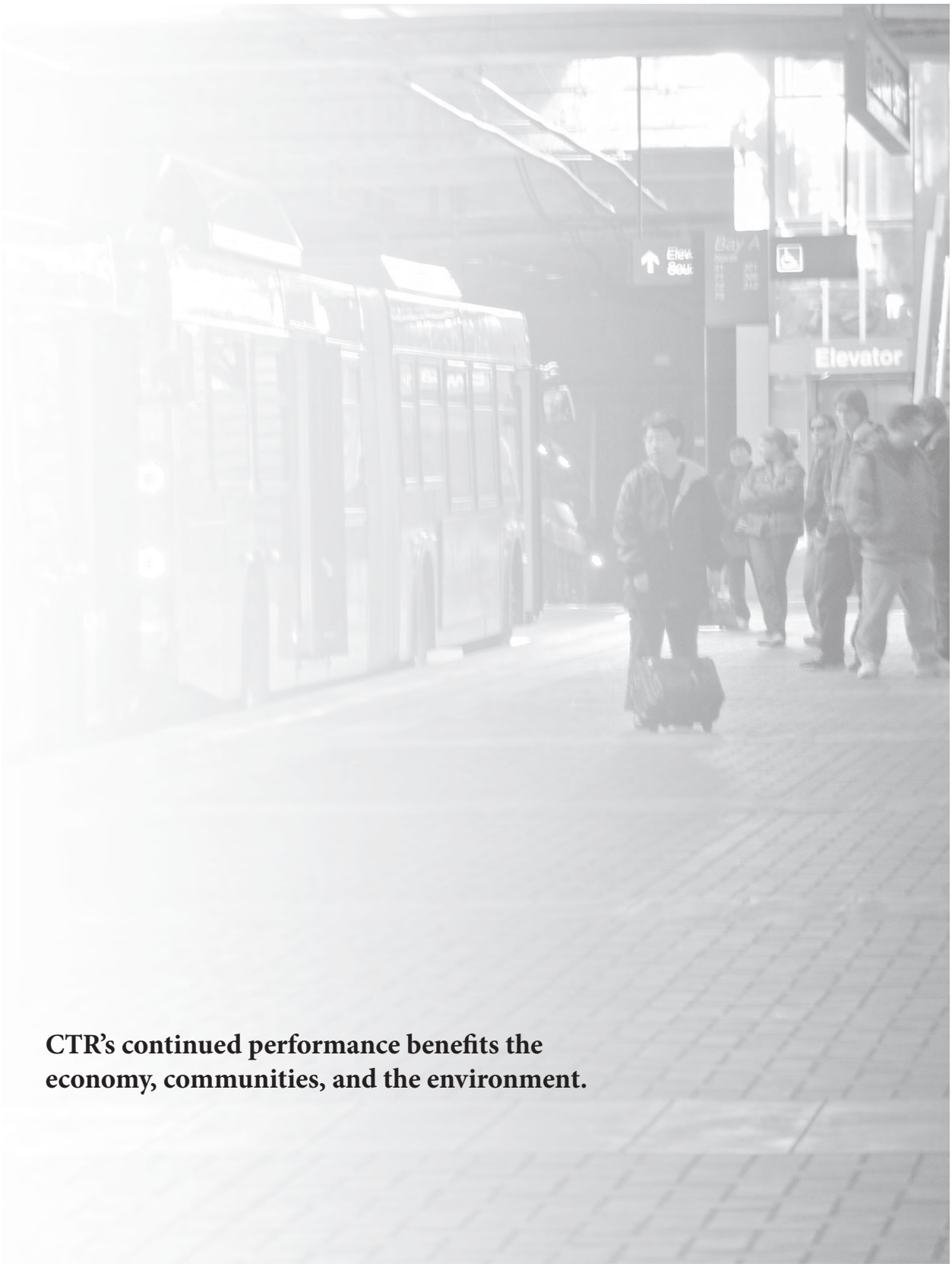
From: Brian Lagerberg, Chair
Commute Trip Reduction Board

It is my pleasure to submit the CTR Board's 2011 Legislative Report. For two decades Washington's Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program has been a foundation of state efforts to manage demand for our highways by offering individuals more choices for how they use the transportation system.

This report shows that CTR works and its continued performance benefits our economy, communities and environment. Through its network of strong public-private partnerships, the program leverages resources and aligns investments focused on common goals. CTR is good for Washington's economy, efficiently getting people to work and helping employers to grow. It helps commuters and their families save money. It makes transportation work better and reduces energy consumption and air pollution.

The CTR Board recommends that the Legislature invest in the program with targeted expansions that build on the new partnerships created over the past several years. Programs that manage demand in our state have never been more valuable. Considering the cost of new transportation improvements and the state's lack of resources, making our transportation system work better with CTR is good government and good business.

If you have any questions about the information contained in this report, please contact me at 360-705-7878.



CTR's continued performance benefits the economy, communities, and the environment.

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Executive Summary

The CTR program has achieved national recognition as an effective partnership between state and local governments and the private sector.

In 2006, employers invested $45 million in CTR, more than $16 for each dollar invested by the state.

- *CTR employers added about 13,500 workers even while the state lost about 140,500 workers over the same time period.*
- *CTR commuters saved more than $22 million a year in 2010.*
- *In Central Puget Sound, the 2009 program performance reduced congestion nearly eight percent, equating to a reduction of 12,900 hours of delay and saving $99 million in congestion costs due to lost time and wasted fuel.*

Twenty years of investment in Washington's Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program has created a legacy of public-private partnerships that now comprise the foundation for managing transportation demand in the state. This proven success supports the state's economy, communities and environment. Recent measurement and analysis of the program confirms its sustained growth, support and success. Survey data shows more employees arriving at CTR sites are opting for alternatives to driving alone, keeping the program on track toward its goals for 2012.

The CTR law was enacted by the Legislature in 1991 to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and decrease fuel consumption through employer-based programs that encourage alternatives to driving alone to work. The CTR program has achieved national recognition as an effective partnership between state and local governments and the private sector.

The CTR Board is charged with policy development and oversight of the CTR program. In 2006, the CTR Board recommended changes to the program to make the law more effective, efficient and focused. These statutory changes increased integration of the program with transportation and economic development plans, and demonstrated that increased local flexibility provides tangible benefits for communities and the state. This report is the first comprehensive assessment of the program following the new focus.

Programs that manage demand across Washington—which connect people to jobs in an affordable and efficient way—aren't just good government; they're good business. Considering the cost of new transportation improvements, the costs of maintenance and preservation, and the state's lack of resources, making our transportation system work better with the cost-effective CTR program has never been more valuable.

This 2011 Legislative Report contains the CTR Board's evaluation of the program, and recommendations for improvement. The CTR Board finds:

- CTR works, and its continued performance benefits the economy, communities and the environment.
- Additional targeted investments in transportation demand management strategies as part of the Moving Washington framework can help create an integrated 21st century transportation system that strengthens the economy and provides results for both the state and local communities.

This report contains comprehensive performance data collected in the 2009–2010 survey cycle and local testimonials that highlight program benefits and impacts.

CTR works and it is a wise use of funds

- Budget leverage is significant. CTR is built on a strong foundation of public-private partnerships, with state dollars leveraging local support and private investment. In 2006, employers invested $45 million in CTR, more than $16 for each dollar invested by the state.
- State and local government support creates the incentive for employers to participate. Employers tell WSDOT that if this support was reduced, contributions would decrease and the partnership would erode.
- The program made significant progress toward its goals to support job growth and improve transportation in the 2009–2010 survey cycle. CTR worksites achieved reductions of about 4.8 percent in the drive-alone rate and 5.6 percent in the vehicle miles travelled (VMT) per employee rate.

Executive Summary

CTR's continued performance benefits the economy, communities and the environment

- CTR is good for Washington's economy, efficiently getting people to work and helping employers to grow. CTR employers added about 13,500 workers even while the state lost about 140,500 workers over the same time period. Even though these CTR employers added jobs, they minimized the number of vehicle trips to their worksites each day, reducing demand on the transportation system and the need for additional state investments.
- CTR helps commuters and their families save money. Gasoline is the average Washington family's highest energy-related expense. CTR commuters saved more than $22 million in 2010.
- CTR helps keep traffic moving. Analysis of the Central Puget Sound region in 2009 shows that the program's performance reduced congestion nearly 8 percent, equating to a reduction of 12,900 hours of delay and saving $99 million in congestion costs due to lost time and wasted fuel. CTR worksites continue to do better at reducing trips than the rest of the state and nation.
- CTR reduces energy consumption and air pollution. By reducing 160 million VMT each year between 2007 and 2010, CTR participants reduced about 71,500 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions and about 8 million gallons of fuel each year.

CTR can do more

The CTR program and the investments highlighted in this report are the foundation of the state's efforts to manage demand on our highways by offering individuals more choices for how they use the transportation system. The CTR program is a key element of demand management and WSDOT's approach to future investments.

"Transportation is a critical issue because it is woven into almost every aspect of our existence. The kind of transportation we invest in determines the shape of our communities, our access to jobs and services, and how much of our time and money we spend on getting around. It also determines the cost of goods and the extent to which we use up diminishing energy supplies and produce emissions that warm the earth. In the United States at every level of government, too little attention is paid to getting a return on transportation investments or maintaining the infrastructure we already have so we can grow sustainably and affordably."

Rockefeller Foundation

The CTR Board recommends that the Legislature:

- **Expand investment in CTR with targeted investments to support economic corridors.** This will help the program expand its benefits to a larger share of the travel market, improve the efficiency of the transportation system, and leverage investments for local and regional economic benefits.

To continue its success over the next 10 years, the CTR Board plans to explore the following initiatives:

- In the short term, explore funding and policy options to enhance local flexibility, improve connections between local, regional and state objectives, and achieve economies of scale.
- In the longer term, optimize flexibility and increase resources of the CTR program to respond to demand, address non-work trips and leverage community investments.

Introduction

For 20 years, Washington has been recognized as a national leader for helping commuters get to work with the Commute Trip reduction (CTR) program. This 2011 Report to the Washington State Legislature contains the CTR Board's evaluation of the program's progress, costs and benefits, as well as recommendations for improving it.

Transportation systems are closely linked to socioeconomic changes, and in this current economic climate, transportation plays an even greater role in driving job creation and economic growth. Transportation demand management strategies such as CTR serve a critical purpose by creating partnerships focused on common goals for transportation efficiency and economic growth.

The CTR Board finds that the CTR program continues to demonstrate success. Investment in CTR is needed for the program's infrastructure and partnerships. Expanding the program with targeted investments will enhance local flexibility, increase share of travel markets, grow an integrated, 21st century transportation system that keeps people and goods moving, and support the health of Washington's economy, communities and the environment.

This report is organized as follows:

1. **Introduction to the CTR program** describes the purpose and history of the CTR program and how it works.

2. **Investment in the CTR program** describes the program's funding and partnerships.

3. **Performance of the CTR program** describes the performance of the CTR program and its benefits to the economy, communities and the environment.

4. **Evolution of the CTR program** describes some potential enhancements to the CTR program.

5. **Recommendations to the Legislature** lists the CTR Board's recommendations for the next phase of the program and beyond.

Introduction to the CTR program

The Washington State Legislature passed the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Law in 1991 with goals to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and reduce the consumption of petroleum fuels through employer-based programs that encourage the use of alternatives to driving alone.

By creating the CTR program, the Legislature recognized that employers have a significant role and interest in transportation efficiency. Employers need an effective and efficient transportation system so that employees can get to work and goods can get to market. Strategies to help manage transportation demand are part of the solution. Changes in commuter habits lead to fewer vehicles in peak periods of travel. Fewer vehicles in peak periods mean less congestion, fewer vehicle emissions and cleaner air. Business resources spent on transportation costs means fewer resources for other opportunities. Creating common goals with employers helps the state achieve broader goals for the economy, environment and communities.

The 2006 CTR Efficiency Act built upon this established employer role and expanded responsibility for program success to local governments that work with employers to make broad economic investment decisions. Local CTR plans and programs are now expected to be integrated with local land use and transportation plans to align policies and investments. An additional program approach, growth and transportation efficiency centers (GTECs), became a part of the program in 2006. GTECs created community-focused implementation of CTR in urban centers, expanding the target market (small employers, residents, students), addressing non-work related trips, and tying transportation goals to job growth and economic development. Communities across the state embraced the GTEC concept because of its additional resources and flexible implementation model. This helped to drive local program innovation and increase state relevance in local land-use and transportation decisions that impact the state transportation system.

CTR is a partnership between employers and governments

The CTR program is unique for its comprehensive and effective network of partnerships among state and local governments, transit agencies, regional transportation planning organizations and employers. These partnerships bring organizations together to engage in developing transportation solutions that support local and state goals, while helping to leverage the state's investment. Some of the partners and their roles:

- **Major employers** implement their programs based on locally adopted goals for reducing vehicle trips and VMT established by the city or county in which they are located. Groups of employers, such as transportation management associations (TMAs) or chambers of commerce, may also partner to provide services and support to commuters.
- **Local governments** provide technical assistance and services to employers to help them achieve the goals and may also run their own outreach and service programs directly to commuters. Local governments are responsible for developing a CTR plan that establishes goals, policies and strategies. More than 50 local governments are involved in the CTR program.
- **Transit agencies** operate bus and vanpool services and coordinate program implementation services and administrative support with local governments.
- Six **regional transportation planning organizations** (RTPOs) provide planning support and coordination

Introduction to the CTR program

across jurisdictions, ensuring consistency in transportation and economic plans.

- The **state** provides grants to local governments to support employers and commuters. The state investment generates significant local and private investment.
- **WSDOT** administers funding, guides the program with policies and procedures, and coordinates measurement and evaluation of the program.
- The **CTR Board** sets the overall policy direction, allocates funding appropriated by the legislature and reports to the Legislature every two years on the effectiveness of the program.

CTR focuses on major employers and congested urban growth areas

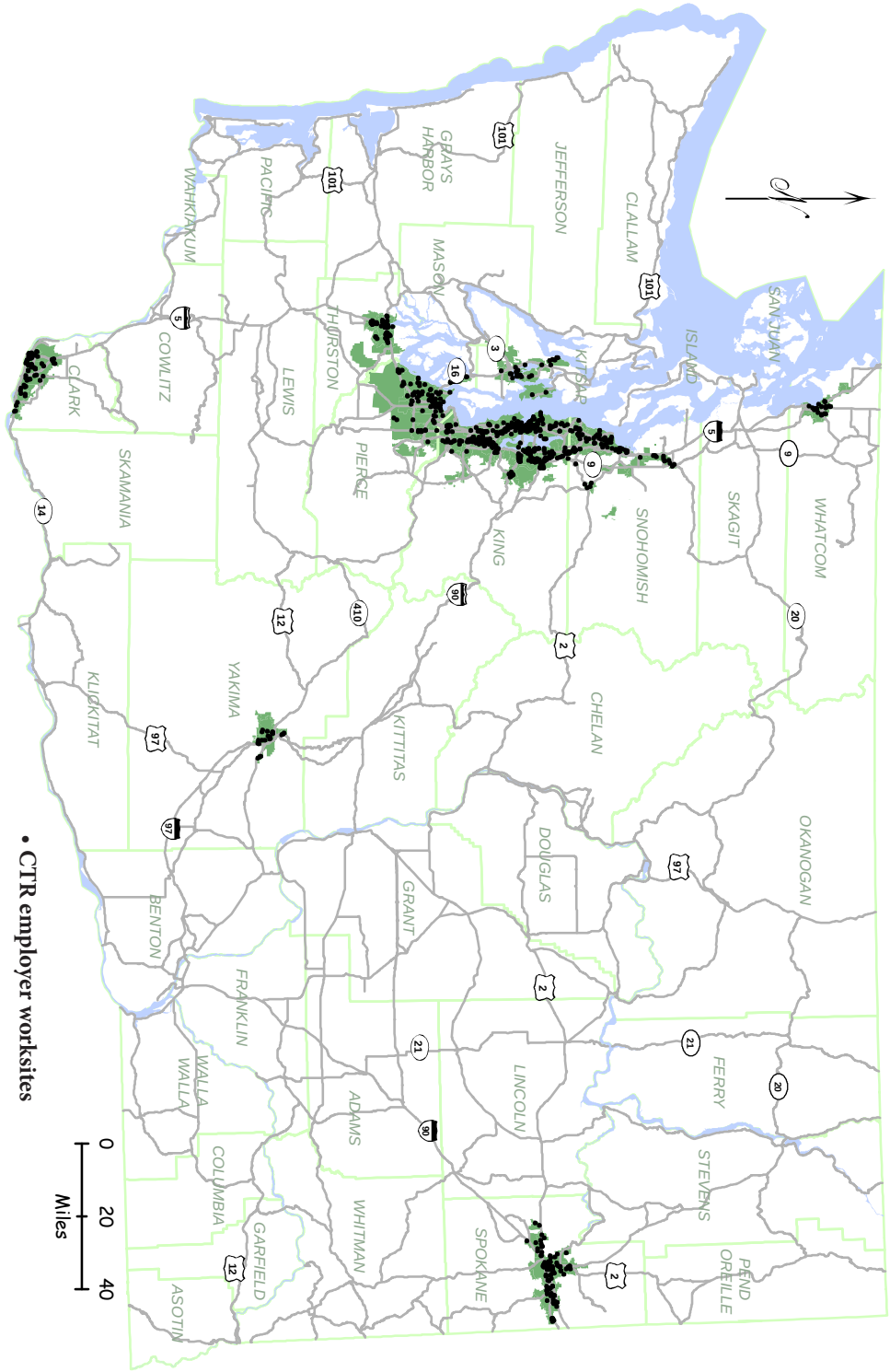
The CTR program's focus is on commuters traveling to large worksites and dense employment centers through congested areas during the morning peak travel period. The program directs major employers[1] in the urban growth areas of the state with the greatest levels of traffic congestion to implement programs to reduce the proportion of employees who drive alone to work. Local governments within these same areas may voluntarily establish growth and transportation efficiency centers (GTECs) to expand the CTR program's benefits to smaller employers, students and residents.

In 2010, approximately 574,000 employees at roughly 1,100 worksites across urban growth areas in nine counties had access to employer CTR programs. An additional 535,000 commuters had access to services and programs offered through seven designated GTECs.

1 A major employer is defined in the CTR law as a private or public employer, including state agencies, that employs 100 or more full-time employees at a single worksite who begin their regular workday between 6 and 9 am on weekdays for at least 12 consecutive months.

Introduction to the CTR program

CTR boundaries and worksites across Washington State



In 2010, approximately 574,000 employees at roughly 1,100 worksites across urban growth areas in nine counties had access to employer CTR programs.

Investment in the CTR program

"I am unaware of any major transit system nationally that has such a close relationship to the employers in its service area. The CTR program, the vanpool program, employer pass programs - they all add up to a major piece of Metro's business. We would be nowhere near as successful as we are without the contributions of the businesses that rely on Metro to get their employees to work."

Kevin Desmond
General Manager, King County Metro

The value of Metro's fare revenue collected directly from employers in 2010 was $75.4 million, which is just over 50 percent of all fare revenue for that year.

CTR is good for employers

- *Reduced costs from employee turnover and absenteeism*
- *Reduced taxes*
- *Reduced parking costs*

Twenty years of investment in Commute Trip Reduction has created a legacy of public-private partnerships that now comprise the foundation for managing transportation demand in Washington. This network of employees, employers, business associations, non-profit organizations, community groups, transit agencies, local and regional governments and the state is a critical network that supports the common objectives of transportation efficiency and reduced demand on the transportation system. WSDOT and its partners can build from this existing network to meet specific goals and adapt to changing needs and priorities as they seek to develop a sustainable, 21st century transportation system.

The CTR partnership leverages investments in support of common goals

The CTR partnership begins with the state investment. In the 2011-2013 biennium, the Legislature appropriated about $5.5 million to WSDOT for program implementation. Of the state investment, $3.9 million is distributed to local governments based on allocation decisions by the CTR Board. Local governments use the funding to assist employers with development and implementation of their worksite programs. The balance of the state investment allows WSDOT to provide technical support and program tools to employers and local governments, and measure, evaluate and report on the program's performance.

The $3.9 million in grants allows local governments to directly assist employers by delivering the strategies in their CTR plans. Local governments invest additional resources to meet their CTR goals. For example, the Downtown on the Go partnership brings together the City of Tacoma, Pierce County, Pierce Transit and the Tacoma-Pierce Chamber of Commerce to focus on reducing the drive-alone rate to downtown Tacoma. Each partner contributes resources that leverage the state investment in CTR in the county.

Employers match and multiply the state and local investment because it makes sound business sense, and the tools provided through the program (such as performance measurement) are an added incentive. In 2006, the latest year for which data is available, employers invested $45 million in their CTR programs, more than $16 for each dollar invested by the state.

A good example of how the CTR partnership directs mutually beneficial investments is King County Metro's market strategy. Metro's employer programs pre-date the CTR program, but the program performance accelerated after CTR became law. Currently almost 1,500 employers and other organizations purchase a transit pass and other benefits from Metro through the ORCA regional smart card program. These organizations distributed approximately 500,000 ORCA cards to employees, students, faculty and other commuters in 2010. The value of Metro's fare revenue collected directly from employers in 2010 was $75.4 million, which is just over 50 percent of all fare revenue for that year.

Employers invest in the program

Many CTR employers invest in the program because providing a benefit to their employees, while simultaneously reducing employee parking demand, has a real impact on their bottom lines. Not only do employers understand that CTR makes good business sense, they tell WSDOT that reducing congestion and environmental impacts in their communities is the responsible thing to do.

The University of Washington credits U-PASS, their comprehensive transportation demand management program, for allowing them to grow and improve neighborhood

Investment in the CTR program

relations. U-PASS is one of the oldest and most successful transportation demand management programs in the nation. The program consists of a flexible package of transportation benefits offered through a pass that allows students, faculty, and staff to choose from a variety of commuting options at a greatly reduced price. The University of Washington Transportation Services 2009 U-PASS profile report explains how the U-PASS program creates value for the institution:

"Since the 1983 agreement between the City of Seattle and the University of Washington, the University's ability to grow has been limited by its ability to stay within specific thresholds for daily traffic volumes and parking capacity on campus. As a direct result of the U-PASS program, the University has been able to replace former parking lots with new academic and research facilities covering over 350,000 square feet. In today's dollars, the cost of that land represents a value of over $71 million."

It would cost $28 million to increase the number of campus parking stalls to the maximum allowd capacity. Today the University is able to accommodate 66,000 with a campus parking supply of 11,590.

From: http://www.washington.edu/facilities/transportation/commuterservices/files/reports/U-PASS_Profile2009.pdf

The state and local role is critical for the success of the partnership

Leadership, commitment and technical support from state and local governments bring the network of partners together and create the framework and motivation for employers to participate. If local and state support were reduced, partnership contributions would decrease and the network would weaken. In 2003, the CTR Task Force asked employers how likely they were to continue their CTR program if their level of support from the government was continued, eliminated or increased. Less than half of the employer respondents indicated they would continue to operate their programs if local and state support were eliminated. On the other hand, if local and state support were to continue, virtually all employers said they would continue to operate their programs. With an increase in local and state support, employers indicated they would increase investment in education, subsidies and flexible work strategies.[1]

In 2008, U of W students, staff, and faculty collectively saved almost $16 million by paying for transit with U-Pass.

Leadership and technical support from the state and local governments is important to employers. A 2003 study shows that employers would significantly decrease their level of investment in the program if the level of support from local government and/or the state was eliminated.

1 DDB Seattle, "Impact of Support Changes on Employer Participation in the Commute Trip Reduction Program," 2003

Investment in the CTR program

Nationally, 5.2 billion trips were taken on public transportation in the first six months of 2011, an increase of 85.7 million trips (1.7 percent) according to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). All major modes of public transportation saw increases, despite the fact that the economic downturn continues. Heavy rail and light rail saw the largest increases in the first six months with increases of 3.8 percent and 3.7 percent respectively. "There is strong support for public transportation nationwide and the uptick in our 2011 ridership figures is a reflection of this," said APTA President Millar. "Now is the time for our country to invest more in public transportation and prepare for the larger demand that will occur when the recession ends."

The CTR partnership is at risk in today's economy

Today, Washington state and the global community are in the midst of an unprecedented economic crisis. The economy has taken a toll on individuals, employers and every level of government. Businesses have downsized, consolidated and folded. Job losses and tight budgets affect both supply of and demand for transportation operations and services. According to the American Public Transportation Association, nearly 80 percent of public transit systems are being forced to implement fare increases or service cuts due to flat or decreased local and state funding. Meanwhile, ridership and demand for transportation choices continue to rise. Cuts to public transportation services, together with reducing financial support from their employers, pose a significant threat to the future of commuter programs.

Targeted investments build on the foundation to expand partnerships and achieve common goals

State investments in CTR have compounding and lasting affects. The following program used targeted investments to build upon CTR's ongoing demand management infrastructure. In the 2007-2009 biennium, the state provided $2 million to seven cities to develop and implement growth and transportation efficiency center (GTEC) programs. These programs broadened the concepts of CTR, reaching out to smaller employers, schools and neighborhoods within specified geographic boundaries in the state's most congested urban areas. The state saw a strong support from local partners as the additional investment established new ways to engage the business community. The flexibility of the GTEC program allowed local partners to both design a program aligned with local objectives and expand the program benefits to a larger share of the travel market. Despite strong interest from local partners and good performance by worksites within GTECs, funding for the program was discontinued after one year of implementation. Nevertheless, program partners cite the GTEC concept as a potential model for CTR program evolution. Some of the most economically beneficial innovation has originated from this short pilot.

Investment in the CTR program

WSDOT's construction traffic management program helps keep people and goods moving during construction by expanding coordination and mitigation for roadway construction. WSDOT works with dozens of project teams from counties, cities, transit agencies and ports to assess construction traffic impacts before construction-related activities begin. When mitigation is required, WSDOT can implement demand management programs to reduce demand on corridors under construction. To develop demand management plans, WSDOT analyzes construction impacts on roadway capacity and develops an overall trip reduction target. The goal is to keep traffic moving just as it would under normal circumstances. WSDOT works with local jurisdiction partners including cities, counties and transit agencies to develop trip reduction programs with the target in mind. These programs use targeted investments to build on ongoing demand management infrastructure. Results from these programs are available from WSDOT at *http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Transit/Library/*.

In order to support new local approaches, WSDOT has been making targeted investments in tools that allow local implementers to help themselves. One such tool is RideshareOnline.com. RideshareOnline.com is a comprehensive web tool that not only facilitates individual ridematching and travel tracking, it offers demand management implementers the ability to build networks within their commuter programs, track travel behavior and produce performance reports. And because RideshareOnline.com is a shared resource utilized by partners across Washington, Oregon and Idaho, there are compounding benefits found in leveraging one another's investments.

"Thanks to the support this program has received at the state level, the Commute Trip Reduction program has given our company the tools necessary to implement a successful transportation plan. BLRB Architects has reduced employee commute trips and adopted ORCA transportation cards as an employee benefit, both of which conserve resources and complement our firm's sustainable business practices. The CTR program and Downtown On the Go provide people with multiple commute options, supporting downtown growth and enhancing Tacoma's environmental and economic health."

-Lee Fenton, AIA, Senior Principal, BLRB Architects, Tacoma, Washington.

Performance of the CTR program

The CTR program goals are set to support sustained economic development.

The CTR program's goals are to reduce the drive-alone rate by 10 percent and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per employee by 13 percent at CTR worksites between 2007 and 2012.

CTR worksites achieved reductions of about 4.8 percent in the drive-alone rate and about 5.6 percent in VMT per employee from the 2007-08 baseline survey to the 2009-10 progress survey. These reductions translate to nearly 16,000 fewer daily vehicle trips on roadways in 2009-10 compared to 2007-08.

The performance of the CTR program is well documented since the CTR Task Force's first report to the Legislature in 1995. CTR is a proven success that benefits the state's economy, communities, and the environment.

The program's approach to goal-setting and performance measurement has evolved over time. Major changes to the program brought about by the CTR Efficiency Act in 2006 connected employer programs with local transportation and land use plans and shifted the performance focus from individual employers to the community.

The CTR program's goals support job growth and transportation success

The CTR program's goals are to reduce the drive-alone rate by 10 percent and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per employee by 13 percent at CTR worksites between 2007 and 2012.

These goals are intended to maintain traffic levels as CTR employers add jobs at their worksites. In 2007, WSDOT estimated that CTR employers would generate approximately 25,000 new vehicle trips by 2012, based largely on employment growth. WSDOT set the drive-alone and VMT reduction targets to help ensure that anticipated job growth would not be constrained by the effects of additional demand for the transportation system.

How does the program measure performance?

Measurement of the CTR program's performance is based on surveys of employees at participating CTR worksites. Determining progress is based on comparing the most recent complete survey data to baseline survey data. Baseline surveys were conducted 2007-08, progress surveys were conducted 2009-10 and the goal survey cycle is 2011-12. Statewide, the average survey response rate for the 2007-08 cycle was about 71 percent and 64 percent for the 2009-10 cycle. The program goals apply at the state, regional, local and employer levels.

The CTR program is on track to meet or exceed its goals

The CTR program made significant progress toward its goals in the 2009-10 survey period. CTR worksites achieved reductions of about 4.8 percent in the drive-alone rate and about 5.6 percent in VMT per employee from the 2007-08 baseline survey to the 2009-10 progress survey.[1] These reductions translate to nearly 16,000 fewer daily vehicle trips on roadways in 2009-10 compared to 2007-08.

It is too early to tell whether the program will meet its goals for 2012. About 60 percent of participating worksites have completed their 2011-12 surveys, but many of the largest worksites have yet to survey. The effects of the economic downturn will likely have a significant effect on 2011-12 survey results as worksite and employee losses, changes in employer programs and changes in transit service will be evident. WSDOT will assess whether local governments, regions and the state met their goals after all worksites have completed surveying in late 2012.

1 These results have been updated from prior reported results based on the inclusion of additional survey data, the exclusion of survey data for some worksites identified as no longer affected by the CTR program, and some other corrections and revisions to both recent and baseline survey data.

Performance of the CTR program

CTR is good for Washington's economy

In a time of slow economic growth and increasing costs for families, the CTR program is an important part of the state's economic recovery. It helps employers grow jobs without overwhelming the transportation system and it helps commuters save money by offering travel options more affordable than driving alone.

CTR generates other benefits that are difficult to quantify, such as improvements to community health from reduced exposure to emissions and traffic stress and from increased physical activity due to cycling and walking. Happier, healthier employees mean higher productivity and reduced costs from employee turnover and absenteeism.

CTR generates other benefits that are difficult to quantify, such as improvements to community health from reduced exposure to emissions and traffic stress and from increased physical activity due to cycling and walking. Happier, healthier employees mean higher productivity and reduced costs from employee turnover and absenteeism.

Figure 1: Comparison of employment at CTR worksites and Washington state

	Employment at CTR worksites in cohort[2]	Percent change	Daily vehicle trips to CTR worksites	Percent change	Wage and salary employment in Washington	Percent change
2007	513,720		356,861		3,154,787	
2010	528,113	2.8%	358,086	0.3%	3,014,335	-4.7%

Source: WSDOT, U.S. Department of Commerce

Comparing employment rates at CTR worksites to statewide employment figures suggests that CTR worksites retained more jobs during the economic downturn and slow recovery. As shown in Figure 1, CTR worksites in the program from 2007 to 2010 added about 13,500 employees while the state lost about 140,500 employees over the same time period. The largest job gains for CTR employers came in the manufacturing, software and health care industries.

CTR helps employers in a number of ways. By promoting transportation options and reducing drive-alone rates, employers save on the need for parking investments, which shrinks costs and creates revenue for other opportunities. Participating employers can also receive state and federal tax benefits.

Growing jobs doesn't have to mean increasing the burden on the transportation system. Between 2007 and 2010, even as CTR employers added workers, the total number of vehicle trips traveling to their worksites each day remained largely unchanged, as shown in Figure 1. This illustrates the economic and social benefit of engaging employers by providing options that enhance and enrich employees' lives.

2 These figures represent the 911 worksites in the CTR program that surveyed in both 2007-08 and 2009-10.

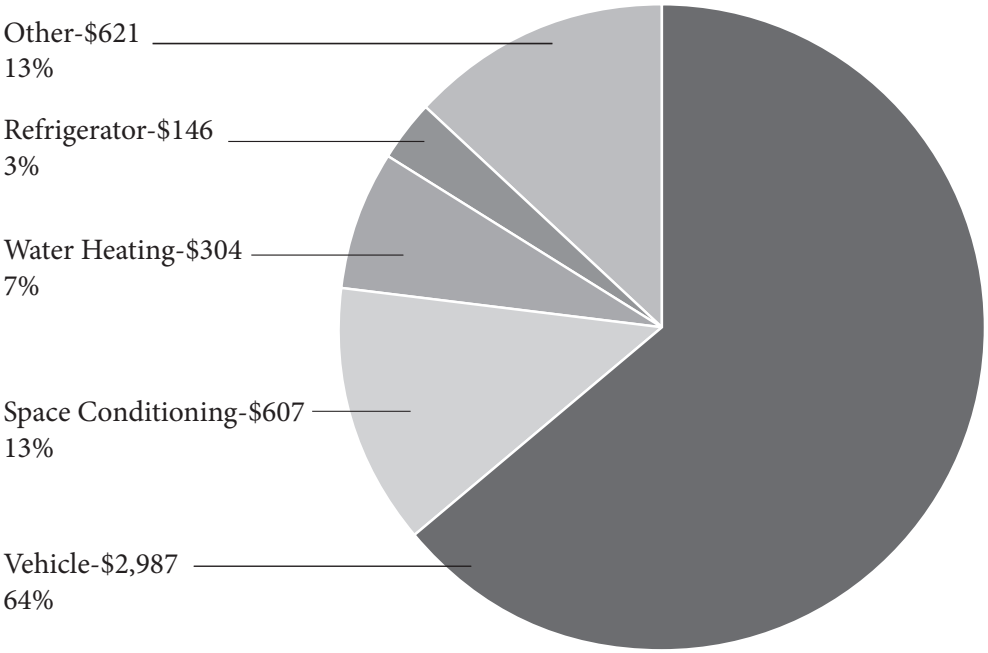
Performance of the CTR program

CTR helps commuters and their families save money on energy costs

According to the Associated Press, by the end of 2011 the typical American household will have spent $4,155 on gasoline this year, a record high. This represents 8.4 percent of the median family income, the highest share since 1981. Nationwide, gas averaged over $3.50 a gallon in 2011, which is also a record. As indicated in Figure 2, gasoline also represents the average Washington household's greatest energy-related expense, far exceeding what households pay to heat and power their homes.

Figure 2

Average Washington Household Annual Energy Bill by End Use in 2008



Source: 2012 Washington State Energy Strategy, Washington State Department of Commerce

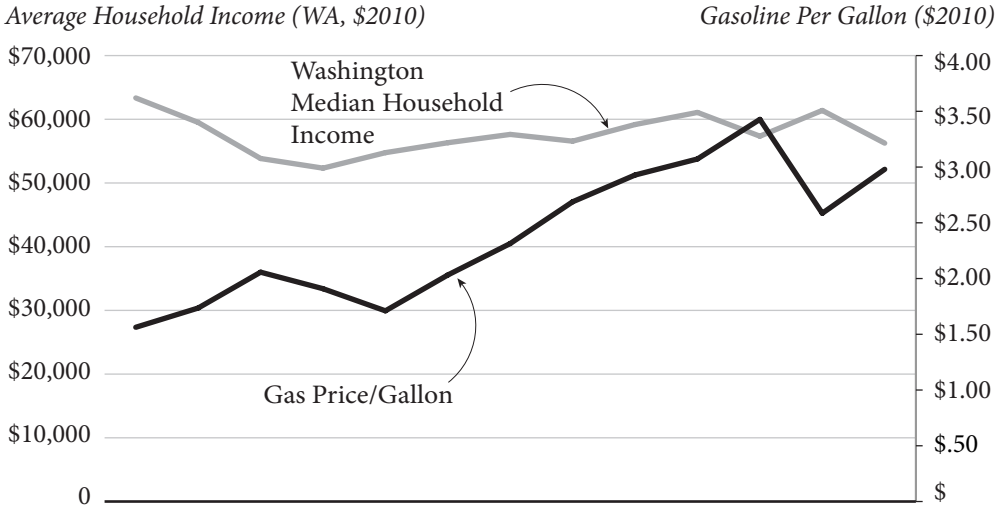
Performance of the CTR program

This increase in gas prices is hitting families particularly hard, since while gas prices have been rising, median incomes have been flattening and recently declining, as shown in Figure 3.

The CTR program helps commuters save money on gas, saving Washington commuters over $22 million a year since 2007, based on the 2009-10 survey results. This results in more discretionary income available to circulate back to the local economy and local jobs.

Figure 3

Comparison of changing household Incomes Versus gasoline prices ($2010)



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration and U.S. Census Bureau. Gasoline price is for the West Coast excluding California.

Performance of the CTR program

By reducing an average of 160 million VMT each year between 2007 and 2010, CTR participants reduced about 71,500 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions and about 8 million gallons of fuel each year.

CTR helps the transportation system work more efficiently

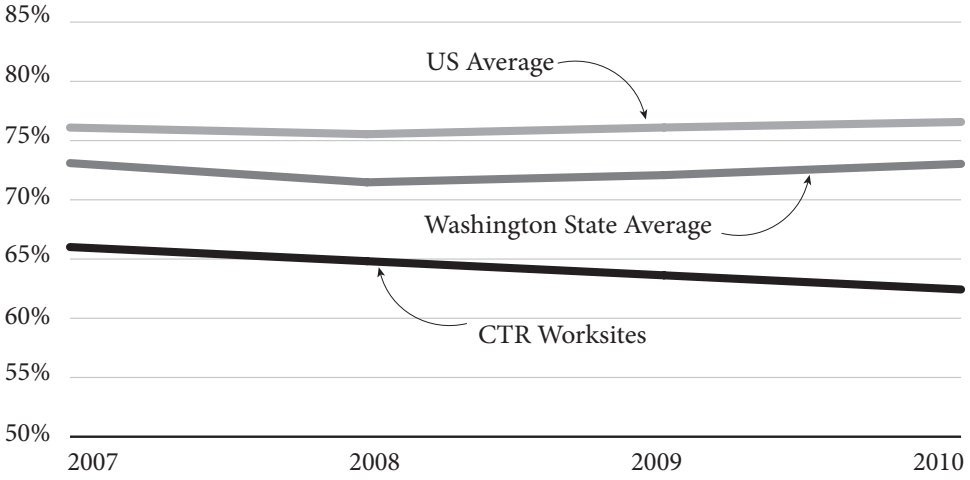
The state's investment in CTR buys low-cost, high-benefit congestion relief, increasing mobility and access for all users of the system, including public transit and freight. The aggregate investment in the 20-year program results in 34,000 vehicles taken off the road during rush hour every weekday morning- which, for example, is more vehicles than the SR 520 Bridge carries during the same time period. This performance reduced delay on Central Puget Sound roads by nearly eight percent every morning in 2009, saving millions of dollars in lost time and fuel for people and freight in the region, as well as incalculable savings in roadway capacity.

Considering other factors that influence transportation decision-making (the price of fuel, availability of alternatives, personal income, etc.), the CTR program has a unique, even tangible effect on individual decision-making. State and national data show that CTR worksites continue to outperform the state and national averages at changing commute habits. While there has been an uptick in the average national and state commute trip drive-alone rates over the last few years, the drive-alone rate at CTR worksites actually declined over the same time period, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Commute Trip Drive Alone Rate Comparison

Percent Driving Alone to Work



Source: American Community Survey; CTR Data from WSDOT

Performance of the CTR program

CTR reduces energy consumption and air pollution

By reducing an average of 160 million VMT each year between 2007 and 2010, CTR participants reduced about 71,500 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions and about 8 million gallons of fuel each year.

CTR helps transit work more efficiently

By connecting employers with transit agencies, CTR helps put riders on buses and trains. An example from Tacoma shows how partnerships can help transit performance, even as transit agencies make hard choices when faced with declining revenues. Transit ridership to downtown Tacoma increased by four percent in 2011, even after a year of 35 percent reductions in Pierce Transit service overall. This is attributed in part to the efforts of the Downtown on the Go program, a collaborative effort of the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber, City of Tacoma, Pierce Transit and downtown businesses, organizations and agencies committed to leveraging resources and relationships to reduce the downtown drive-alone rate. Downtown on the Go reached out to downtown businesses prior to service reductions, conducting a series of "Try the Bus" events to help workers in the downtown area learn about their transit options.

In 2009, the University of Washington reported that almost 80% of the campus population- about 52,000 people- commute to campus using transportation that's greener than driving alone.

Evolution of the CTR program

"The Commute Trip Reduction program has given Propel Insurance the tools and incentive we need to reduce our employees' commutes and save our company money. We currently have approximately 48% of the staff in our Tacoma location taking alternate forms of transportation as a direct result of the Commute Trip Reduction program and the implementation of the ORCA pass system."

-Patti Sutton, Director of Human Resources, Propel Insurance, Tacoma, Washington.

The transportation system is the backbone of the state's economy. However, there is a growing imbalance between demand for transportation and available capacity. Funding sources are eroding. Costs for construction, maintenance and operations continue to rise. And, the system is aging.

At the same time, there is increasing pressure on governments at all levels to become leaner and to maximize the effectiveness of existing resources. Public agencies are seeking strategies to address multiple objectives while becoming more efficient, as financial challenges strain their resources and limited funding options threaten their operations. The size of government is shrinking and, as agencies redesign themselves they are evaluating cost-effective ways to deliver services and grow within their means.

Strategies to manage demand such as Commute Trip Reduction are part of the solution. The CTR program brings together partners and tools to efficiently address traffic congestion, prevent environmental degradation, improve mobility and grow business.

What the CTR Board, WSDOT and others must now determine is the direction in which the program should go. It has demonstrated 20 years of success but has an uncertain future. How can the program evolve to help the state solve its most pressing challenges?

Assessing the program to chart a course for the future

In 2010 the CTR Board launched a program assessment to determine the direction of the program and whether it is evolving as intended in the CTR Efficiency Act. As part of this assessment, the CTR Board reached out to local and regional government implementers using workshops and written surveys to gather information. They also worked with local governments to gather feedback from employers. This outreach provided the CTR Board with valuable information about what is and is not working, and what they can do to reduce barriers to implementation and boost program performance.

Program implementers provided valuable feedback, offering a number of ideas the Board will consider as it further develops the program. Implementers expressed appreciation for the base CTR program, as it has been the foundation for many successful trip reduction strategies and innovative programs. GTECs are seen as an enhancement to the base program. Changes to the law that forged connections with land-use planning, regional governments, the business community and sustainability initiatives have all been positive. In particular, relationships with employers have strengthened because the program continues to resonate with their business objectives. Existing partnerships have been strengthened and new partnerships have been created, resulting in additional resource leveraging.

Implementers made a number of recommendations to the CTR Board, including:

- Establish long-term funding stability for the program.
- Explore ways to expand flexibility, administrative efficiencies and local determination for the program.
- Provide resources for program expansion and explore other innovative approaches— such as GTECs, residential-based and corridor-based programs— to adapt to local and regional conditions and needs.
- Provide more technical support, such as tools, templates, models, incentives and technical assistance.

Evolution of the CTR program

- Advocate for investments in transit service and capital investments that support worksites.
- Fund statewide marketing initiatives.
- Work with RTPOs to make a stronger economic-development connection and solidify their role in TDM planning and coordination.
- Prioritize and fund projects at the state level that include mobility goals, TDM strategies and performance measures to track progress.

A consistent and significant question in the assessment process is whether the state's demand management program should focus solely on commute trips and major employers. Some local governments have expressed interest in expanding the program to address other trips (e.g., trips to school, shopping or services) and smaller employers. Until its funding was discontinued, the GTEC program helped launch these efforts.

This issue is closely related to program goals and resources. Figure 5 demonstrates the small percentage of statewide VMT addressed by the CTR program. Because the current scope of the CTR mandate is narrow, the market impact is relatively small. The program captures about 20 percent of the commute market share and 6 percent of statewide VMT.

Given its current funding structure, the CTR program has limited opportunities to expand its influence and success. New methods and resources are needed to help the program achieve broader goals. Even a small state investment can leverage local partnerships and innovation that provide benefits far beyond the CTR program.

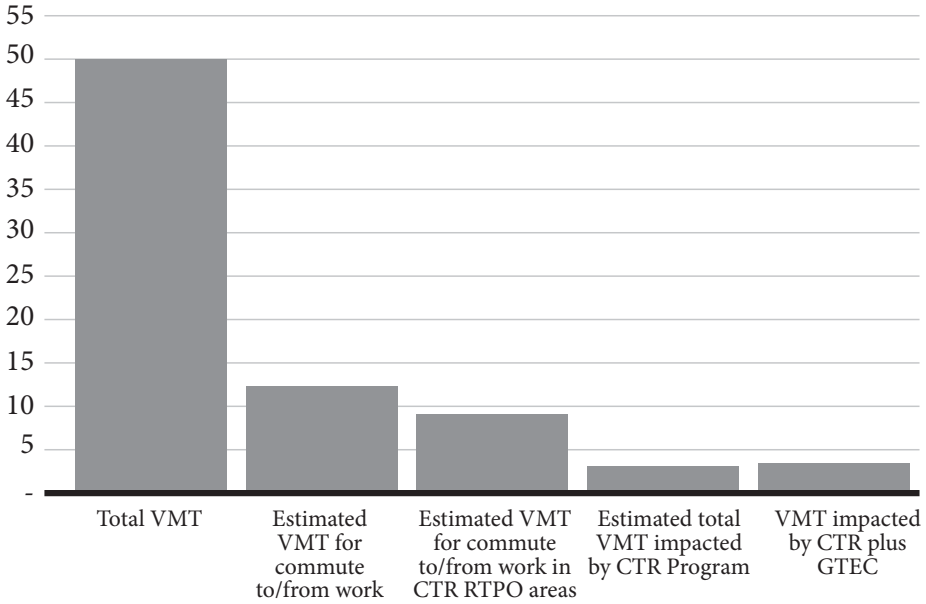
"Providing employees with commuting options like flexible work schedules and teleworking, as well as promoting alternative transportation modes, supports our company culture of environmental stewardship. CH2M HILL is a great place to work, in part, because of these options, which help our employees find work-life balance by reducing the time they spend in traffic and creating a work schedule that fits personal priorities and meets business needs."

Dave Sturtevant (CH2M HILL Vice President, Puget Sound Area Manager).

Figure 5

Estimated Statewide VMT affected by CTR

(Light Duty Vehicles, 2009 - VMT in billions)



Sources: WSDOT and 2009 National Household Travel Survey

Evolution of the CTR program

Connecting Washington Task Force

"Finding transportation solutions to link people, communities and businesses"

Primary Purpose of the 10-year Investment Strategy: Make critical investments that will create a more integrated and effective statewide transportation system to spur economic growth, enhance our state's ability to compete in the global economy, and retain and create jobs.

The CTR Board is committed to making the best use of current resources without compromising the benefits of the base program. The CTR Board is interested in exploring methods that provide flexibility and incentives for affected local governments to focus resources on employers that offer maximum support to local and regional priorities. Efforts to increase the share of the travel market affected by a state TDM program will allow the CTR program to set goals that achieve greater benefits for the transportation system.

The CTR Board considered several recent studies and initiatives along with input from program implementers as part of its program assessment work. Highlights from these guiding strategies, plans and analysis inform the recommendations in this report and help point the way forward for the program.

These highlights and recommendations are summarized in this section:

- Connecting Washington Task Force
- WSDOT's Moving Washington approach
- The Department of Commerce's 2012 State Energy Strategy
- Puget Sound Regional Council's Transportation 2040 plan
- Local program innovations
- Research on trip reduction opportunities in suburban areas

Connecting Washington Task Force recommends investment in economic corridors

Governor Gregoire formed the Connecting Washington Task Force to develop a 10-year investment and funding strategy for the state's transportation system. This advisory group will identify transportation system needs and recommend the most promising investment options and revenue sources to address top priorities. The group—made up of nearly three dozen locally-elected officials, members of state legislative transportation committees, tribal members, organized labor, trade associations and businesses—has developed investment principles and performance objectives for new investment scenarios. The group's focus is on economic corridors for transportation investment to keep people and goods moving.

Demand management investments will be needed to advance and fund the 10-year investment strategy. As demonstrated by its performance, the CTR program helps integrate the transportation system by bringing together partners focused on common goals while helping employers create jobs through transportation efficiency.

The following information was taken from *The Connecting Washington Task Force* website:

Performance objectives

1. **System Preservation** – Investments to repair and maintain our statewide system of roads and bridges, and to operate and maintain ferries and transit services
2. **Strategic Mobility Improvements** – Investments in projects and services that will relieve congestion in specific corridors, improving the movement of people and goods
3. **System Efficiency** – Investments that improve connections among modes (e.g. rail-truck, ferry-transit, car-transit), enhance speed and reliability, and improve the cost effectiveness of our existing transportation system
4. **Safety**—Investments that reduce fatalities and serious injuries across all modes.

Evolution of the CTR program

Please read more about the Governor's **Connecting Washington** Task Force and its charge to find transportation solutions to link people, communities and businesses.

WSDOT's *Moving Washington* approach

Moving Washington is WSDOT's approach for creating an integrated, 21st century transportation system. It relies on partnerships that invest in common objectives. Its first priority is to maintain and preserve the safe and long-lasting performance of existing transportation infrastructure, facilities and services. To develop the system, Moving Washington combines three transportation strategies: manage demand, operate efficiently and add capacity strategically. Moving Washington provides the principles and approach for making sustainable and responsible decisions driven by Connecting Washington. The CTR Board supports the principles of Moving Washington as a strategic framework for transportation.

Investment principles

Moving Washington provides the principles for making responsible and sustainable decisions.

Maintain and keep safe – Our highest priority is maintaining and preserving the safe and long-lasting performance of existing infrastructure, facilities and services. This is the heart of Moving Washington and the target of our investments.

Integrate investments for cost-effective solutions – Moving Washington combines three essential transportation strategies to achieve and align our objectives and those of our partners. All will require strong partnerships with a shared vision for the corridor.

- **Operate Efficiently** – This approach gets the most out of existing highways by using traffic-management tools to optimize the flow of traffic and maximize available capacity.
- **Manage Demand** – Whether shifting travel times, using public transportation or reducing the need to travel altogether, managing demand on overburdened routes allows our entire system to function better.
- **Add Capacity Strategically** – Targeting our most congested traffic hotspots or filling critical system gaps to best serve an entire corridor, community or region means fixing bottlenecks that constrain the flow.

Moving Washington is WSDOT's approach for creating an integrated, 21st century transportation system. It relies on partnerships that invest in common objectives.

Evolution of the CTR program

2012 Washington State Energy Strategy:

"Public programs to manage and reduce commute trips should be expanded. Washington already has a successful commute trip reduction program that works through employers to encourage car pools and public transportation use, as well as telecommuting and compressed work schedules. Commute trip reduction programs are a proven strategy in our state to reduce work trip vehicle miles traveled. To increase savings, programs must expand to include smaller employers and non-commute trips. The state Department of Transportation has already demonstrated the value of this approach through its Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC) program."

2012 Washington State Energy Strategy recommends expanding trip reduction

Transportation is the primary focus of the Department of Commerce's 2012 Washington State Energy Strategy because it places a growing burden on our economy, our household budgets and our environment. Of all the sectors of our state's economy, it is our transportation sector that uses the most energy, emits the most greenhouse gas emissions, and costs the majority of our energy dollars– more than half of the state's energy expenditures go to move people and goods. Our transportation system is also our least efficient energy sector, presenting real opportunities to improve efficiency and keep more dollars and jobs in Washington.

Supporting a more efficient and coordinated system of travel through expanded trip reduction programs and smart-growth policies are a major recommendation of the energy strategy. In addition, the energy strategy recommends new programs and methods. While the CTR and GTEC programs focus largely on the commute trip, about 75 percent of vehicle travel is not associated with work-related trips. Therefore, the energy strategy also recommends beginning to more broadly address all trip types in the near-term not only by investing in GTECs, but also by funding preliminary pilot studies through a competitive grant program that addresses all trip types.

Demand management in Puget Sound Regional Council's Transportation 2040

CTR has steadily become more integrated with the fabric of planning for the future in many communities across the state. Long-range plans are the most fertile ground for linking the multiple objectives supported by CTR: economy, community and environment. Long-range regional and local transportation plans rely on demand management to help them cost-effectively address the pressures of growth. The Puget Sound Regional Council's Transportation 2040 plan is a good example of how managing demand fits into regional planning. Its regional growth-centers strategy aligns with the state's GTEC approach. The plan includes an aggressive mix of demand management programs and tools. It supports the implementation of new regional programs that build on local efforts to take aim at emerging markets and promote new technologies to achieve trip reduction goals.

Local program innovations introduce new strategies for trip reduction

The CTR program is used as a platform for innovation. The CTR program's statewide infrastructure provides an opportunity to leverage local program investments and innovation for benefits to both the state transportation system and the local community. Recent local innovations include:

- In Tacoma, a collaborative program of the city, county, Pierce Transit and the Chamber of Commerce called Downtown on the Go recently partnered with a local bank to offer mortgage discounts for people moving to the downtown vicinity from an outlying area. This new program can reduce VMT

and increase population density in an area well served by local businesses and services.

- In Snohomish County, a program managed in partnership between the county, the cities of Lynnwood and Mill Creek and Community Transit called Curb the Congestion uses a corridor-based approach to reduce peak demand on the congested corridors of 164th and 120th streets, where it is cost-prohibitive to expand the road capacity.
- In South King County, the jurisdictions of Kent, Tukwila and Renton have partnered to support one another in their trip reduction efforts by pooling resources to hire a shared employee to target new markets of travelers and develop programs that work for their unique geography, employer makeup and limited access to transit.
- In Spokane, the county, city, Spokane Transit and the three local universities have partnered to implement programs aimed at minimizing staff, faculty and student transportation impacts on campus and the local and state transportation systems.

Increasing trip reduction benefits in suburban areas

The CTR program continues to integrate lessons learned and concepts tested during the GTEC program. In 2010, WSDOT commissioned research from the Washington State Transportation Center (TRAC) focused on GTECs in suburban areas. The TRAC report recommended options for enhancing trip reduction activities using GTEC-like concepts within the statewide CTR programmatic framework.

The report recommended several changes to CTR and GTEC rules to incent voluntary employer participation, allow multi-jurisdictional partnerships and expand the concept of GTECs to corridors and high-density employment centers in suburban areas. During the research project, several CTR coordinators indicated that current CTR regulations did not reward them for working with employers eager to participate in trip reduction activities but were not eligible for the CTR program. Jurisdictions that received first-round GTEC funding were able to overcome those restrictions. Many small companies are located in suburban areas, and CTR activities can be beneficial in recruiting and retaining employees in these firms[1].

Where should the CTR program go from here?

The CTR program plays a critical role in implementing such initiatives and growth plans as the state's ten-year transportation investment strategy, the State Energy Strategy, community development plans, economic development plans and employer business plans. Current investments in CTR are necessary to sustain support for the foundation of partnerships, but additional investments are needed to support implementation of these plans and strategies.

1 "Review of the Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center Program, with Recommendations for Increasing Benefits to Suburban Cities," Hallenbeck; Carlson, TRAC, February 2011

CTR Board 2011 Investment Principles:

Support the principles of Moving Washington as a strategic framework for transportation

Strengthen and grow public-private partnerships to enhance trip reduction infrastructure, leverage investments, maximize resources and defer business costs

Link with economic, environmental, and community objectives

Focus resources where they have the most impact

Cultivate and reward local innovation and accountability

Incentivize integration of transportation and land use policies, plans and decisions

Evolution of the CTR program

The CTR Board is committed to evolving the program to adapt to changing conditions– making it more nimble, effective and relevant. As the fiscal future will be lean, the state must look beyond its budget constraints by leveraging the investments of local partners to benefit the state program. Likewise, local governments must be incented to participate with limited resources. Each community is unique, and the CTR program must be flexible enough to not only connect with local objectives but become a meaningful solution to their challenges. Statewide feedback and performance prove the GTECs succeeded because communities were highly invested in a program they helped design to meet their needs.

In the coming months, the CTR Board will evaluate the performance of the program relative to its 2012 goals. It will establish new goals focused on the 2020 timeframe. The CTR Board will also seek opportunities to create efficiencies in planning and implementation through incremental changes and exploratory learning. The idea is to design a more nimble framework that can support local and regional objectives while adapting to changing conditions over the next decade.

Evolution of the CTR program

"Symetra participates because it the right thing to do! CTR has many environmental benefits like reducing congestion and air pollution but one of the fundamental reasons we participate is the impact it makes on our employees. The program saves our employees money – up to $9,000 per year depending on miles driven. This contributes to overall employee engagement and retention. Our commute option (to driving alone) program continues to be one of our core benefits. We invite new employees to think about their commute choices before they start their first day at work. Our commitment to CTR has resulted in over half of our employees sharing a ride, biking, walking or using transit on a daily basis. Who doesn't like saving time, money on fuel costs coupled with wear and tear on your vehicle, and reducing the stress of being stuck in traffic?"

Peg Randles, Symetra Life Insurance Company

New methods and resources are needed to help the program achieve broader goals. Even a small state investment can leverage local partnerships and innovation that provide benefits far beyond the CTR program.

Recommendations to the Legislature

The network of partnerships and services created by the CTR program provide the foundation for delivering the most comprehensive trip-reduction program in the nation. Additional resources are needed to sustain a strong and resilient CTR program if Washington is to build a sustainable and integrated transportation system that drives economic growth.

Throughout the history of CTR, the program has been the foundation that allows for other transportation strategies and initiatives such as GTEC and construction traffic management to take hold. In the last two years, some of the GTEC programs have continued at a lower level of investment with other funding sources, but much of the momentum associated with funding and implementation has been lost. Communities are poised to resume these programs when the state reengages and resources become available. It is critical for the state to resume a leadership role in these programs if our collective challenges are to be addressed. Growing the program through targeted investments will advance Washington's shared objectives.

The CTR Board makes the following recommendation to the Legislature:

Expand investments in CTR with targeted investments to support economic corridors. This will help the program expand its benefits to a larger share of the travel market, improve the efficiency of the transportation system and leverage investments for local and regional economic benefits.

The CTR program has demonstrated value to individuals, employers, communities, regional governments and the state. This 20-year public-private partnership providest a proven return on investment for Washington state taxpayers. The program efficiently gets people to work and helps employers grow.

The CTR program provides enhanced benefits for the state and local communities through targeted investments. CTR can help address many policy objectives, making the best use of limited resources. Targeted expansion of the program is needed to support economic corridors, urban centers employers, and communities. Targeted investments are needed to implement Moving Washington, recommendations in the State Energy Strategy, economic development objectives and other initiatives.

Recommendations to the Legislature

The CTR Board will work on the following short- and long-term ideas for the program and report on progress in future legislative reports:

- **Short-term:** Explore funding and policy options to enhance local flexibility, to improve connections between local, regional and state objectives, and to achieve economies of scale.

  The CTR program provides the foundation for many innovative trip-reduction programs and key supportive strategies that address multiple transportation challenges. Communities across the state have embraced the programs created through CTR (such as GTEC), and remain interested in trying new strategies to achieve greater success through expanded local flexibility and stronger connections to local objectives. The GTEC program showed that community-based programs can expand partnerships, leverage additional resources and lead to better results.

  The CTR Board sees this next phase of the program as a learning opportunity to support new methods. The Board will work with local and regional partners to support and expand the parameters of flexibility that exist in the current law and determine if different methods will lead to greater program effectiveness.

- **Long-term:** Optimize flexibility and resources of the CTR program to respond to demand, to incorporate non-work trips and to leverage local investments.

  CTR can do more to help strengthen the economy and provide additional benefits for communities and the state. Every community has different needs, and the program has been most effective when it has responded to local challenges and objectives. Future options include expanding the program to include non-work trips, focusing on corridors or centers and targeting investments on the supply-side of transportation to achieve greater results. The CTR Board understands the program must be more flexible in the face of changing conditions and adaptable to the diverse needs of individual communities. The Board envisions a future where local determination leads to more innovation, greater performance and an integrated 21st century transportation system.

Washington State
Department of Transportation