



# Downtown Vancouver Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center Plan



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**APPENDIX A**  
LETTERS OF SUPPORT

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In 2006 the Washington State Legislature passed the CTR Efficiency Act to improve the efficiency of the state's transportation system. The legislation is focused on those areas of high employment, housing, and state highway congestion. The Act requires local jurisdictions to develop local and regional CTR plans, and provides them the opportunity to create Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers (GTEC). GTEC's are intended to be developed in a jurisdiction's densest employment or residential areas. A GTEC can utilize customized transportation demand management programs and efficient land-use policies to improve transportation system performance.

The City of Vancouver GTEC program is a collection of adopted goals and policies, facility and service improvements and marketing strategies to increase progress towards the reduction of drive alone trips and vehicle miles traveled. The program also specifies a financial plan and organizational structure for implementing the program strategies and services. Building upon the success of the existing Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program, the GTEC partners strive to meet the goals of the plan by working in partnership and coordination with other agencies.

The City of Vancouver GTEC program has been developed through involvement by employers, organizations, and individuals who helped identify strategies and ways for successful achievement of the goals. The program is also based on WSDOT guidance, the lessons learned from TMA's within the Vancouver/ Portland metropolitan area and from recognized experts. This plan helps to support the achievement of the jurisdiction's overall CTR, comprehensive and other plans.

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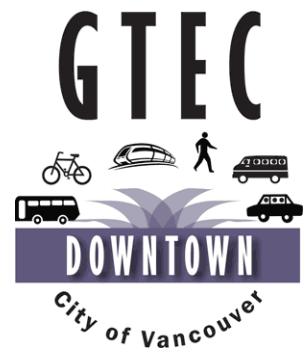
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## **Executive Summary**

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

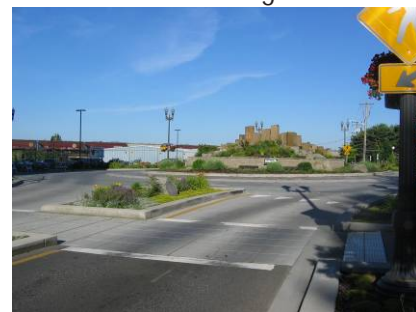
Westward expansion and European settlement during the nineteenth century enabled the City of Vancouver to become a vital economic and cultural center of activity in the state of Washington. Vancouver is one of the oldest inhabited areas in the Pacific Northwest. The City developed around Fort Vancouver, the first European settlement in the Northwest, and continued to grow throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Steady population growth occurred in the post-war years, spurred by the construction of Interstate 5 (I-5) in 1965 and Interstate-205 in 1982. During the 1990s, the population nearly tripled from in-migration and the annexation of Cascade Park, the largest annexation in state history. Vancouver is a thriving and diverse community with a 2003 population of 150,700 people, covering approximately 46 square miles.



Rapid growth in Vancouver has brought increased vehicular traffic, which has led to cut-through traffic in downtown neighborhoods, more running of red lights and speeding when traffic finally clears. Safety has become a real concern, especially for pedestrians. The City has made great strides toward developing a balanced, multi-modal transportation system, though needs still exist in areas for better sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit services. Traffic congestion at the I-5 Bridge has reached a critical state. According to Columbia River Crossing Project, "traffic congestion at the bridge will increase from six hours today to 14 hours in the year 2030. Bus travel times are increasingly impacted by congestion, bridge lifts and crashes on I-5. Crashes will grow with congestion. About one crash occurs every work day, a rate two times higher than similar freeways in Oregon and Washington." These delays in turn create traffic problems on Interstate 205.



As stated in the Vancouver Strategic Plan, the City pledges to develop and support a comprehensive, urban transportation system that provides alternative modes of mobility. The City's growing need for alternatives to drive alone travel necessitates an evaluation of strategies to relieve traffic congestion in Vancouver. However, the immediate need for road improvements and cost of maintaining and expanding the City's transportation system cannot be met with current funding sources. Capacity for future development is limited by lack of funding to rebuild the I-5 Bridge. The establishment of a Downtown GTEC will more efficiently manage automobile traffic in the downtown, while providing continued economic growth and community vitality.



## **1.2 VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GTEC**

The vision for downtown Vancouver is one where people from all walks of life come to gather, live, work, shop and enjoy. The City hopes to maintain Vancouver's small-town feel while continuing development by adding future employment and housing. This GTEC will assist the city by removing cars from downtown streets, clearing unnecessary parking, and providing pedestrian, bicycle and transit friendly links to major destinations. It will help provide additional transportation capacity without the need to build more on-street parking and/or parking infrastructure.

The City of Vancouver proposes to implement a series of GTEC programs in partnership and coordination with other agencies and local businesses. The planned local services and strategies for achieving the established goals and targets will be implemented in phases, as described in Chapter 4. The first year will require organizational work necessary to establish and run the GTEC in the short term, and will be managed primarily by the City. Most importantly, the first year will be used to set-up, market and manage several GTEC programs, including the creation of additional vanpools.

The success of this GTEC will depend largely upon the degree of participation and level of support from local businesses and residents. For this reason, the first two years of GTEC programs will center on outreach and awareness efforts. Short term strategies, implemented within the first two years of establishing the GTEC, will heavily focus on gaining support from the participating employers and area residents. These programs would include but are not limited to: area-wide promotions, ride-matching services, car-sharing services, and individualized marketing programs to suit the specific needs of employers and residential areas with a higher density of people. These programs will be implemented by the City and partnering agencies, and are intended to communicate the GTEC Plan, purpose and vision, while generating excitement and interest in the program.

## **1.3 GTEC TARGETS**

Using data from 2005, there were approximately 900 households within the Downtown GTEC. The GTEC area also provides over 11,000 jobs, less than 10% of which are retail. The remaining 10,000 plus jobs are classified as other, but include manufacturing, financial and business services, wholesale, transportation and government offices. Future projections show an additional 4,000 households within the Downtown GTEC by the year 2030, which represents an increase of over 3,000 households from 2005. Total employment within the GTEC area will grow to over 22,000 jobs, with nearly 90% classified as non-retail.

It is anticipated that the GTEC will reach all employers and 11,000 employees currently within the GTEC area. As employment with the GTEC begins to grow, it is anticipated that those new employees and employers will be involved in the GTEC program as well. It is intended that the GTEC will include outreach to residents, with the goal of reaching out to at least 50% of households in the first 5 years.

Overall, the Downtown Vancouver GTEC has established a target to reduce SOV trips by 14% and VMT by 16% by the year 2011. These are more aggressive goals than the 10% SOV and 13% VMT reductions identified for the region in the local CTR plans. The Downtown GTEC is designed to target a broader group of commuters than the CTR program, by including both area residents and small or medium-sized employers.

## **1.4 PROPOSED GTEC PROGRAM STRATEGIES**

Vancouver has made the first steps toward reducing the number of single occupant trips and vehicles miles traveled through its Commute Trip Reduction Plan. This GTEC will take that plan several steps further by specifically targeting a broader group of participants. The City will increase the number of van and carpools, construct additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities, facilitate Vancouver's high-capacity transit connection with the larger region and set an aggressive goal to achieve financial independence for the GTEC. The specific programs this GTEC will implement include the following:

- Increase the number of car or vanpools through improved ride matching services
- Work with employers to provide bicycle amenities such as bike parking and showers
- Develop and implement a plan to provide discounted transit passes to employees or area employers
- Implement program to subsidize carpools by paying the cost of parking
- Work with employers and area businesses to provide preferential parking to car and vanpools
- Work with employers to develop a flexible work schedule plan to reduce peak period trips
- Assist local employers with the development of a telework program

## **1.5 KEY FUNDING AND SERVICE PARTNERSHIPS**

To be successful, the GTEC plan will require on-going and active partnerships between the public and private sectors working together innovatively to design, implement and manage trip reduction programs and services. Many employers are already required to implement internal trip reduction efforts within worksites through the State's CTR Act. However, CTR efforts are limited to employers with 100 or more employees. As illustrated in this report, 87.7% of employers in Clark County employ less than 20 persons. As a result, the City of Vancouver, C-TRAN and private sector employers and associations will need to partner in a range of programs and services that will lead to a significant shift in the status quo for how trip access is managed within the GTEC. Planning and funding for new transit service, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (public sector), purchasing transportation demand management products (private sector) and on-going management and coordination of the GTEC (public/private) will require new sources of funding and a willingness of all partners to agree to common goals and objectives related to trip reduction and mode shares.

The City of Vancouver will work with major employers and business organizations to oversee implementation of the GTEC plan, and will provide direct assistance in designing and implementing worksite based employee programs. As GTEC programs expand and TDM activities increase, the responsibilities for funding and managing the GTEC will shift from the City to a Transportation Management Association (TMA). The TMA will develop, promote and manage the implementation of trip reduction programs to help affected employers make progress toward meeting their GTEC goals. The original funding sources, intended to be used to establish the GTEC plan, will be supplemented by private funding after the initial community outreach and organizational work have been completed.

The City will transfer its role and responsibilities to the newly established TMA when financial support from the community has been provided. This TMA would likely be established after the first two years of the GTEC program. The TMA could form a non-profit organization, establishing a Board containing representatives from downtown property owners, business owners and managers, the City of Vancouver, C-TRAN, local neighborhood and business associations and other interested parties. Alternately, the TMA could function as a part of a larger organization such as the Chamber of Commerce or the Vancouver Downtown Association. In the long term, the City will continue to assist local businesses and organizations, but will play a less prominent role in funding and managing the GTEC and/or TMA.

## **1.6 RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION PROGRAM**

The purpose of the CTR Act is to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled. The City of Vancouver has developed a CTR plan to assist employers of 100 employees or more with the implementation of CTR requirements. In addition to serving these major employers, the Downtown Vancouver GTEC will provide assistance to area residents, commuters, and employers of all sizes.