

DRAFT

**COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION PROGRAM
CTR Efficiency Act Implementation**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below are answers to some frequently asked questions about the Commute Trip Reduction Program and the most recent changes.

Question: Why did you make changes to the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program?

Answer: The current law sunsets the CTR Task Force in 2006. Recommendations were submitted to the legislature on the program's future by December 1, 2005. This was an opportunity to make changes to the program so that it could be more effective and efficient. The Task Force worked since August 2004 to shape recommendations for the future of the program.

Q: What does the current funding for the program do?

A: In 2005-2007, \$3.8 million was allocated to the ten CTR counties based on the number of worksites in the county (70%) and the number of trips reduced in the county (30%), with a minimum of \$160,000 allocated to each county per biennium. This funding helps local jurisdictions operate their CTR programs as defined in local ordinance: technical assistance to major employers, employer program review, and more. About \$1.4 million was allocated to the state for the CTR Task Force, data collection and technical support to local jurisdictions.

Q: How has the proposal changed funding for the CTR program?

A: Funding is subject to legislative appropriation. However, if the program continues to be funded at its current rate of \$5.4 million per biennium, the intent is to provide roughly the same amount of state funding for each jurisdiction that remains in the base program. (Over time, the number of worksites in the program has increased and the biennial allocation has declined, so that funding per worksite has decreased.) The CTR board is responsible for allocating CTR program funds and will explore different ways of allocating program funding based on performance.

Q: How is funding going to be allocated and who will receive it?

A: State program funds will be allocated by the state CTR Board to local jurisdictions, transit agencies, RTPOs, or other entities contracted to run the local program for the affected urban growth area (UGA). A contractor could be a government or private

agency. Local jurisdictions will continue to have a choice in whether they want to run their own program or contract out to another entity.

Q: Will the new CTR planning requirements for RTPOs that will take away local autonomy? What will the RTPOs be required to impose upon local jurisdictions?

A: No. Six RTPOs have a role in CTR for planning purposes only. The intent is for local jurisdictions and the RTPO to collaborate in a coordinated planning process. RTPOs will use local CTR plan information to develop a regional CTR plan, including a regional goal, strategies, and a financial plan. Local jurisdictions would retain autonomy for their CTR programs and would be the only entities authorized in the law to create growth and transportation efficiency centers (GTECs).

Q: Does adding RTPOs insert another layer of bureaucracy to the program?

A: No. A planning role for RTPOs is added, but this will not require changes in the day-to-day operation of the program. There are two main purposes for this change: for planning and for the programming of federal funds.

- First, the intent is for CTR to be elevated as a transportation strategy within the regional planning process and allow local information to be better utilized at the regional and state levels to establish priorities and integrate CTR programs with other planning processes.
- Second, the Task Force wants CTR, transportation demand management (TDM), and GTECs to be a higher priority in the planning and programming of federal funds by the RTPO.

Q: Is any money provided for the new planning requirements?

A: Yes. The state legislature provided \$750,000 in FY 2007 for WSDOT to provide to RTPOs and local jurisdictions to develop the local and regional CTR plans. WSDOT may also use some of the funds to hire contract staff to implement the legislation.

Q: What is the process for the local-regional-state plan development?

A: The intent of the legislation is for the local, RTPO, and state CTR plans to be coordinated in a collaborative fashion that involves all major stakeholders. Specific details of these relationships will be defined in the rule-making process, but the intent of the legislation is as follows:

- The state CTR board works collaboratively with local jurisdictions, RTPOs, transit agencies, major employers, and others to develop program rules, criteria and guidance.

- In a collaborative effort at the regional level, RTPOs, local jurisdictions, and others will initiate a regional CTR planning process, develop transportation criteria for GTECs and set minimum requirements for TDM programs.
- Local jurisdictions will adopt CTR plans and submit the plans to the RTPO for informational purposes.
- Local jurisdictions *may* designate GTECs. If a jurisdiction seeks state CTR funding for the GTEC, it will have to apply to the RTPO for certification.
- RTPOs will submit local and regional CTR plans to the state CTR Board for review. RTPOs and the state will discuss regional plans to ensure consistency. The state CTR Board will certify that both local and regional CTR plans meet the minimum requirements of the law and are consistent with program rules.

RTPOs would not have the authority to deny or redirect state CTR funds within their region, nor to reject local base program plans. Only the state CTR Board will have the authority to allocate state program funds.

Q: Why does the new law contain language that directs transit agencies, local governments, and RTPOs to identify GTECs as priority areas for service and facility investments?

A: The intent is to increase collaboration among transit agencies, local governments, and RTPOs to integrate land use and transportation decision-making at the local level and support the transportation investments of CTR. The proposal asks these entities to support the formation of the GTECs as a local and regional priority. Many jurisdictions already designate centers in their comprehensive plans, and this proposal provides a financial incentive and formalizes the state's interest in supporting the success of those centers.

Q: Why would any jurisdiction ever want to designate a GTEC? Creating one seems to lay significant administrative burdens on the jurisdiction while directing very limited resources their way.

A: The intent of the legislation is to provide tools and incentives from the state for local jurisdictions to prioritize TDM as a transportation and economic development strategy. The GTEC program is a "start-up" strategy. If TDM is a local priority, and a jurisdiction seeks state support, this will support those intentions. It is in the state's interest for TDM to be more broadly used, particularly in key employment centers. Designation of a GTEC is not a requirement but may be used as an option.

Not all jurisdictions will seek to designate GTECs. In fact, there may be only a handful to start. It depends on local priorities. Over the longer term, however, the program may create significant benefits for local economic development and the state transportation system.

Q: Does the new law change the requirements for major employers?

A: No. However, a local jurisdiction may develop a TDM program for a GTEC that has different requirements for the employers in that center. The intent is for major employers to be at the table during the local and regional planning process to provide input for program development. GTECs should be more flexible and have less administrative requirements than the base program.

There are several specific changes in the proposal that affect employers:

- Employers would be required to do a baseline measurement before submitting a program to a jurisdiction for approval. Employers would have 90 days after becoming affected to do a survey, and 90 days after receiving the results to submit a program.
- Language has been added to the good-faith effort clause so that
 - If an employer intends to substantially modify its program it shall either receive approval from the reviewing jurisdiction or acknowledge that its program may not be approved.
 - An employer will provide adequate information and documentation of implementation when requested by the jurisdiction.
- The proposal gives jurisdictions flexibility to review employer programs at least once every two years, rather than annually.

Q: What are the state, regional, and local goals and measurements?

A: WSDOT and the CTR board will establish a state minimum target and goal that applies statewide. The target and goal is under development. Local and regional goals and measurements will be developed during the CTR planning process and informed by state data and guidance. GTECs will be expected to strive for a higher goal than the regional goal in order for their programs to be certified for funding. Acceptable measurements will be developed in the rule-making process. The state goal will be developed by the CTR Board using the regional plans.

Q: How will the GTEC program be funded?

A: WSDOT and the CTR board intend to pursue state funding for the GTEC program, with additional funding incentives to be created at the state and regional level in the form of competitive grants, formula allocations, and prioritized services and facilities.

Q: What is the definition of “person hours of delay” and how is it calculated?

A: The person hour of delay figure is an *indicator* of congestion. It replaces county population as the determinant of where the program is focused. The state will be making the calculations of affected UGAs using this congestion data, which is available for all state highways around the state and is collected by WSDOT.

Q: Do you really want the CTR Board to have administrative responsibility, e.g., approving RTPO trip reduction plans. Is this really what you want that body to be doing?

A: Not entirely. The CTR Board will fulfill the state CTR planning function by reviewing local and regional plans and using this input to develop a state goal and plan. From a policy perspective, this will be an important Board function. More of the administrative details may be delegated to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for discussion and recommendations back to the Board.