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314 E. Champion Street Bellingham, WA 98225 WhatcomSmartTrips.org 360-756-TRIP (8747)

FREE “SMART TRIPS” BUS PASSES FOR DOWNTOWN AND FAIRHAVEN RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

BELLINGHAM, June 19, 2006—Residents and employees of downtown Bellingham and Fairhaven can receive a free quarterly bus pass (while supplies last) beginning July 1, 2006. Information regarding how to obtain a free bus pass will be available at an “Open Bus” to be parked at Bellingham City Hall on Wednesday, June 21, from 11am to 1pm.

The distribution of 4,200 bus passes (through July 2007) is one element of the Smart Trips program to be launched county wide next month. Smart Trips is geared toward increasing the use of alternative transportation throughout Whatcom County. Program elements include monthly and quarterly drawings for cash prizes, incentive gifts, discounts at local merchants, and an emergency ride home program.

Free bus passes have been made possible through Washington State’s Trip Reduction Performance Program. Recipients of free passes will be required to complete a survey and register as Smart Trips participants. The program will allow WTA to gauge the extent to which a group discount or free pass can increase ridership within a target area. The program is also intended to attract new riders to WTA’s new Red Line, with service every 15 minutes between downtown Bellingham and Fairhaven.

Whatcom Smart Trips is an ongoing partnership between local government, public agencies, employers, and schools to promote transportation by walking, bicycling, sharing rides, and riding the bus.

Information regarding free bus passes can also be obtained by calling 756-TRIP (8747). Smart Trips registration begins July 1 at whatcomsmarttrips.org.