



Whatcom Smart Trips: A Model for Other Urban Areas

Notes for Slides

Title Slide

Slide 2 – All urban areas

Slide 3 – Long-term Strategies

It's common knowledge that communities interested in reducing vehicle trips should be implementing these long-term strategies. Build it and they will come – pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders. However, these strategies take time and money. There are a lot of things that urban areas can do to increase walking, cycling and transit trips in the meantime.

Slide 4 – Ready to Do Now

Almost everyone living in an urban community makes at least some drive-alone vehicle trips that could be easily switched to walking, cycling, ridesharing and transit trips *with the existing infrastructure and transit service*. It makes sense to pick the low-hanging fruit first. Find the people who are interested in driving less and give them the help and encouragement that they need. That's the basis of Whatcom Smart Trips.

Slide 5 – What is Whatcom Smart Trips?

Smart Trips is funded by multiple local and state partners as well as some private sponsors. (The funding will be discussed in later slides.) Two of the local funding partners have roles in operating the program – Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) and Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA).

Slide 6 – Whatcom Smart Trips includes:

Smart Trips is a collection of programs marketed under a single Brand Name. Each program addresses a specific need that people have for information and/or motivation. The overall program targets people who live or work in Whatcom County.

Slide 7 – Welcome to your Trip Diary

Keeping track of walking, cycling, ridesharing and transit trips makes participants more aware of the circumstances surrounding those trips. Online trip diaries help participants understand that they DO have opportunities to make Smart Trips. A staff person spends an average of 15 minutes a day answering the Smart Trips phone line and email address, helping people understand the program and use the online trip diaries.

Slide 8 – I made the following Smart Trips

For example, when you record the trip that you make walking to the pharmacy on your lunch hour, it helps you recognize that there are other trips that you could conveniently make on foot.

Slide 9 – Thank you for making Smart Trips!

The website reports participants' personal pollution prevention statistics and fuel savings. It also indicates how soon participants will receive their next Smart Trips Milestone coupons (one of several incentives discussed in later slides). Many participants report that seeing the pollution prevention numbers are as motivating as receiving Smart Trips incentives.

Slide 10 – Community Smart Trips Stats

On the News page, participants can see how their personal trip stats are contributing to the Smart Trips statistics of the entire community.

To see how the website functions for Smart Trips participants, staff from other cities are encouraged to click the new user button on the homepage and create false records for themselves. (The state field will only accept Washington – WA or British Columbia – BC.) Please use XYZ as your last name if you create a false record. That allows WCOG staff to realize that the record is false and should eventually be deleted.

Slide 11 – Smart Trips Rewards

The trip diaries are connected to a database that WCOG staff use for mailing incentives to participants. The receptionist spends about 10% of her time mailing the incentives (in the form of coupons). Incentives are given to participants as they reach milestones in the number of smart trips made. Incentives and the frequency of distributing the incentives have been chosen to appeal to beginners and veterans, people who like prizes and people who just like the pat on the back.

WCOG and WTA staff have password-protected administrative access to the Smart Trips database that they use for administering Emergency Ride Home, helping participants with computer questions, creating reports, conducting prize drawings, printing envelopes for mailing incentives, and many other functions.

Whatcom Council of Governments is willing to provide the code for the Smart Trips website and database at no cost to other jurisdictions. Jurisdictions wishing to do this should be aware that they will most likely need to invest several thousand dollars to adapt the code for their own situation and to train someone to maintain it. If you have any questions about doing this, contact Susan Horst at susan@wcog.org or 360-676-6974.

Slide 12 – Smart Trips Discounts

The program provides positive reinforcement right away with the Smart Trips Discount. After recording just 10 trips, a Discount card is mailed to participants. WCOG staff

maintain a list of 100+ businesses that offer discounts to cardholders. Businesses do this in exchange for the advertising that they receive from the Smart Trips program. This program requires about 40 hours a year to maintain. To implement a similar program in your community, plan on a minimum of a month or two of work to establish the initial agreements with the businesses offering discounts.

Slide 13 – Smart Trips Milestone Coupons

After every 100 trips recorded, participants receive a coupon for a small thank you gift. This incentive is designed to encourage participants to continue recording their trips. WCOG staff recruit local vendors for these thank you gifts. The vendors collect the coupons and submit them to WCOG along with an invoice for the wholesale cost of the items provided. The gifts cost \$1.50 - \$3.00 (wholesale) and are mostly locally made food items, the idea being that most people will find these to be desirable gifts.

Slide 14 – Smart Trips Prize Winners

All participants who record 5 or more Smart Trips per month are eligible for monthly and quarterly cash prize drawings. This incentive is designed to appeal to people who don't care about the small freebies but are motivated by the chance to win a big prize. It is relatively affordable to offer a very small number of large prizes compared to a large number of small prizes.

Slide 15 – Smart Trips Leaders

Most of Smart Trips messaging and incentives are geared toward encouraging people who don't really see themselves as pedestrians, cyclists, ridesharers or bus riders. It feels like a big step to them to try bicycling or riding the bus. Accordingly, the bar is set pretty low for earning most of the incentives. The exception is the recognition of Smart Trips Leaders – people who record 200 or more Smart Trips in a year. These people are important to the program. They do most of the word-of-mouth advertising for Smart Trips.

Slide 16 – Emergency Ride Home

Emergency Ride Home provides free taxi service to bus pass holders and Smart Trips participants who experience an emergency or illness at work and need to get home quickly. WTA runs the service using their customer service phone line and contracts with a local taxi company to provide the rides. Participants can use the service up to three times a year. This is a very important service for people who are new to sustainable transportation. They need that assurance that they won't be trapped at work if they leave their car at home. However, emergencies don't really happen that often. WTA has experienced very limited use of the service – 48 trips in 2007 and 39 trips in 2008. People want to know that the service is available, but it's just not used that much. So with a very small investment, WTA is able to persuade many more community members to try making Smart Trips.

Slide 17 – A Smart Way to Get to Work

The employer program provides free services to employers who establish worksite programs to help employees make Smart Trips to work. The employer page of

WhatcomSmartTrips.org provides a description of the services provided. As of May 2011 there were 128 Smart Trips Employer Partners requiring a .8 FTE to coordinate the program.

Slide 18 – Welcome ETC!

One of the services provided to employer partners is access to the Smart Trips database. Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs) logon to track the Smart Trips made by employees at their companies. This allows employers to recognize and reward their Smart Trips participants. Employee participation statistics also provide great PR for the company.

Slide 19 – Custom Trip Report

This is a sample report of a worksite's employee participation.

Slide 20 – Host a Smart Trips Party!

The Smart Trips program has benefitted immensely from detailed mobility data for the City of Bellingham. In-depth surveys conducted by Socialdata have provided data on mode choice, duration and trip distance, car usage, potential for increasing walking, cycling and transit trips, and much more. Recently, program staff have begun targeting their efforts where the data shows there to be good opportunities for increasing Smart Trips. One area of opportunity is clearly bicycle trips made by women. Men in Bellingham make more than twice as many bicycle trips as women. Smart Trips parties are one of the strategies that staff are using to educate and encourage women to explore sustainable transportation modes. A woman invites a dozen or so of her friends to her house, and Smart Trips staff co-host the party by bringing brownies, a transportation trivia game and education materials.

Slide 21 – Pedal Power

This poster campaign was targeting younger women who might be reticent to bicycle because of concern about their appearance.

Slide 22 – Dude Magnet Poster

Slide 23 – Rock & Roll Poster

Slide 24 – Senior Ladies

Our data also indicate that we have opportunities to increase bus trips among seniors. It's a challenging group to work with, but very rewarding when we are successful. Unlike everyone else, where we must make the case for giving up vehicle trips in favor of sustainable modes, with seniors, their trips are just not made. They wait for family and friends to give them rides or they don't go where they want to go. Teaching them to ride the bus gives them greater control over their lives and stronger connections to their community.

Slide 25 – Senior Bus Tours Poster

Starting in the Spring of 2011 we began offering guided tours using our local fixed route bus service. The tours begin at a bus stop near the local senior recreation center and use regular bus routes. These tours have been very well received and attended by the seniors. Our goal is to teach active seniors who are still driving how to ride the bus in preparation for the day when they give up their car keys. Some participate expressly so that they learn how to ride the bus, while others participate because of the attraction to the destination. Either way, we achieve our goal. We've found that targeting active seniors works much better than our previous strategy where we worked with seniors living in senior residences. Our experience in those situations was that many seniors were a little past the teachable age. Some had cognitive difficulties and most were fearful of venturing out on their own.

Slide 26 – Shop on Foot

Another area of opportunity is shopping trips. When we think of shopping, we instantly think of the big shopping trips that are really only possible with a car. But all of us make trips to the store for one or two items. These are perfect opportunities to make walking and/or bicycling trips. In September of 2009, program staff mailed these postcards to 540 households within a quarter mile of one of the local grocery stores. Participants who recorded three shop on foot trips during the month received a free Smart Trips bag and were entered into a drawing for a Hook and Go (pictured on the front). There was a 4% response rate on the campaign.

Slide 27 – everybodyBIKE website

everybodyBIKE is the bicycle education program of Whatcom Smart Trips. The program provides bicycle safety classes, skills rodeos for children, and Bike Buddies (veteran cyclists who mentor beginner cyclists).

Slide 28 – Gear Up for Spring Cycling

This is one of our ads for our adult bicycle education classes.

Slide 29 – Enjoy Autumn by Bike

We're very intentional about showing local people in recognizable place riding comfortable bikes and looking mainstream.

Slide 30 – Photo of bicycle skills rodeo

This boy is testing his skills on a bicycle rodeo course. One FTE (split between two people) manages the **everybodyBIKE** program and coordinates educational/promotional events using a small team of volunteers and contractors.

Slide 31 – Photo of Sprocket Hero

Sprocket Hero teaches bicycle safety at a Boys & Girls Club.

Slide 32 – Photo of chicken crossing the road

On Walk a Child to School Day, children help the chicken cross the road.

Slide 33 – Bellingham Bike-In Movie Theater Ad

We also sponsor events for all ages like our summer Bike-In (instead of a drive-in movie). This slide was used as an ad preceding movies shown in our local independent cinema.

Slide 34 – Team Up for everybodyBIKE Splash Page for Website

Team Up for everybodyBIKE is Whatcom Smart Trips celebration of National Bike Month in May. Our goal is to encourage new cyclists and expand the bicycling community by teaming up people who bike a lot or a little with people who haven't started yet.

Slide 35 – Promotional Campaign

The Community Relations & Marketing Manager at WTA runs the Smart Trips promotional campaign. She spends \$75,000/year on all forms of Smart Trips advertising and outreach combined. This is WTA's total yearly financial contribution to the program. (All other local partners contribute cash to WCOG's Smart Trips operating budget.) \$75,000/year is a lot of money in the small media market of Whatcom County. In 2008, a substantial amount was used to create the 5-minute Smart Trips video that is linked to the News page of WhatcomSmartTrips.org.

Slide 36 – Smart Trips Posters

The Smart Trips promotional campaign uses local faces to communicate the idea that participants are people "just like me".

Slide 37 – Smart Trips Print Ads

All advertising, website pages, letters and printed pieces make liberal use of praise and gratitude. Program staff sincerely believe that Smart Trips participants are making Whatcom County a better place. That message and variations of it appear in all program materials and advertising. Smart Trips messaging is 100% positive, no guilt:

You're already doing it at least some of the time

Look for the easy trips to change

Slide 38 – Smart Trips Bus Exterior Ads

The Smart Trips participants featured in these exterior bus ads and the posters on the previous slide agreed to come to a combination photo shoot and video filming event. Their images, participation statistics and comments about the program were used in the 5-minute informational video, on the website and in many different printed materials. It was a very efficient way to create a library of images of local participants.

Slide 39 – Small Business Owner

Bellingham and Whatcom County are small communities, so it is possible with a small amount of money to really get noticed with our print advertising. But we also like to use posters to raise awareness of the program and create that feeling that "everybody's doing it." These posters and similar postcards advertised our bike classes for adults.

Slide 40 – Professional Musician

Slide 41 – Massage Therapist Extraordinaire

Slide 42 – Smart Trips Drink Coasters

These drink coasters are in use in several local bars and restaurants. They are our latest answer to the challenge – how do we reach people who don't see our print ads.

Slide 43 – Neighborhood Smart Trips

Online trip diaries, incentives, educational materials and safety classes are very effective ways of motivating and educating people, but these methods require community members to take the initiative and sign up online or request assistance. Neighborhood Smart Trips goes directly to community members' homes to ask if they want to participate. People in a targeted area are contacted at home and engaged in their own educational process, and in so doing, discover their own internal motivations for using sustainable transportation modes. Neighborhood Smart Trips is labor intensive, but it produces durable behavior change. Socialdata, the firm that developed this approach, calls it Individualized Marketing (IndiMark™). Socialdata has conducted hundreds of successful IndiMark projects in cities around the world. Follow-up surveys in Perth, Australia; Portland, OR; and Bellingham, found that reductions in drive-alone trips were maintained or increased three and five years after the projects.

Slide 44 – Map of targeted area in 2008 project

The targeted area included just over 10,000 household, about one-third of the city's population.

Slide 45 – Target Area Response

All Individualized Marketing projects follow the same procedure. Households in the targeted area are contacted by letter and by phone, asking if they are interested in information about walking, bicycling and riding the bus. Households are segmented by their responses:

N = not interested

I = interested

R with = regular user with interest in further information

R without = regular user without interest in further information

Slide 46 – Neighborhood Smart Trips Materials Order Form

The Interested group receives an order form for educational and motivational materials. They also receive follow-up phone calls if they are slow in returning the forms. All phone calls are friendly and encouraging and intended to establish a dialogue with participants that engages them more deeply in their own learning process. This technique takes more time and money than standard direct mail campaigns, but the success rate justifies the investment. In the 2008 Neighborhood Smart Trips campaign, one-third of Bellingham households (10,037) were targeted. Contact was made with 89%. 45% of those households fell into the Interested group and 90% of them ordered and received materials.

Slide 47 – Bellingham Smart Trips Map

One of the materials that all Neighborhood Smart Trips participants receive is a Smart Trips map. These maps show safe bicycling routes, bus routes and individual bus stops.

Slide 48 – Stop-specific Bus Schedule

Another important educational item is a printed schedule of the times that the bus stops at the bus stop nearest to your house. This is critical information for people who have never ridden the bus before. Giving such a person a multi-page transit guide isn't very helpful.

Slide 49 – Walking brochures

These are other educational materials, all featuring photos of Whatcom County residents in recognizable locations.

Slide 50 – Bicycling brochures

Slide 51 – Active Transportation for Children

Slide 52 – Are these programs working?

Slide 53 – New Participants in Online Trip Diaries (by year)

Participation in the program is the simplest measurement of its effectiveness. Over 3,000 people signed up for the online trip diaries in the first six months of the program (July-Dec 2006). The rate of new online registrants slowed in 2007, but increased in 2008 when we did the Neighborhood Smart Trips campaign. The rate of new registrants has slowed since then, although the program continues to grow.

Slide 54 – Miles Not Driven (by year)

The year to year change in miles-not-driven parallels the change in new registration.

Slide 55 – May 6, 2011

These are the total participation statistics from the time that the program began in July 2006 until the beginning of May 2011. The program will be five years old in July and has 12,729 participants. That represents more than 6% of the population of Whatcom County's 200,000 residents. That level of participation alone is an accomplishment.

Slide 56 – What are we hoping to achieve?

However, enthusiasm for the program isn't the real goal. Program implementers and funders want to know if the program is causing participants to change their mode choice and if so, for what percentage of their trips.

Is the percentage of drive-alone trips decreasing?

Are the percentages of walking, cycling and transit increasing?

Is a higher percentage of the population making these trips?

Slide 57 – City-wide Mode Shift 2004 – 2009

And the answer is yes, mode share throughout the City of Bellingham is changing. Walking, bicycling and transit trips have increased and vehicle trips have decreased.

Slide 58 – 2008 Project – Target Area Mode Shift

In the third of the city where the 2008 Neighborhood Smart Trips campaign was conducted, mode shift has been even more dramatic. Although the mode share for walking, bicycling and transit was much higher to begin with than in the city overall, the campaign:

- Increased walking trips by 22%
- Increased bicycling trips by 35%
- Increased transit trips by 10%
- Decreased vehicle trips by 13%

Slide 59 – Mode Shift by Smart Trips Diary Participants

For Smart Trips diary participants in the targeted area, the results are even better. These residents reduced vehicle trips by 20%! This is a very encouraging result. It shows that people who are already high users of sustainable transportation modes have more, not less, ability to shift their vehicle trips – something that is important to note as we strive to meet future greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Slide 60 – Increase in Physical Activity

An important benefit of increasing walking, bicycling and transit trips is the increase in physical activity for the people making these trips.

Slide 61 – Reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled

In Washington State, 85% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are from energy-related activities, and the transportation sector accounts for over half of these emissions. One of the most important results of the 2008 campaign was the 15% reduction in vehicle miles traveled.

Slide 62 – Reduction in Greenhouse Gases

The 15% reduction in VMT will result in an annual decrease in greenhouse gas emissions of 3,500 tons.

Slide 63 – Program Costs

Slide 64 – Revenue Sources

For communities wishing to implement a program like Whatcom Smart Trips, the biggest challenge is likely to be recruiting the necessary funding. There are few if any tailor-made funding sources for this kind of community-wide education and incentive program. Local, state and federal governments understand how to fund infrastructure improvements, and to some extent, specifically targeted transportation safety programs, but not community-wide education and encouragement programs. In developing the

funding for Whatcom Smart Trips, WCOG staff first created a detailed plan for each of the component programs, along with educated guesses about costs. A description of the proposed programs and estimated costs formed a proposal that was presented, first to WTA, then to the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County, and finally to a state legislator who chaired the Washington State Senate Transportation Committee. Each entity was asked to contribute a specified amount for three years from their transportation budgets. In addition to this core funding, WCOG applied for specific state and private grants whose targeted purposes were aligned with components of the Smart Trips program. In 2010, WCOG was successful in procuring federal funds for Whatcom Smart Trips.

Slide 65 – Expenses

The details of this expense chart have limited value for communities that are considering creating a Smart Trips-like program. WCOG and WTA expenses are idiosyncratic to this situation. Even if a city wanted to build a program identical to Whatcom Smart Trips, staffing, vendors, media and materials costs would all be different. For a city that is considering building a program similar to Whatcom Smart Trips, the best approach is to write a detailed description of the services that you wish to provide and base your cost estimates on that vision.

How many people do you guess will use each service?

How will you tell people about it? Design costs? Printing costs? Postage? Advertising? Website design?

Will you have physical things that need to be distributed? How will you do that?

How much staff time will it take to provide the service?

Will you have ongoing distribution costs? Maintenance costs?

The most important bit of information to be gained from this chart is that a significant investment has been made in a relatively small community. Cities need to invest at this level if they really want to provide the encouragement, assistance and supportive environment that people need to explore new forms of transportation. But remember, compared to the cost of automobile infrastructure, Whatcom Smart Trips is a bargain. The entire budget for three years of Whatcom Smart Trips would only pay for one fairly complicated intersection improvement project. Ask your potential contributors, what is the benefit of one \$2 million intersection improvement? How does that compare to an educational and motivational program that reduces 30 million miles of vehicle trips in less than five years?

Slide 66 – Level of Investment

Any city that wants to increase the number of walking, bicycling and transit trips by providing education and encouragement should anticipate a long-term need for whatever programs are developed. There is a lot of work to be done to help people try new forms of transportation. It won't happen overnight, and no matter how enthusiastically people participate in your programs, it takes awhile for significant numbers to join in. In other words, anticipate an ongoing investment in whatever program you create.

With Whatcom Smart Trips, that investment is \$2-3 per year per resident. That investment doubled in 2008 when WCOG hired Socialdata to conduct an Individualized Marketing campaign. These campaigns are labor-intensive and therefore more costly than the ongoing program costs. On the other hand, as was discussed in previous slides, the effectiveness of the approach justifies the investment. Furthermore, Socialdata has done repeated follow-up surveys in several cities (including Bellingham) where Individualized Marketing campaigns have been conducted and found that the gains in walking, bicycling and transit trips are maintained without any further campaigns. In other words, you can significantly improve the success of your other programs, if you're willing to make the one-time investment in this approach.

Although five WCOG staff members regularly work on component programs of Whatcom Smart Trips, it amounts to only slightly more than three FTEs. It is difficult to advise other cities about their staffing needs. You won't need to expend so much time and effort in developing your program if you stick closely to the model of Whatcom Smart Trips. You can benefit from the experience of WCOG and WTA staff and all the materials that we have developed. You can also choose to implement component programs one at a time. With these approaches in mind, it's possible that you could begin with one full-time staff member who receives some support from others in the organization. However, if you aim to create a comprehensive program that really provides the support that your community members need, it's difficult to imagine making it work with such a minimal staffing level.

Slide 67 – How do you create a program like Whatcom Smart Trips?

Slide 68 – Essential Preconditions

Accessibility

Think about where you live and the places that you go. Can you get there on foot, by bicycle or on transit? Every community has residential areas and destinations that are designed to be accessed by car. But if that is true for most homes and businesses in your community, a Smart Trips-like program will not be very effective.

Good Transit Partner

Does your transit agency serve only commuters to other areas? Only the transit dependent? Are they interested in converting car trips to walking, biking and transit trips? It's more challenging to entice vehicle drivers to use a transit service than to simply provide transit service to current customers. To run a Smart Trips program, you need a transit partner that wants to work hard for new customers.

Receptive Community

If community members don't perceive any problems with congestion/parking, will they have other reasons to be supportive? If the community culture is interested in doing things to protect the environment, a Smart Trips program will still work for you.

Local Champions and Financial Commitment

Do local leaders understand the benefits of increased use of sustainable transportation modes? Will they advocate for supportive land use and transportation policies? Will they contribute significant funding for the program?

Program Implementers

Do you have an organization that is willing to house such a program? Do they have staff with the creativity and passion to implement the program? Would they be able to hire additional staff if needed?

Slide 69 – Important Design Factors

Target Audience

Talking to the entire community requires extensive use of websites, media, public presentations, and mailings for communication and distribution of incentives and educational materials.

No Targeted Trips

Some urban areas have experience operating vehicle trip reduction programs that target congested corridors and/or large worksites. Whatcom Smart Trips includes an employer program, but the overall approach intentionally does NOT target specific trips. Whatcom Smart Trips lets participants choose which vehicle trips that they want to change to Smart Trips. In so doing, the program has more success empowering people to do what they want to do, rather than trying to persuade them to be interested in ‘high value’ mode shifts, such as long distance trips, congested corridor trips or peak hour trips. More people are encouraged to participate when they are in charge of their own educational process. People will naturally choose the easiest trips to change to Smart Trips. Those may or may not be the trips that local stakeholders care about. However, making easy Smart Trips helps people see the value of other, more challenging behavior changes. In the end, you have more people using sustainable transportation modes for more of their trips.

Community Needs

Design your program to provide the education, assistance and encouragement that is needed in your community – not just what the funders want to pay for. You won’t have the comprehensive program that you need if you tailor your program to available grants. If you can’t get local partners to fund the program that you envision, take a step back and spend some time educating and persuading the potential funders.

Positive Goals

The premise of Whatcom Smart Trips is to get people to do MORE of something – walk, bicycle, share rides and ride the bus. This is so much easier than asking people to do LESS of something – drive cars, pollute the air, contribute to traffic congestion, etc. When you ask people to do MORE of something, you can be very concrete and specific. People need that specific communication and education if they are going to try new behaviors. Get right to the point and talk about what you want them to do and how you

can help them. Focusing on vehicle trips places too much emphasis on the behavior that people already are engaged in. People think about all the reasons that they need to keep driving so much. They tend to feel guilty rather than responding to your encouragement and offers of assistance. A vehicle trip reduction orientation also makes program implementers into people who operate automobile programs. The assumption is that the transportation system is all about vehicles and the best that anyone can do is to make a few reductions here and there. A vehicle trip reduction orientation prevents implementers from seeing walking, bicycling and transit trips as real transportation options that are desirable in and of themselves. This makes the program implementers ineffective communicators, educators and motivators. Of course, Whatcom Smart Trips does result in fewer vehicle trips, less pollution, less traffic congestion, etc. But along the way, the words and images are all about how great it is to walk, bicycle, share rides and ride the bus. Whatcom Smart Trips is about community transformation, not just making whatever improvements we can achieve in an automobile-dominated transportation system.

Positive Messaging

Compliment everyone. Make them feel good about what they are already doing. After all, no one drives alone for 100% of their trips. Even people who never bicycle or ride buses for transportation, share rides with people occasionally and walk for very short trips. Guilt makes people feel defensive. Focusing on the positive puts everyone in the right frame of mind to try making more Smart Trips.

Beautiful and Compelling

When it comes to marketing and communications, programs like Whatcom Smart Trips are in competition with the automobile industry and the millions of dollars that they put into advertising. Make sure that your images are as beautiful and compelling as they can be. Avoid cute clipart that trivializes your messaging. Use the best design work that you can afford. Show pictures of people that everyone can identify with. Use messaging that is motivating for your audience.

Slide 70 – Essential Program Elements

Program Measurement

If you're going to create a program designed to increase the use of sustainable transportation modes, you need to know what your starting point is. How many trips are being made currently by walking, bicycling, sharing rides and riding the bus? And after you've operated your program for three years or so, you and your funders will want to know if you're making a difference. Whatcom Smart Trips is using baseline and follow-up measurements conducted by Socialdata, the German firm that also conducts the Individualized Marketing campaigns (Neighborhood Smart Trips). Socialdata uses household trip diaries along with follow-up phone calls and letters to collect detailed and accurate mobility data. Their basic survey technique provides information about mode choice, trip purposes, travel time, numbers of trips, distance traveled and vehicle use. All information can be cross tabulated with social demographic variables, days of the week and time of day. Socialdata also conducts In-depth Mobility Surveys, which additionally

provide information about trip legs, attitudes, potential for reducing car trips, potential for increasing use of sustainable transportation modes, benchmarks for neighborhoods and the experiences versus expectations that people have when they use sustainable transportation modes. Socialdata has conducted both basic mobility surveys and In-depth Mobility Surveys in Bellingham. Whatcom Smart Trips has greatly benefitted from both kinds of data collection.

Trip Tracking

The underlying premise of Whatcom Smart Trips is that many, if not most people have opportunity to shift vehicle trips to Smart Trips. Trip tracking is critical to helping people recognize situations when it would be easy for them to make additional Smart Trips. Besides serving as a fundamental educational tool, trip tracking also allows program implementers to reinforce the learning experience with positive feedback, in the form of incentives and information about positive contributions to the community (such as pollution reduction).

Incentives

Whatcom Smart Trips uses a diversity of incentives that are distributed at different levels of participation to motivate as many people as possible to participate in the program. The ‘feel good’ aspect of the program is usually what keeps people participating, but it’s the incentives that get them to try it in the first place.

Educational Materials

People know IN THEORY how to walk, bicycle, share rides and ride the bus for transportation. But if they are actually going to do it, they need specific information, for example:

How does a bicyclist turn left from a one way street?

How do I carry things on my bike?

How do I find someone to carpool with?

Where is the closest bus stop to my house? If I get on a bus that stops there, where will the bus take me?

Whatcom Smart Trips has developed a large number of educational materials devoted to the details of making Smart Trips. These materials cover topics specific to each mode of transportation and are written for children, adults, parents, commuters, shoppers and employers.

Bicycle Education

Bellingham’s In-depth Mobility Survey found that 47% of vehicle trips could be easily switched to walking, bicycling and bus trips. Of those three potential modes, bicycling represents the biggest opportunity – 32% of the easily changed vehicle trips could be made by bicycle, followed by 17% bus and 15% walking. These percentages can be surprising to people accustomed to thinking of bicycles as recreational equipment. But their usefulness is logical. Unlike fixed route transit service, bicyclists can go anywhere. In addition, they can travel relatively long distances much more quickly and comfortably than a pedestrian. All that is to say that increasing bicycling trips is a very important goal of Whatcom Smart Trips. However, just because it’s important doesn’t mean that it’s

easy. Printed educational materials may be sufficient to help someone start walking more or even start riding the bus, but real human help is necessary if someone is going to begin riding a bicycle alongside cars in the street. Safety classes for adults, bicycle skills rodeos for children and mentoring for novice cyclists are all extremely important services provided by Whatcom Smart Trips (through the everybodyBIKE program).

Public Awareness Campaign

Whatcom Smart Trips definitely attracts new participants through word-of-mouth, but the program would not be nearly as successful without an ongoing advertising/public awareness effort. If you're going to create a great program to educate and motivate people to use sustainable transportation modes, you need to tell everyone about your program. The Whatcom Smart Trips public awareness campaign is also largely responsible for creating the 'supportive environment' that's needed to help people become comfortable with the idea of walking, bicycling and riding the bus. A small subset of any population are early adopters, ready to try new behaviors that fit their needs and values. However, most people need to be reassured that the new behavior is socially acceptable and even valued by their peers and the community as a whole. A good public awareness campaign makes people feel that using sustainable transportation is something worth trying, because everyone seems to think it's a good idea.

Neighborhood Education Campaigns

While it is possible to create a program like Whatcom Smart Trips without including Individualized Marketing (neighborhood education campaigns), the overall program wouldn't nearly be as effective. Most elements of Whatcom Smart Trips require community members to take the initiative – to ask for materials, sign up for a class, log on to the trip diaries, etc. Program implementers have to wait for people to come to them. With Individualized Marketing, you can take the program benefits to the doorstep of people's homes and ask them directly if they want assistance. As a result, the behavior change that occurs is multiplied by a much larger number of participants. In the 2008 Bellingham campaign, people living in the target area reduced their vehicle trips an average of only 1.5 trips per week and 1.7 miles per day, but the total impact is an annual reduction of 1.7 million vehicle trips, 9.5 million vehicle miles and 3,500 tons of greenhouse gases.

Not Essential, but Important

Whatcom Smart Trips includes two component programs and a third program that is in development that are not included here in this list of essential program elements:

- An employer program
- Emergency Ride Home
- A school program

While these programs provide important support to community members and significant momentum to the overall program, they are not essential. A community wishing to create a program similar to Whatcom Smart Trips could easily choose to add such programs later, after the essential program elements are established. An employer program takes a long-term focused effort with a full-time coordinator. With that level of resource investment, the benefits are definitely worthwhile. Employers create a ready-made

audience for educational materials and promotional events and their own investments multiply the effectiveness of the community's program. Emergency Ride Home is a service intended for people when they have an emergency at work, but no car available to take them quickly where they need to go. If your overall program doesn't include an employer program element, then you won't have as much emphasis on work trips as is the case with Whatcom Smart Trips. The Whatcom Smart Trips school program is being developed in 2011. Program implementers anticipate that it will require a similar level of commitment as the employer program, but also yield comparable benefits to the community.

Slide 71 – Photo of Smart Trips Participants

Whatcom Smart Trips has been whole-heartedly embraced by the community. Many participants contact program staff to say how much they appreciate what the program does for our community and how it helps them personally to reduce their resource consumption and pollution emissions. It does take a lot of time and resources, but it's definitely worth the effort.

Slide 72 – Program Contact Information

Whatcom Smart Trips program staff are happy to share the information in this slideshow and on the website with other urban areas interested in creating similar programs. Programs that provide education and encouragement to people to help them use sustainable transportation are still in their infancy. We all need to be sharing our best ideas with each other. If you have a specific question about Whatcom Smart Trips, please contact one of the staff members listed here. Good luck with your own efforts!