

## What is *Way to Go, Seattle*?

***Way to Go, Seattle!*** is part of Seattle's effort to improve transportation systems and provide more transportation choices. The **Way to Go, Seattle One-Less-Car Demonstration Study** is designed to show people that they can save money and simplify their lives by not owning their second or third, or even first, car. Our goal is to ease neighborhood traffic and automobile-caused air pollution.



The **One-Less-Car Demonstration Study** offers families information and financial incentives to help them reduce automobile use, try other transportation options, and rethink the way they use their car for both commuting and errands or entertainment. Participating families agree to not use their “extra” car for a number of weeks, keep a diary of their daily transportation behavior and choices, and help us determine both the barriers and incentives to car trip reduction. The study stipend the families receive is the same amount of money they would have in their pocket if they didn't own that second car. The stipend has averaged \$85 a week, the amount of money the average second car costs to own and operate (this figure includes all costs such as registration and insurance, maintenance, gas, and parking costs).

### What do *Way to Go, Seattle!* One-Less-Car participants do?

Three rounds of the Study were conducted in 2000, 2001, and 2002. For each round the City of Seattle signed a contract with participating families for either nine weeks (in 2000 & 2001) or twelve weeks (in 2002). The families agreed to use “one-less-car” for nine of the twelve weeks and receive a study stipend equal to the cost of owning and operating a second car - matched to each household's actual cost - in exchange for keeping daily records of all trips they make.

- ◆ Participants were provided with information and tools to try other transportation options.
- ◆ Each driving member of the household agreed to keep a daily diary of their travel behavior, including costs (e.g. when and why they took a bus or taxi, drove their car, biked, walked, rode with a neighbor, etc). They also kept qualitative comments in their diary, such as how they consolidated trips, when and why the transportation mode they chose either worked well or was too inconvenient, how weather influenced their choices, etc.
- ◆ Participants were also asked to keep a travel diary for the first three weeks of the study period, detailing how they normally get around, to give us “baseline” information. They received a stipend for providing us with this valuable baseline information, but at the lesser rate of \$25/week. For the nine weeks they did not use their second car, they were paid the amount of money they would actually have had in their pocket if they didn't own their “extra car” (this amount was determined by having them fill out our Car Cost Worksheet). The collective total averaged slightly less than the national average of \$85 per week.
- ◆ Participants turned in their travel diaries each Monday, and were paid their weekly stipend via automatic deposit after sending in the weekly travel diary. We also developed an online diary form to make this process easier and reduce labor, although participants will have the choice of using that, e-mailing, faxing, or postal mailing in their diaries.
- ◆ We checked odometers of the car the participants gave up at the start and end of the non-driving period to make sure the “extra” car was not used during the nine weeks. We also checked the odometer of the other car to give us another estimate of how much more the first car was be driven.
- ◆ Project households were asked to participate in media/informational/educational campaigns to describe the pros and cons of making more conscious transportation choices for up to one year after the project is completed.
- ◆ Participants filled out a follow-up survey to determine if there are lasting results.

At the end of their contract, we met with participants to hear from them directly how the project worked for their families. We also evaluated their use of the funds they received and the information in their diaries to see if, in fact, making better travel choices was less expensive than owning a second, or even a first, car and to learn what successes might be incorporated in a broader car trip reduction effort.

### **How does the public benefit from Way to Go, Seattle?**

Public benefits include less neighborhood traffic and less pollution. Over 60% of pollution contributing to global warming in the Northwest is from driving. Approximately 75% of trips are non-work related, so this is why we're as frustrated by traffic on weekends doing errands as we are during weekday commute hours. The Seattle **One-Less-Car Demonstration Study** provides the basis of an educational effort to get Seattleites to think about their transportation decisions and try riding the bus, participating in car sharing, bicycling and walking and other things that reduce auto trips.

Why do we want to know how to help Seattle residents change their transportation behavior? Because, in the long run, trip reduction can result in cleaner air, less wear and tear on streets, less land devoted to parking, and a shift in thinking about automobile use. This project is a cost-effective experiment to determine what works, and how receptive Seattle residents are to car trip reduction. It has also set the stage for a future public education campaign urging citizens to save money by making wise transportation choices – including potentially selling their “extra” cars. Increasing the mobility options and realizing the costs of driving are particularly important for low-income families where the cost of owning a car has a disproportionate impact on the family income.

We have produced a web page that offers tips and tools to make transportation choices including public transportation connections, maps, and sample “car-free trips” and which contains the outcomes of all three rounds of the Study. Please visit [www.seattle.gov/waytogo](http://www.seattle.gov/waytogo).

### **What's Next for the Way to Go, Seattle One-Less-Car Demonstration?**

- ◆ Just from hearing about the project, people are selling their cars! Four applicants for the second round (Spring 2001) decided to promptly sell their second cars and start realizing the savings immediately before the study began. Some of the families made the decision to sell their cars after hearing how much other families saved, others made the decision after they filled out our new Car Cost Worksheet that helped them calculate how much money they would save each month if they gave up one car.
- ◆ Additional long-term benefits will be realized through the planned media campaign based on the One-Less-Car Study which will introduce the concept of “Transportation Conservation” building on Seattle’s past successes of energy, water, and solid waste conservation efforts. We are preparing to launch a pilot version in the Fall of 2003 under the name of the “**One-Less-Car Challenge**.” Participants will learn that owning fewer cars reduces stress and saves money, and the campaign promotes SOV trip reduction in favor of walking, biking, and busing by providing information about transportation options and incentives to drive less. Households will be asked to give up the use of their first or second car for one month.
- ◆ We will also be packaging the results to enable other cities to replicate this project – we have a waiting list of 20 cities so far.

**For more information please call *Way to Go, Seattle!* at (206) 615-1550  
or visit [www.seattle.gov/waytogo](http://www.seattle.gov/waytogo)  
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