City of Seattle

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Common Q & A on the "One-Less-Car" Study

- **The response has been overwhelmingly positive**, from both the press and the public. We have had about 3 times as many applicants as spots. Almost all applicants have been very civic-minded, and think the project idea is great.

- **Why spend money on this?** The majority of the Seattle Department of Transportation's budget funds transportation choices such as roads, bridges, bicycle lanes, transit priority, car-sharing, etc. Trip reduction is a cost-effective and an important part of the mix of transportation solutions. When you have an energy crisis, you conserve energy, and when you have a transportation crisis, you conserve transportation. It is by far cheaper to reduce the number of cars using our transportation network than it is to build more and more lanes of road. Both are part of the mix of transportation solutions.

- **What about people who don't have enough money to even own a car?** Again**,** the study is part of a mix of transportation choices. This is particularly important for low income families where the cost of owning a car has a disproportionate impact on the family income. One of the reasons we are putting extra money into car-sharing, is to allow us to increase the number of areas in the City where Flex Car is available (such as the Central area). In addition, the **Car Smart Community Challenge Grants** are available to any individual who wants to use our easy one-page application form. A list of sample grant projects and tools are available by calling 615-1550 or checking out our new web page: www.cityofseattle.net/waytogo.

- **What about me? I already have given up a car and try to drive as little as possible?**
  First of all, thank you! It is great that you are already driving less. We very much appreciate that you are already doing your part to ease neighborhood traffic, preserve our air quality, and make our communities more livable. Like the people who were recycling before we all had city-sponsored curbside recycling, you are leading the way for others. We won't be taking applications from people who have already given up their "extra car" for a few reasons:

  1. People who have already given up their "extra car" are, in practice, already saving the money (the average is $85/week) they would spend if they did own that "extra" car.

  2. We only have enough money for approximately 40 households in this study. We don't have enough money for this project to work with every household in Seattle, nor is that our long term goal. The goal is to receive detailed daily information about what it would take for the households in the study to use "one less car", in an effort to have others think about their transportation choices. And, we want them to keep their diary as they are weaning themselves from their second car, not after they've already done it.

  3. We don't see the weekly stipend as a reward – it is in part a way to simulate the actual savings each household would realize if they gave up their "extra car" for real, and in part it is an exchange for the daily information we will receive.

- **How where participants selected?**
  We want to work with all different types of households form all over Seattle. The criteria included:

  1. **Ratio of Car Ownership to # of Licensed Drivers**: The ratio of car ownership to licensed drivers in the household does not exceed 1:1 (with the theory that if they had more than one cars per driver, then it wouldn't be that hard to give up using one car).

  2. **Neighborhood** : accessibility of public transportation, local amenities and residential density (per Location Efficient Mortgage Program).

  3. **Mix of Household Types**: (no kids, school age kids, driving age teenagers, senior citizens, unrelated adults living in the same household, etc.).

- **Will I need to pay taxes on this money?**
  The stipends each household receives is reportable income. The City will issue a 1099 (statement to the IRS) if you receive over $600 in a year.