

# Redmond, WA

## Mayor Rosemarie Ives

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### ***Small Business Assistance - Commute Services Program***

The City of Redmond's Small Business Assistance Program offers a comprehensive set of commute services to small businesses located within the City. Three key partnerships form the foundation for the program:

- **Redmond - Trip Reduction Incentive Program (R-TRIP)** - This alliance between the City and businesses in Redmond offers funding and program development assistance for alternative commute programs.
- **Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association (GRTMA)** - The City's membership in and collaborative involvement with the GRTMA provides small businesses with marketing and promotional support for alternative commute programs.
- **Ridequest.com** - By offering grant application support and seed funding, the City of Redmond supported the GRTMA's efforts to develop and implement the nation's first Internet ridematch system.

#### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Four years ago, in response to growing traffic congestion, the City of Redmond enacted a business tax to help fund transportation improvements. While the majority of the \$10 million dollars anticipated in tax revenue was allocated to traditional roadway improvements, \$1 million was dedicated to helping employers implement commute trip reduction programs.

#### **Redmond-Trip Reduction Incentive Program**

The Redmond-Trip Reduction Incentive Program (R-TRIP) forms a critical cornerstone to help employers access Redmond's transportation funding and help employers develop programs. In addition to funding provided by the business transportation tax, the City of Redmond partnered with King County Metro, the county's main transit provider, to leverage additional funding and staffing assistance.

R-TRIP provides funding for commute trip reduction programs such as: free transit passes, or transit and vanpool fare subsidies;

carpool, bike, and walk incentives; bicycle racks; guaranteed ride home programs; high-occupancy vehicle parking signs; and transportation events. Small businesses receive favorable funding and match rates.

Small businesses are also provided with specialized outreach and assistance. As part of the Small Business Assistance program, R-TRIP has:

- developed a Small Business Assistance brochure specifically tailoring R-TRIP program elements to meet employer needs
- conducted a Small Business employer focus group to identify specific small business needs and types of programs desired
- distributed materials announcing city-wide alternative transportation promotional events and campaigns
- implemented a five-month rideshare promotional campaign specifically targeting employees of small businesses

Over 60 small businesses within Redmond have benefited from the R-TRIP program. A new rideshare campaign designed to promote vanpooling along specific transportation corridors is scheduled to begin in Spring 2001.

#### **Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association**

The City of Redmond is one of the original members of the Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association (GRTMA). As a full service outsource for CTR services, the GRTMA takes care of about 80-85 percent of an organization's marketing and advocacy needs. Experienced staff provides members with professional and entertaining print and electronic marketing products to educate and motivate employees to use commute alternatives. The GRTMA creates innovative transportation products, such as web-based ride-matching services and coordinates with Metro and Community Transit to improve employee access to transportation. Monthly employer network meetings include training programs, guest speakers, and helpful tips to make a business's programs successful.

***"Small businesses are a vital part of Redmond's community. We're enthusiastic about the partnerships we've developed that not only help reduce congestion, but make good business sense and strengthen our commitment to be a community of good neighbors."***

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Program has been running two+ years

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As part of both its small business outreach and development review programs, the City of Redmond encourages businesses and developers to become members of the GRTMA. This approach has provided a key means of informing employees of small businesses about alternative commute options, as well as providing marketing materials and access to enhanced rideshare promotion prizes available through the GRTMA.

Beginning in 2001, Redmond will expand its commitment to small businesses further by partnering with both the GRTMA and the neighboring City of Bellevue to market and fund commute incentives in a major employment area, Overlake.

### **Ridequest.com**

The GRTMA, in collaboration with the City of Redmond, leveraged private membership funding with grant resources to develop Ridequest.com, the nation's first on-line ride-matching system. Participants can register, receive ridematch lists, update information, and e-mail prospective carpoolers with the click of a mouse.

Ridequest.com offers a critical tool to assist employees in small businesses find prospective carpool and vanpool partners. Unlike most large employers in Redmond who have an Employee Transportation Coordinator on-site to handle questions about commute alternatives, most small businesses are not set up to handle these requests. This need is met through Redmond's Small Business Assistance program's periodic outreach and rideshare promotions, in conjunction with GRTMA marketing campaigns, help individual employees become more aware of their rideshare options. Moreover, as awareness of transportation benefits increases among small businesses, R-TRIP provides a readily available source of seed funding to implement a transportation subsidy or incentive program.