



# PACTRANS SEMINAR SERIES

**Date:** Wednesday February 5, 2014  
**Time:** Seminar: 10:30 A.M. – 11:20 A.M.  
Reception: to Follow  
**Location:** UW Seattle Campus  
Husky Union Building Room 334

Organized by

**The Pacific Northwest Transportation Consortium (PacTrans)  
USDOT University Transportation Center for Federal Region 10 and  
University of Washington's Department of Urban Design and Planning**

Presentation Title:

**School Siting and Children's Travel: Planning to Support Active Transportation**

## Abstract

Last year, school districts across the county spent almost \$22 billion to bus children to school. While this may seem like a small amount of money to ensure the safety of our children on their way to school, this represents approximately 4.2% of the funds spend on k-12 public education annually. Not only is busing children to school expensive, it may be negatively impacting the health of our children and our communities. In 1969, approximately 50% of students walked or bicycled to school. Today, that number is about 13%. The remaining students are driven to school by their parents, who increase the congestion around schools. Between 15 and 25% of car trips in morning rush hour are school trips. Parents driving children to school creates a vicious cycle in which they collectively make traffic worse and conditions less safe for children walking or bicycling to school. The most common reasons why parents do not let their kids walk or bicycle to school is the distance to school and the amount of traffic along the route. In the last several decades, the number of schools has decreased while the number of students has increased, so schools are bigger and draw from students from longer distances. This means that fewer students live within a walking distance of the school, so more students are driven to school by their parents or in a school bus. Increasing the share of students who walk or bicycle to school will have positive benefits for the community and our children; it would reduce air pollution, cut traffic congestion, and increase children's safety and level of physical activity.

## Speaker: Dr. Ruth Steiner



Ruth L. Steiner, Ph.D. is a professor and director of the Center for Health and the Built Environment in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, and an affiliate faculty in the School of Natural Resources and Environment and the University of Florida Transportation Institute (UFTI) at the University of Florida. Her research focuses on the coordination of transportation and land use, with a particular focus on planning for all modes of transportation and its impact on communities, the environment, and health. She is co-author of *Energy Efficiency and Human Activity: Global Trends and Prospects* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) and author of over sixty book chapters, journal articles, reviews and research reports. Dr. Steiner is a member of the Pedestrian and Transportation History Committees of the Transportation Research Board (TRB) and the Scientific Committee of the World Congress on Transportation Research Society (WCTRS). She was recently

named Society Editor for *Transport Policy*. She is a member of the Gainesville Urbanized Area Citizens Advisory Committee to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPo). She received her B.A. in History from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, an M.B.A. from the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and a Masters of City Planning and a Ph. D. from the University of California at Berkeley. During her last sabbatical in the 2006-2007 academic year, she was a visitor in the Department of Urban Design and Planning and TRAC at the University of Washington.

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For questions, please contact Ms. Meghan MacKrell, assistant director for PacTrans at

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