

South King County Projects Update

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New turn lanes open on SR 169 near Maple Valley

You may have noticed a safety improvement on SR 169 near Maple Valley. We've just opened [new turn lanes](#) to and from SE 288th Street. This intersection had a high potential for collisions from vehicles blocking SR 169 while waiting to turn onto SE 288th Street. This project will help improve traffic flow on this busy corridor.

Upcoming lane and ramp closures in South King County

We'll be closing a number of lanes and ramps in the coming nights as we work to improve your roadways. Some of the closures include:

- [SR 167: 15th Street SW to 15th Street NW – HOV](#)
- [I-405: Renton Widening \(I-5 to SR 169\)](#)
- [SR 518: Link Light Rail - Seatac Airport - Sound Transit Project](#)

We're upgrading our Seattle area traffic computer system

You may not have noticed, but our software engineers are in the process of updating the computer system that controls our traffic map, freeway cameras, ramp meters, electronic message signs and travel times. Over the next few months our engineers will [test the new system](#) so that when the switch occurs on the first of the year, everything will go smoothly.

During these tests, traffic data will not be available between Southcenter and Factoria along I-405 on our Web site. These sections of the [color coded traffic map](#) will appear gray and you won't be able to get [travel times](#) between Bellevue and Federal Way, and Bellevue and Tukwila. However, you'll still be able to see the [camera views](#) on this route. We'll conduct the tests during off-peak travel times, and we'll delay or reschedule the tests in the event of a significant traffic or weather event.

Federal landlord starts Peace Arch project; Prepare for traffic delays

The federal [General Services Administration](#) has started construction on a new [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#) building at the [Peace Arch crossing](#). GSA is confident that it will finish the project in time for the 2010 Olympics in Canada, and we'll be working with them to make the required changes to the highway go as smoothly as possible.

The new building will be much larger and equipped to handle modern safety and security systems. That will allow GSA's tenant, Customs and Border Protection, to move more people across the border safely.

Unfortunately, starting Nov. 5, you'll have to suffer through construction and delays before enjoying the improvements. We're doing our best to make the changes as painless as possible. We plan to have our traffic detection equipment up and running later this month to help you decide which border crossing to take. Plus, by December, we should have more lanes open at the nearby truck crossing.

For information about the building project, e-mail [Bill Lesh](#), public affairs manager for GSA.

End of daylight saving time means time for extra caution on the roads

As the first fall storms came in about a month ago, the State Patrol reported a 62 percent jump in collisions. With daylight saving time ending Sunday, Nov. 4, it becomes even more important for you to be extra cautious when out on the road in the dark, wet conditions. Please follow these fall driving tips to stay safe:

- **Watch for pedestrians** along school bus routes, intersections and transit stops and centers. Use extra caution when backing out of driveways and driving around in parking lots. More pedestrians are struck and killed during fall months than any other time of the year.
- **Slow down.** Posted speed limits are for dry pavement.
- **Use your headlights.** Turn them on even in the middle of the day when it's raining or foggy.
- **Allow extra following distance.** Following too closely is one of the top causes of accidents in wet weather. You should allow more than four seconds between your vehicle and the one in front of you when the road is wet.
- **Brake carefully.** Look ahead while driving so you can anticipate the need to stop. Don't stomp on your brakes – the vehicle behind you may not be able to stop in time, and you can skid and lose control of your vehicle on a wet road.

Ride in style again with the return of Amtrak *Cascades* railcars

Several railcars sent in for repairs in early August are back in operation at Amtrak [Cascades](#), just in time for the busy holiday season. Crews removed several cars from service this summer after they discovered small cracks in the suspension support systems. With those cars back on the tracks, passengers can once again enjoy reduced travel time, business class, feature movies, checked baggage and bicycle accommodations.

The fall and winter schedule went into effect on Monday, Oct. 29, so now's the perfect time to plan a holiday train trip. Amtrak *Cascades*, which is operated by Amtrak [under a contract with WSDOT](#) and the Oregon Department of Transportation, includes four daily round-trips between Portland and Seattle, with service between Bellingham and Portland via Seattle, between Eugene and Seattle via Portland, and between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C.

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