



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

Central Puget Sound Public Opinion Research Findings

Washington State Transportation Commission Meeting

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Background

- Purpose of Research
 - Update WSDOT Communications Plan and Washington Transportation Plan
 - Central Puget Sound Focus
- Timing
 - May 2004
- Cost of Research
 - Environmental focus group - \$5,000
 - General focus groups - \$72,000
 - Survey - \$35,000

Focus Groups

- Environmental Focus Group (12 people)
 - Purpose: Talk about environmental priorities with environmental leaders
- Five General Focus Groups (48 people)
 - One each Snohomish & Pierce counties
 - Three in King County
 - Purpose: Talk about transportation priorities, projects and funding in context of current environment

Public Opinion Survey

- 500 registered voters in 3-county area
 - 61% King, 19% Snohomish, 20% Pierce
 - 71% drive alone, 29% other commutes
 - 46% male, 54% female
 - 45% commute < 10 miles, 52% > 10 miles
 - 72% < age 65, 25 % > age 65
- Phone survey, 20 minutes, 20 questions
- Purpose: gather statistically valid information about projects and priorities

Findings

- General
 - Right direction/wrong track
 - 47% say we're on the wrong track
 - Economy stronger/not stronger
 - 56% say it's not getting stronger
 - Concerns these days
 - War in Iraq (34%) & economy (32%)
 - Transportation (12%) along with health care, taxes, and education

Findings

- There's little belief that “there's a plan to fix things” and that if given the money, the plan can be delivered.
- Trust and accountability are still “top-of-mind” issues.
 - WSDOT
 - Government
 - Large Business
 - Other Leaders

Findings

- Agency Approval Ratings
 - Sound Transit (49-27-24)
 - Seattle Monorail (42-39-19)
 - King County Metro (63-10-26)
 - WSDOT (57-23-20)
 - Community Transit (47-9-44)
 - Pierce Transit (31-6-64)

Findings

- Pain Points – Transit
 - Lack of off-peak service (22%)
 - Lack of system coordination (20%)
- Pain Points – Drive Alone
 - Other people's driving behaviors (49%)
 - Stop & go traffic/traffic congestion (37%/35%)
 - Bottlenecks at on/off ramps (32%)

“Drivers Seat” Education Campaign

- *Tag line*
 - You’re in the Driver’s Seat. Slow Down.
 - You’re in the Driver’s Seat. Pay Attention.
 - You’re in the Driver’s Seat. Don’t Tailgate.
 - You’re in the Driver’s Seat. Give ‘Em a Brake.
- *Bus boards*
 - Whatcom, Snohomish, King, Pierce, Thurston, Clark, TriCities, Spokane
- *Bill boards*
 - Pierce, Spokane and Whatcom Counties

Findings

- Improving congestion and choke points of high importance (67%)
 - What does improvement mean?
 - Eliminating stop and go traffic
 - Improve travel time reliability
 - Save 20 minutes or 20-30% on commute time

Findings

- Projects
 - Overall, respondents supported the projects regional leaders are considering
 - Note: all respondents rated King County Projects, Pierce and Snohomish rated their own projects.

Snohomish County

Local support for Snohomish County projects

- Add lanes to SR 9 73%
- Add lanes to US 2 (thru Sultan) 68%
- Add lanes to SR 522 65%
- Improve SR 532 from Camano Island to I-5 56%
- Add lanes to US 2 Sultan I-5 @ SR 204 53%

King County

Local support for King County projects

- Extend light rail to SeaTac Airport 76%
- Replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct 71%
- Add lanes to I-405 68%
- Replace the SR 520 Floating Bridge 61%
- Rebuild the I-405/SR 167 Interchange 60%
- Add lanes to SR 167 60%
- Extend SR 509 59%
- Re-configure ramps to I-5 between SR 18 and SR 161 42%

King County projects: Noteworthy responses from other counties

- 40% of Pierce County supports replacing the SR 520 Floating Bridge
- 70% of Pierce County respondents support extending SR 509
- 69% of Snohomish County respondents support extending light rail to Northgate
- 40% of Snohomish County respondents support improving the SR 167/I-405 interchange
- 72% of Pierce County residents support adding lanes to SR 167
- 66% of Pierce County respondents reconfiguring ramps to I-5 between SR 161 and SR 18

Pierce County

Local support for Pierce County Projects

- Extend SR 167 76%
- Add HOV lanes to I-5 and SR 16 70%
- Add lanes on SR 167 54%
- Build the Cross-base highway 52%
- Realign SR 302 41%

Findings

- **Priorities**
 - Respondents were evenly split on their highest priority investments
 - Maintain and repair existing transportation structures and roadways (33%) [75%]
 - Expand our roadways to provide traffic relief and eliminate bottlenecks (34%) [66%]
 - Invest in mass transit alternatives (33%) [60%]
 - Some ordering occurs when the top two priorities are combined
 - Respondents would evenly split new investments to their top two priorities

Findings

- Reactions to some public initiatives
 - Raising taxes for education (54-41-5)
 - Raising taxes for Puget Sound transportation (43-52-5)
 - Banning smoking in public buildings (67-26-7)

Findings

- Reaction to regional approach for funding transportation improvements – too close to call.
 - Support 48%
 - Oppose 45%
 - Don't know 8%

Findings

- Revenue
 - A survey question explained that as much as \$100 billion worth of transportation improvements may be needed over the next 30 years in the Puget Sound Region. Respondents were then asked if they believe we can address those needs with existing revenue sources.
 - 38% said we could address with existing revenue
 - 48% said we could not address with existing revenue
 - 14% didn't know

Findings

- Support for increased revenue varied by source:
 - Tolls and user fees (55%)
 - Car Tabs (50%)
 - MVET (45%)
 - Weight Fees (42%)
 - Gas Tax (32%)
 - Sales Tax (27%)
- Not many “don’t knows” in this area

What do we do next?

- Share information with interested parties.
- Feed information into WTP update process
- Assess results and use to update WSDOT communications plans
 - Need for statewide information?