Washington State Department of Transportation

Rave Reviews for Incident Response

The Incident Response Team (IRT) is a specially trained group of WSDOT maintenance employees who respond to blocking incidents on our state's freeways and highways. Their main function is "clearing roads" and "helping drivers" to restore the normal flow of traffic as safely and quickly as possible.

- *"They were a godsend and really helped us out. It's good to know our tax dollars can work!""*
- *"He was a lifesaver that day. My vehicle & cell phone died on same morning. He was there in 15 minutes to help. I commute M-F200mi+/day. It is a relief that services like this are out there."*
- *"Evidence of tax dollars at work. Thanks! A very helpful & appreciated service... "*
- *"Prompt, excellent and courteous assistance. Please don't let budget cuts affect this program!"*

Web Site Kudos and Comments

- *"I routinely check the DOT website for the traffic flow map/ cameras before I leave work. Ditto incidents/events tab if things look bad (I grumble loudly when the Mariners are playing). Nice site layout with useful info."*
- *"Thank you for providing this service. The highway mountain pass conditions are what I use the most, tho I do browse the rest of the pages while I am at it."*
- *"We've got kids in college at WWU, CWU & U of W, how nice to be able to look at the pass and traffic. Extremely useful."*
- *"I am very impressed with the new map. I really like the details, as it makes it much easier to judge which exits to use. My husband calls me for traffic updates, and this will make directions even better. I also like the news links and the links to other parts of the site as I would be unlikely to see them otherwise. I am very impressed with all the work your team has done. I loved the site before and it is even better now. Excellent use of my tax money."*
- *"The Department's new websites for cycling and walking are absolutely terrific! I have been passing on the Bicycle Alliance's flyer flagging the new websites to many folks. Thank you all for creating them!"*

Performance Measures and Accountability

Measures, Markers and Mileposts, also called the *Gray Notebook,* is WSDOT's quarterly performance measures report. It provides in-depth reports on agency and system performance to keep WSDOT accountable to the public, Transportation Commission, and legislators.

The current edition of the *Gray Notebook* can be viewed at: www.wsdot.wa.gov/accountability

If you have questions or suggestions regarding the *Gray Notebook*, please contact:

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Washington's Transportation Plan

The 2005 update to the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) will be a blueprint for transportation programs and investments.

Summaries of background work as of October 2004 on the following themes

System Preservation	*Safety*
System Efficiencies	*Bottlenecks and Chokepoints*
Moving Freight	*Health and Environment*
Transportation Access	*Economy and Jobs*
Future Visions	

can be found at:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/wtp/MostRecentFolios

If you have questions regarding the Washington Transportation Plan, please contact:

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A compilation of e-mails and other comments prepared for presentation at:

Transportation Research Board
Washington, D.C.

January 10, 2005

What Customers Want From Transportation In Washington State

in their own words.....

"A class on how to use the trains, buses and ferries once a year would be nice for the public, especially new residents. This should include trips into Seattle, Everett and how to make connections to SeaTac airport."

Washington State Department of Transportation

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Some things are not always what they seem....

I-405 overpass in Bellevue: Bridge designers devised an ingenious staging method to build the new bridge, and then roll it into alignment while keeping NE 8th Street open to both eastbound and westbound traffic...not everyone saw it for the success that it was:

"...I just happen to see this in action for myself with the close of 405 in Bellevue and the debacle of moving this bridge. I saw close to 50 DOT people viewing this move, were they being paid, overtime, and shift differential? And why was this bridge moved, who made the mistake to begin with and was this person held accountable for this? ...Please let me know."

Lynnwood Truck Detour

"DAAAAAAA!!!! Lynnwood detour for truckers...Who is the state Department of Transportation to tell truckers from all over the US to make a detour in Lynnwood, Wa. I'm not a trucker, but if

I were and I heard I was expected to make a detour somewhere out west I'd certainly soon forget it, especially when I drive thousands of miles every year trying to make a living. I can't believe that anyone with an ounce of COMMON SENSE would even consider such an idea much less try to put it into effect, just because some scaffolding was too low for passing trucks."

A Man with a Plan!

"...I have too many close calls at above intersection when north bound on 530 to west bound 20. The problem is trucks parking on the shoulder to go into the Shell station & store this makes the intersection completely blind...A relative inexpensive fix would be to paint strips and big no parking in an area and have the sheriff pass out expensive tickets. If that doesn't work redesign the intersection and close the store if necessary."

Calling All Forward Thinkers

"People on Vashon Island who oppose any land use for a connecting bridge are selfish people who are living in the past. Desperately clinging to the idea things can stay the same as they were in the 1960s. Just because they don't want it done, does not mean that it can't be done, or shouldn't be done. A lot of them are rich old people who will die off soon, opening the door for more forward thinking, younger, less myopic voters/taxpayers who will progressively think of the future, not sit and whine about it, wishing for the past. One can only hope..."

Hitchhiker Permits

"The one big reason that we don't do more hitchhiking is becauseof its dangers...Here is one idea...make hitchhiking legal on all roads and highways, make it a permitted process. Licensed drivers and anyone over the age of 16...could apply for a permit for their car and or person for a hitchhiking permit. Once this system is in place, hikers would just carry a two foot long folding sign and marking pen to signify their destination."

Please and Thank-you...or "NO" Thank-you.

- *"A few months back I talked to a gentleman about a couple of the exits being rough and one was by Richland and other was coming into Pasco and they have been ground down. So I want to say thank you for getting that done and now I can put my false teeth back in."*

"I HATE THIS *(New Tacoma Narrows)* ***BRIDGE, I hate that it is***

being built, I hate that people voted & approved it being built, I hate that I will be paying a toll to travel over said hated bridge, I hate the misery of the NEW traffic tie ups due to the construction. Basically in a nutshell I hate the damn thing & have not spoken to one person who lives on the Gig Harbor side who voted for it. I'm so thankful for all those that did vote for it & was wondering if you would be able to supply their names & addresses so I can get them to shell out the money for the damn toll. The only good thing so far about this bridge is getting to gawk at the construction workers but & I know this is misdirected since they are only doing a job but I hate them too."

- *Regarding a new ferry terminal in Mukilteo: "I like the new terminal you have described here, but hurry and get it done. I am 90 years old and would like to use it."*

- *"I just wanted to express my gratitude for the help that you guys give. I was stuck on the side of the freeway with a blown tire... The springs in my car were cut so my car is very low. The incident response team showed up to help me. I didn't call them, I didn't even know that they existed. A man named Mark... showed up and was extremely helpful. I had no spare tire and I didn't know how to use my jacks because my car was so low. He told me to go to the junkyard not too far from where we were at and get a jack for a Honda and a tire. He gave me his cell phone number and told me to call when I got back and he would help me change the tire. He also assured me that no one would tow my car ...When I got back I called him ... In only minutes my tire was changed. I don't know what I would've done without him."*

- *"We need to make mass transit more workable. Whatever that takes: education, more buses, more times so that I'm not sitting at the station for 20-30 minutes. My time is expensive. I'm already on the road for two hours. Sitting in the station because they don't have enough buses is not acceptable. Also, could someone please make it easier or show me how? I've tried to do the right thing and it's just too complicated. People who are developmentally delayed can do it but I can't. So get someone to help me! Work on improving these services. Because reducing congestion will take getting some of us off the road, whatever it takes."*

- *"Yesterday was the first time I have ever utilized the Amtrak Cascades service between Vancouver (WA) and Seattle... I have to say that the Cascades service was very enjoyable...This was honestly a welcome departure from the low quality service one typically recieves in an airport, especially recently...I do not frequently send in comments...the exceptional service provided, warranted praise."*

- *"...Now I've always been for mass transportation. Ms. M... comments about eliminating the need to own a car. I got rid of mine and don't mind so much taking the bus wherever I need to go. However, I do miss the convenience a car provides. While Seattle has a very good and thorough bus system, it can be incredibly inconvenient at times. A "quick trip" to the grocery store typically takes between one and two hours (if I'm lucky) with at least two transfers, and I don't think I need to mention how much it sucks waiting in the rain for that bus that's running late."*

- *"...There need to be big changes in western Washington State. It went from a sleepy backwoodsy place to a place that was very cutting edge. Now, due to tax cuts given to Boeing and the NIMBY*

attitude of a few who just happen to have the money to influence SOME officials, this is going to become a stagnant, no-growth state. People will come here, stay a while, get fed up and move somewhere else. There are many many ways a state can raise revenue such as put a toll booth at the state border on all highways, charge a surcharge for all airline tickets to and from the state, stop giving tax breaks to greedy mega-industries who make profit over profit over profit already. Introduce term limits and stop all government pay raises. Stop the wasteful overspending and political pocket-lining associated with mass transit and other public projects. You would be suprised then, how fast the state can come up with a Billion dollars."

Questions, Questions, Questions!

- *"Can a six months pregnant woman use the HOV lane? The answer to this questions wasn't in the frequently asked questions page."*

- *"If [a] hearse is transporting a dead body can it drive in the car pool lane on a highway?"*

- *"My name is Shayna ... I'm in 3rd grade and I'm studying the Narrows bridge and I have two questions... Here they are... Why is the Narrows bridge green, and is the new narrows bridge going to be green, if you do not know what color the new narrows bridge is going to be send in a request for bright red. THANKS SHAYNA!!!!!"*

- *"This may sound odd, but it is a serious inquiry. I am from Vancouver, Canada and am interested in purchasing a road sign. My boyfriend travels to Westport WA to surf and likes the blue signs that warn of large waves. I would like to know if it is possible to purchase one and have it shipped to me as a birthday present for him. Please advise...and if so who I should speak with?"*

- *"Are there any age-restrictions on road flares? I have heard that in Washington State, it is illegal for anyone under 20 to possess a road-flare. Is this true or anywhere close?"*

- *"I am planning on buying an all electric car and I am having problems finding places to plug it in. I am also having trouble finding insurance for this auto. The insurance I can find is more expensive than regular auto insurance. I work for the USPS...at Seattle and they don't have a place for me to plug in. What can I do and where do I go for help???"*

- *"We hate to always be complainers but we depend on your Hood Canal bridge weather report to know whether my husband can fly his radio controlled model airplanes. The weather report on the bridge's website is stuck on what happened on June 30th. It took us a few days to realize that not every day is the wind at 0 mph with gusts to 3 from the north. Has the bridge's construction project fouled it up? The camera is working fine. Please investigate."*

"(Contrary) Reality Checks"

One person's opinion:

"...You people are so insulated from reality that you just do not see the problem with the 520 bridge problems. Please let me enlighten you: THERE'S NOT ENOUGH CAPACITY. WE NEED MORE LANES. We do not need more (or newer) carpool lanes, bicycle lanes, or rest areas on 520. We need capacity. We taxpayers do not need you folks at the DOT to fund any more multi-million dollar studies -- we need more lanes on the 520 bridge...Does DOT have a planning department? Are there any engineers working there? Did the engineers get their degrees by mail or something? (DOT)...seems more interested in forcing the population they "serve" to carpool in order to drive to work in a reasonable time. What is the charter of the DOT in the state of Washington? Are you guys supposed to social engineer or civil engineer?"

Might be another's:

"We have been driving SR 167 from Puyallup to Kent for the last 17 years. I am beyond frustated by the total lack of foresight in the amount of growth in the south end. Highway 167 should have had at least 3-4 lanes each way years ago... When are you going to make more lanes? The growth in Puyallup and Sumner and Orting has skyrocketed with total disregard to the impact of egress in or out of town. Governor Locke has said he was going to improve roads. Why hasn't 167 been even considered for expansion?..."

But not necessarily another's:

"I'm in favor of maintaining the roads we have first. Beyond that, we have to give people viable, aesthetically pleasing alternatives so I want to see as much money go to improving transit as to adding more lanes. No matter how many lanes you add, traffic will increase to fill up whatever capacity you've created ..."