

2009 Statewide Transportation Poll Results

Traffic relief is still important to two-thirds of voters

by Michael Ennis
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Introduction

Washington Policy Center has released the results of a recent statewide poll that asked voters about the importance of traffic relief across Washington State.

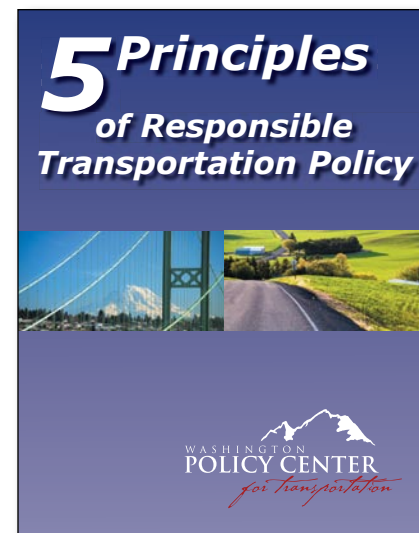
This updated survey builds upon Washington Policy Center's first poll conducted in December 2007. In both cases, voters continue to show strong support for making traffic relief a high priority. Two-thirds of respondents still feel the state's role in reliving traffic congestion is important, but also believe the state is performing poorly at actually doing anything about it.

The poll was conducted by Moore Information as a telephone survey to 500 voters across Washington State, on January 14-15, 2009. The sampling error is plus or minus 4% at the 95% confidence level.

This information builds on Washington Policy Center's [Five Principles of Responsible Transportation Policy](#):

- *Tie spending to congestion relief*
- *Respect people's freedom of mobility*
- *Deploy resources based on market demand*
- *Improve freight mobility*
- *Utilize public/private partnerships*

These principles place congestion relief as the cornerstone in any successful transportation plan.



1. When spending your transportation tax dollars, do you think Washington State government’s first priority should be to reduce traffic congestion, or to fund other transportation needs?

| | Dec. <u>2007</u> | Jan. <u>2009</u> |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| strongly reduce traffic congestion | 28% | 29% |
| reduce traffic congestion | 23% | 19% |
| Total reduce traffic congestion | 51% | 48% |
| don’t know | 11% | 13% |
| Total fund other transportation needs | 38% | 39% |
| fund other transportation needs | 17% | 16% |
| strongly fund other transportation needs | 21% | 23% |

2. As you think about the government’s role in transportation, how important to you personally is reducing traffic congestion?

| | | |
|--|------------|------------|
| extremely important | 32% | 33% |
| fairly important | 38% | 33% |
| Total extremely/fairly important | 70% | 65% |
| Total somewhat/not important at all | 29% | 35% |
| only somewhat important | 23% | 27% |
| not important at all | 6% | 8% |
| don’t know | 1% | * |

** less than one-half of one percent*

3. How would you rate state government’s performance on relieving traffic congestion?

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|
| excellent | 1% | 1% |
| good | 24% | 27% |
| Total excellent/good | 25% | 28% |
| Total not so good/poor | 69% | 66% |
| not so good | 40% | 41% |
| poor | 29% | 26% |
| don’t know | 5% | 5% |

4. Would you vote for or against a major tax increase if you were convinced the plan would actually reduce traffic congestion in your area?

| | | |
|----------------------|------------|------------|
| definitely for | 22% | 24% |
| probably for | 32% | 27% |
| Total for | 54% | 51% |
| don’t know | 9% | 9% |
| Total against | 37% | 40% |
| probably against | 16% | 15% |
| definitely against | 21% | 25% |

5. Next, here are two views on state government's role in transportation.

Mr. Smith believes state government should try to get people out of their cars and that we need to focus tax dollars on public transportation, not building more highways. He says trying to fix traffic congestion with road improvements will result in more people driving more cars, more damage to the environment and more congestion.

OR

Mr. Jones believes state government should focus on fixing traffic congestion chokepoints. Congestion relief will help commuters get to work, help businesses move their products and help the environment because shorter commutes mean less air pollution.

Do you agree more with Mr. Smith or Mr. Jones?

| | Dec. <u>2007</u> | Jan. <u>2009</u> |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| strongly Mr. Smith/focus on public transportation | 26% | 31% |
| Mr. Smith/focus on public transportation | 13% | 12% |
| Total Smith | 39% | 42% |
| don't know | 13% | 7% |
| Total Jones | 49% | 51% |
| Mr. Jones/focus on traffic relief | 27% | 19% |
| strongly Mr. Jones/focus on traffic relief | 22% | 32% |

Michael Ennis is director of the Center for Transportation at Washington Policy Center, a non-partisan independent policy research organization in Seattle and Olympia.