WHO'S DRIVING TRAFFIC SOLUTIONS IN THE PUGET SOUND

Anywhere you go, you'll find people talking about transit issues. Commuters, municipal officials, politicians, the woman at the bus stop — everyone has an opinion. But they're not all talking about the same thing. The significance and goals of transit vary depending on your perspective — even, and perhaps especially, at the agency level. Take a look at Washington's big players in the transportation arena, and see how their priorities and strategies line up.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

As congestion continues to rise, so does transit use. Public transit use in Washington rose from 189.9 million passengers in 2010 to 221.2 million in 2013 — a 14% jump in four years. At the state level, WSDOT has been tracking and analyzing congestion in its annual Corridor Capacity Report for the last 14 years. WSDOT also monitors commute times, transit occupancy and identifying hot spots such as Seattle-Federal Way. It works to carry out the legislature's \$16 billion measure to enhance the state's transportation system while addressing critical infrastructure needs.



How Washington gets around



GETTING OUR REGION

MOVING AGAIN

Source: WDOT 2015 Corridor Capacity Report (2014 data), remaining 6.7% work from home (5.5%)





Due to rounding, percentages do not add up to exactly 100%

New technologies and ideas to improve mobility

MOVING FORWARD



Crowdsource your commute

Waze, Google's free, community-based traffic navigation app, uses real-time traffic and road info submitted by other drivers in your area to save time and outsmart traffic. The company says it's "like a personal headsup from a few million of your friends on the road," suggesting alternate routes and alerts to accidents, road closures and police presence. Google is now preparing to expand Waze into a limited carpooling program in San Francisco's Bay Area, potentially going head-to-head with Uber, Lyft and other ride-sharing apps. Google was an early investor in Uber in 2013. (Sources: waze.com, cbsnews.com)

SmartCity Challenge: Seattle contest funds trailblazing transportation idea

The SmartCity Challenge, a partnership between Paul Allen's Vulcan Inc. in Seattle and the U.S. Department of Transportation, invited cities across the country to submit ideas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create innovative and practical climate change solutions. Columbus, Ohio, was selected from 78 cities that applied. Columbus will receive up to \$40 million from U.S. DOT and up to \$10 million from Paul G. Allen's Vulcan Inc. to supplement the \$90 million that the city has already raised from other private partners to reshape its transportation system by using data, technology and creativity to reimagine how people and goods move throughout the city. Finalists were Austin, Columbus, Denver, Kansas City, Pittsburgh, Portland and San Francisco. To learn more about the Smart City Challenge and Vulcan's local role, visit http://smart-city.news/.

ASK AN EXPERT



Mike Swires, WSDOT assistant regional traffic engineer for the King

What's the best way to fight traffic in heavily congested areas or during construction projects that require lane closures?

Zipper merging is a useful tool to fight traffic congestion, especially during major road construction with lane closures. To be effective, drivers need to use all lanes up to the closure point, leave enough room for merging and take turns. It's a simple concept of "you go, I go, you go, I go." Traffic moves more steadily and it reduces chokepoints that occur when drivers try to force their way in or prevent others from merging in front of them.

The Seattle Times is planning a unique public service journalism project, Traffic Lab. The upcoming multi-year project will examine aspects of our region's traffic, with solutions and recommendations to improve our mobility and move the most people and freight in the most cost-effective manner. In advance of the kickoff, we have created this Traffic page to help readers learn the basic facts. Let us know what you would like to see at trafficlab@seattletimes.com.

The Seattle Times