

2009 Statewide Transportation Poll Results

Traffic relief is still important to two-thirds of voters

by Michael Ennis
Director, Center for Transportation

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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.

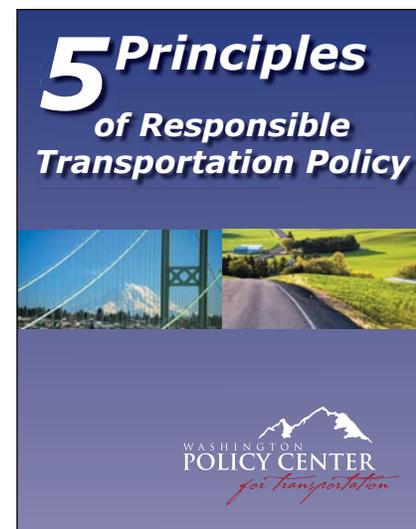
This updated survey builds upon Washington Policy Center's first poll conducted in December 2007. In both cases, voters continue to show strong support for making traffic relief a high priority. Two-thirds of respondents still feel the state's role in reliving traffic congestion is important, but also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