



Interstate 5 Tumwater to Mounts Road Survey

Why WSDOT is studying I-5 between Tumwater and Mounts Road?

Interstate 5 and the connecting transportation system between the 93rd Avenue SW interchange in the City of Tumwater (milepost 99) and the Mounts Road overpass just east of the Nisqually River (milepost 116) affect the region's economic vitality, accessibility and mobility, defense operations, and the environment.

This segment is a major freight and commuter corridor which experiences some of the highest freight traffic volumes in the state due to the proximity of ports in Tacoma, Seattle, and Olympia. Military convoys going to and from Joint Base Lewis-McChord also commonly use this section of I-5.

This segment of I-5 experiences reduced throughput – or number of vehicles per hour –, recurring delay, and unreliable travel times. This occurs mostly at the US 101 interchange, in the Olympia and Lacey urban growth areas, and near the Nisqually River Bridge during commute peaks.

The state Legislature tasked WSDOT to develop mid- and long-range strategies to address regional congestion and look for ways to benefit salmon habitat in the Nisqually River delta.

Survey Highlights

- The survey received 4,609 responses.
- A majority of respondents ranked improving travel times and making them more predictable as their main goal.
- Roughly 75% of respondents supported adding capacity to, or developing an alternate, to I-5.
- There were notable differences in transportation needs and priorities based on characteristics like commute mode, income, and age.

WSDOT collected input from more than 4,600 respondents in I-5 planning study survey

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) developed two surveys to get feedback on the needs and goals of communities and commuters along this section of I-5. The first survey gathered a range of data from about 3,300 respondents on topics like how often respondents travel in the area to what kinds of outcomes they would like to see and where in the corridor. The second survey was shorter and followed up on changes to goals and solutions based on community input from the first round. WSDOT collected 1,300 more responses through the second survey.

WSDOT made both surveys available online and advertised them via email, social media, and local news. TRPC also made a paper version of the second survey which they distributed at locations commonly visited by the public such as libraries and transit routes.

Overall respondents valued improving travel times most, some groups value environment, equity more

WSDOT asked survey respondents to rank five study goals that WSDOT developed collaboratively with local city and county partners (see graph on the next page). In the first survey, respondents overall ranked “moving

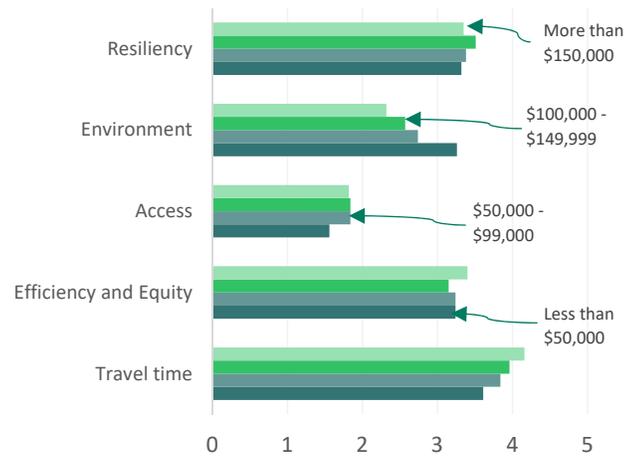
people and cars efficiently” as the highest priority. Most respondents in the second survey ranked “improving travel times on I-5 and making them more predictable” as their highest priority.

WSDOT found that respondent support among the study goals was different based on certain characteristics. For example, in the first survey, respondents who had a household income of less than \$25,000 valued the goal of ensuring equitable access to transportation services 35 percent higher than the overall average. Those with household incomes of \$150,000 or more valued the same goal about 9 percent less than average.

Another notable trend was respondents who used any commute modes other than driving alone valued improving travel times up to 16 percent less and equity and environmental goals up to 51 percent and 23 percent more, respectively. WSDOT added a new resiliency goal and changed some wording of other goals for this question in the second survey due to comments received via the first round, and results were similar.

Support of study goals differed by respondent characteristics, travel time main goal overall

Average goal rank by household income, five is most important

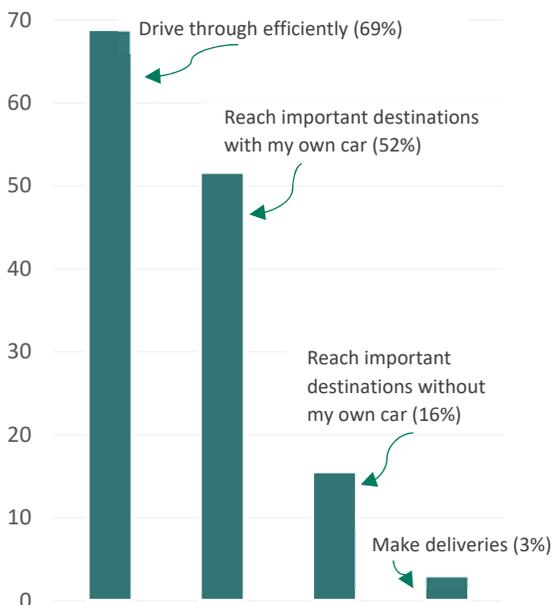


Respondents’ transportation needs related to primary commute mode, income, age

WSDOT asked respondents what they need most from the transportation system along this segment of I-5 (in addition to safety). The most common answer was to be able to drive through the corridor efficiently and reliably (see graph below). Similar to respondents’ weighting of study goals, there were notable differences in transportation needs based on certain characteristics; most notably by commuting mode, income, and age.

Overall, respondents say they need to drive through the study corridor efficiently

Percent of respondents by transportation system need



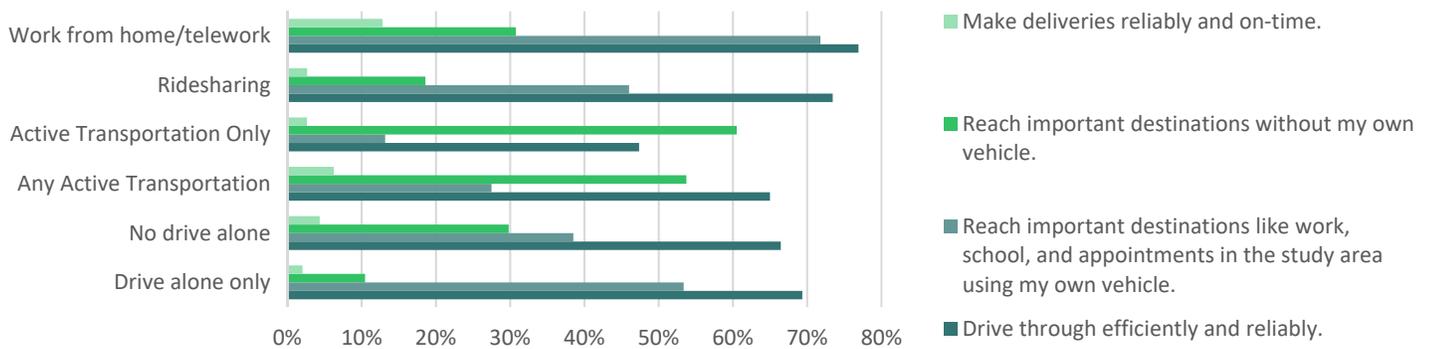
Respondents who used any commute mode besides driving alone valued reaching destinations without a private vehicle more than average, ranging from 19 percent higher for those who carpool to 287 percent higher for those who only bike, walk, or use transit. Similarly, these groups tended to value driving through the corridor less than average.

Respondents who had household incomes of \$75,000 or less also valued reaching important destinations without their own vehicle 21 to 60 percent higher than the overall average. Respondents with the household incomes above \$100,000 valued the same goal 17 percent less than average.

Finally, respondents tended to value reaching important destinations with their own car less as they were older. Respondents over the age of 45 valued this goal 10 to 21 percent lower than average, while respondents 44 and younger valued it 19 to 27 percent higher than average.

Respondents transportation needs differed by their main commute mode

Percent of respondent support by primary commute mode



Improvements to alternate routes, interchanges had most support overall, supporting HOV, transit, etc... linked to income, commute mode, living in study area

WSDOT asked respondents what types of improvements they would support among options ranging from highway expansion to demand management and improvements to local roads in the second survey. “Adding capacity to, or developing, an alternate to I-5” was the most common response, with roughly 75 percent of respondents indicating support. “Improving traffic flow at interchanges like US 101/Olympia City Center” was a close second with 70 percent indicating support.

Respondents with lower household incomes as well as those who did not commute by driving alone were more supportive of improvements to transit, walking, and biking. Among respondents who drive alone, 60 percent supported adding new general use lanes to I-5, while 31 percent of respondents who used any active transportation supported this improvement. Support for improving conditions for walking or biking was 50 to 199 percent more than average for respondents who did not drive alone.

WSDOT also noted that respondents who live in zip codes touching the study area were more likely to support certain improvements such as HOV, interchange, and bicycle/pedestrian improvements 6, 7, and 15 percent more than average, respectively.

Most respondents frequent commuters in study area

Most respondents indicated they travel within the study area at least a few times a week, generally during peak commute hours (4pm to 7pm and 7am to 9am) to commute to and from work. Other common uses were it for visiting family and friends, recreational activities, and medical services. Roughly half of all respondents work in the Downtown Olympia/Tumwater area and about 61 percent live in the study area. A large majority of respondents (88 percent) indicated they drive alone to commute. 62 percent marked drive alone as their only commute mode.

Respondent input leans toward resiliency, transit, environment

WSDOT staff reviewed roughly 6,500 open-ended responses related to study goals and outcomes in the first survey. Among responses related to study goals, 25 percent suggested adding resiliency to disruptions like the Amtrak derailment that occurred in 2017 as a goal and many more expressed concern about it.

Another, more common, comment was to have reducing reliance on driving alone by expanding transit and other options as a study goal. 43 percent of responses about study goals mentioned this outcome. WSDOT and its study partners incorporated this intent into existing goals and measures.

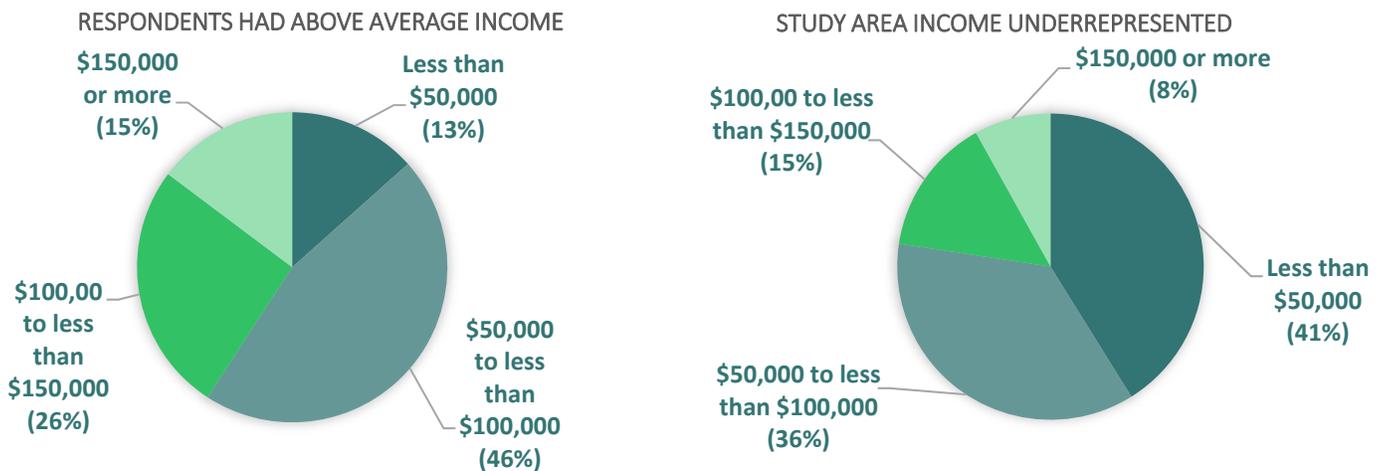
“...I think there needs to be more push on reducing the number of cars on the road through better, more varied, swift, reliable, and financially accessible to all public transportation...”

Survey sample over-represented certain groups compared to study area

Respondent demographics differed from overall demographics in the study area, in some cases significantly. For example, 15 percent of respondents had a yearly household income of at least \$150,000, almost twice the proportion of people living in the study area. The same was true for respondents with household incomes of \$100,000 to \$150,000. On the other hand, 13 percent of respondents had a yearly household income of less than \$50,000, roughly two thirds less than the 41 percent of the population in the study area.

Age had similar results to income with the proportion of respondents between 35 and 64 years old being very over-represented compared to the study area, while ages 25 and under or 65 and over being under-represented. For example, the about a quarter of the survey sample was between 45 and 54 years old, twice the rate of the study area population. Results were similar for ages 35-44 and 55-64.

Similarly, 82 percent of survey respondents identified as white alone, while 79 percent of the study area identified as such. The next largest groups of respondents identified as two or more races/ethnicities, Asian/Asian American, and Hispanic or Latinx, four, three, and two percent, respectively. Within the study area, the largest race/ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latinx, two or more races, and black/African American with 9, 6, and 3 percent, respectively. Other ethnicities over-represented in the survey sample included Native American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander at three and one percent of the survey sample compared to 1.4 and 0.9 percent of the study area population, respectively.



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