

# WSDOT'S GRAY NOTEBOOK

## DATA THAT DRIVES DECISIONS

SREENATH GANGULA, Assistant Director Transportation Safety & Systems Analysis Division  
- Performance Management Office  
Washington State Transportation Commission Meeting  
January 14, 2025

# GRAY NOTEBOOK ORIGINS

- Media and public confidence in WSDOT eroding
- Governor and committee voice accountability concerns
- Initiative-695 passes, cutting revenue by 30%
- 10-year no new revenue drought continues



Washington State  
Department of Transportation

## Measures, Markers and Mileposts

The Gray Notebook for the quarter ending March 31, 2001

WSDOT's quarterly report to the  
Washington State Transportation Commission  
on transportation programs and department management

**Douglas B. MacDonald**  
Secretary of Transportation



This periodic report is prepared by WSDOT staff to track a variety of performance and accountability measures for routine review by the Transportation Commission and others. The content and format of this report is expected to develop as time passes. Information is reported on a preliminary basis as appropriate and available for internal management use and is subject to correction and clarification.

Revised 5/14/01

# GRAY NOTEBOOK ORIGINS

- Started small
- First edition was nine pages from start to finish (including the cover and table of contents)

## Measures, Markers and Mileposts

For the quarter ending March 31, 2001

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*[Additional Reports to come]*

### “What gets measured, gets managed.”

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# GRAY NOTEBOOK ORIGINS

- Accountability, Credibility and Transparency began to grow at WSDOT and beyond
- Trust in the agency was renewed and support and funding followed

## Freeway Operational Efficiency Strategies – Incident Response Teams and Service Patrols: Quarterly Update



A WSDOT Incident Response Team renders assistance.

Non-recurring traffic incidents, not just traffic volumes, are a significant factor in urban area congestion. WSDOT's strategy to address congestion is to quickly clear incidents when they occur. Quicker Incident Response Teams and the new Service Patrol program are reducing non-recurring congestion and travel times for the public. We are currently developing performance measures.

### Incident Response Teams\*

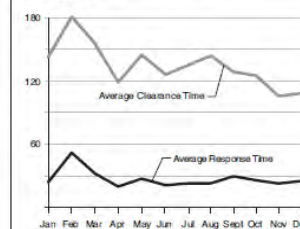
There are currently 13 Incident Response Teams statewide. These well-trained teams, with specially equipped vehicles, are able to respond 24 hours a day to accidents and other types of incidents that require on-the-spot traffic control and coordination with the Washington State Patrol (WSP) and other emergency services. Incident Response Teams do not respond to all accidents but only to those when the WSP calls for their assistance. WSP calls when they believe an incident is going to last longer than one hour.

### Service Patrols\*

There are currently four Service Patrols in the Puget Sound area. Most encounters by the roving Service Patrols are minor incidents involving debris, disabled vehicles or non-crash related incidents. These types of encounters make Service Patrols the best fit for removing incidents from the roadway without needing to block traffic while waiting for a tow vehicle. The chart indicates the number of Service Patrol contacts made thus far in FY 2002, compared to FY 2001.

\*See the Gray Notebook for September 30, 2001.

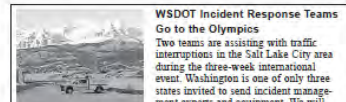
Response Time and Clearance Time for the WSDOT Incident Response Teams  
In minutes, 2001\*



Average response time is the monthly average time from when an Incident Response Team received a call to when that team arrived on the scene.

Average clearance time is the monthly average time from when the Incident Response Team gets a call to when the incident is cleared from the roadway and all lanes are again free for traffic flow.

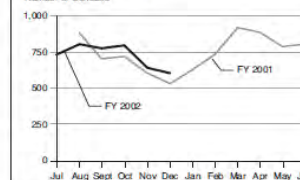
\*Benchmark levels have not yet been developed for this critical performance indicator.



WSDOT's staff and Incident Response truck on patrol in the Salt Lake City area.

**WSDOT Incident Response Teams Go to the Olympics**  
Two teams are assisting with traffic interruptions in the Salt Lake City area during the three-week international event. Washington is one of only three states invited to send incident management experts and equipment. We will provide an update about our experience and what we learned in the next Gray Notebook.

Service Patrol Contacts  
Number of Contacts



# GRAY NOTEBOOK PAST

The Gray Notebook has been recognized as the “gold standard” for data and performance reporting.

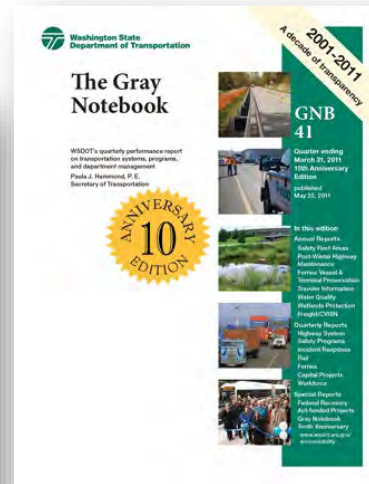
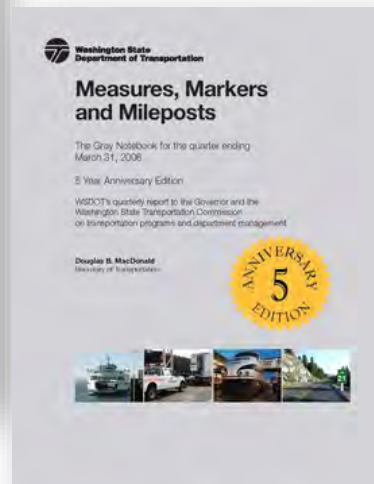
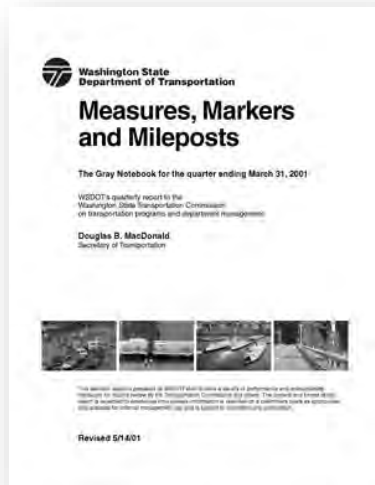
In 2016, our office won its first Extra Mile Award from the Governor.





# GRAY NOTEBOOK PAST

The GNB has evolved over the years and continually improved, while keeping true to its original mission to promote agency-wide accountability, credibility and transparency



# GNB CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The GNB team surveyed the numerous programs it works with on the publication. The vast majority of WSDOT programs that produce GNB articles use the vetted data and text for actions including:

- Operational decisions
- Investment decisions
- Special requests
- Internal meetings and reports
- External outreach
- Legislative updates
- State reports and assessments
- Federally-mandated reports
- Folios, brochures and news releases

# GNB CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Ensure all programs have the opportunity be included in the GNB
- Make certain that program-centric GNB partnerships thrive
- Discuss data the subject matter experts use to manage their programs





# GNB CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- PDFs have extreme space issues and limitations
- Searching PDFs is difficult
- Online PDFs vs. print can result in inconsistencies
- PDFs do not work on smaller screens

## 87 BRIDGES ANNUAL REPORT

### WSDOT bridge conditions worsen in 2022

WSDOT-owned bridges in poor condition increased from 179 bridges (3.8 million square feet) in June 2021 to 199 (4.2 million square feet) in June 2022. While some inventory was removed from the poor condition category due to repair, rehabilitation or replacement, the percentage of WSDOT-owned bridges in poor condition increased from 6.7% in June 2021 to 7.4% in June 2022 (refer to chart below). The increase in the poor condition percentage was primarily due to the SR 24 Yakima River Bridge and the two I-90 bridges over SR 906 near Snoqualmie Pass, which contributed 0.35% (196,363 square feet of deck area) to this category. These three bridges are currently programmed for preservation construction projects.

As of June 2022, 92.6% of WSDOT-owned bridges by deck area were in fair or better structural condition, declining from 93.2% in June 2021. Despite the drop WSDOT met its annual goal of having at least 90% of its bridges by deck area in fair or better condition.

WSDOT meets performance goal with 92.6% of bridges in fair or better condition as of June 2022; number of bridges in poor condition increases June 2018 through June 2022; Condition categories; Deck area in millions of square feet; Percent of bridges by deck area; Number of bridges

Structural condition rating	June 2018	June 2019	June 2020	June 2021	June 2022
Good					
Bridge deck area	20.9	21.3	21.2	20.8	20.6
Percent of deck area	38.4%	37.1%	37.5%	37.0%	36.7%
Number of bridges	1,701	1,729	1,726	1,725	1,719
Fair					
Bridge deck area	29.4	32.0	31.8	31.5	31.4
Percent of deck area	54.1%	55.7%	56.3%	56.2%	55.9%
Number of bridges	1,456	1,457	1,452	1,461	1,457
Fair or better <sup>2</sup>					
Bridge deck area <sup>2</sup>	50.3	53.3	53.0	52.3	52.0
Percent of deck area <sup>2</sup>	92.5%	92.9%	93.8%	93.2%	92.6%
Number of bridges	3,157	3,168	3,178	3,186	3,176
Poor					
Bridge deck area	4.1	4.1	3.5	3.8	4.2
Percent of deck area	7.5%	7.1%	6.2%	6.7%	7.4%
Number of bridges	165	158	164	179	199
Total					
Bridge deck area	54.4	57.4	56.5	56.1	56.2
Number of bridges	3,332	3,326	3,336	3,365	3,375

Data source: WSDOT Bridge and Structures Office.

Notes: The above data shows WSDOT-owned bridges, culverts, and ferry terminals longer than 20 feet that carry vehicular traffic. All numbers shown in the table above are based on the "out-to-out" calculation method (which includes curbs and rails on the bridge) instead of the bridge width from curb to curb. 1 WSDOT's goal is to have at least 90% of its bridges by deck area in fair or better condition. 2 Numbers and percentages have been rounded up and may not add exactly as a result.

### Notable results

- The percentage of deck area on WSDOT-owned bridges in poor condition increased from 6.7% in June 2021 to 7.4% in June 2022
- WSDOT owned 314 bridges 80 years old or older as of June 2022, an increase of 12 bridges (4.0%) from 302 in June 2021
- There were 135 WSDOT-owned bridges that were load posted or load restricted in June 2022, up from 131 in June 2021

### Bridge Condition Ratings

**Good** - Bridges in good condition range from those with no problems to those having some minor deterioration of structural elements.

**Fair** - The primary structural elements of bridges in fair condition are sound; such bridges may have minor deterioration, cracking, spalling or scour.

**Poor** - Bridges in poor condition have advanced deficiencies such as section loss, deterioration, scour, or seriously affected structural components. Bridges in poor condition may have weight restrictions, but are safe for travel.

# COVID-19 DASHBOARD

- COVID-19 Dashboard paved the way for the Multimodal Dashboard
- Success led to members of the office receiving their second Extra Mile Award in five years

**-63%**

Highway travel - With businesses and schools closed, construction projects halted, and a stay at home order in place, vehicle volumes on state highways dropped by 63% on March 28 and 29

**-80%**

Tolling - Washington's five tolled facilities saw an average of 80% less usage on March 28 due to decreased travel on state highways

**-87%**

Washington State Ferries - In response to COVID-19 and resulting decrease in ridership on all routes—which bottomed out at 87% on March 28—WSF implemented a reduced service schedule

**-77%**

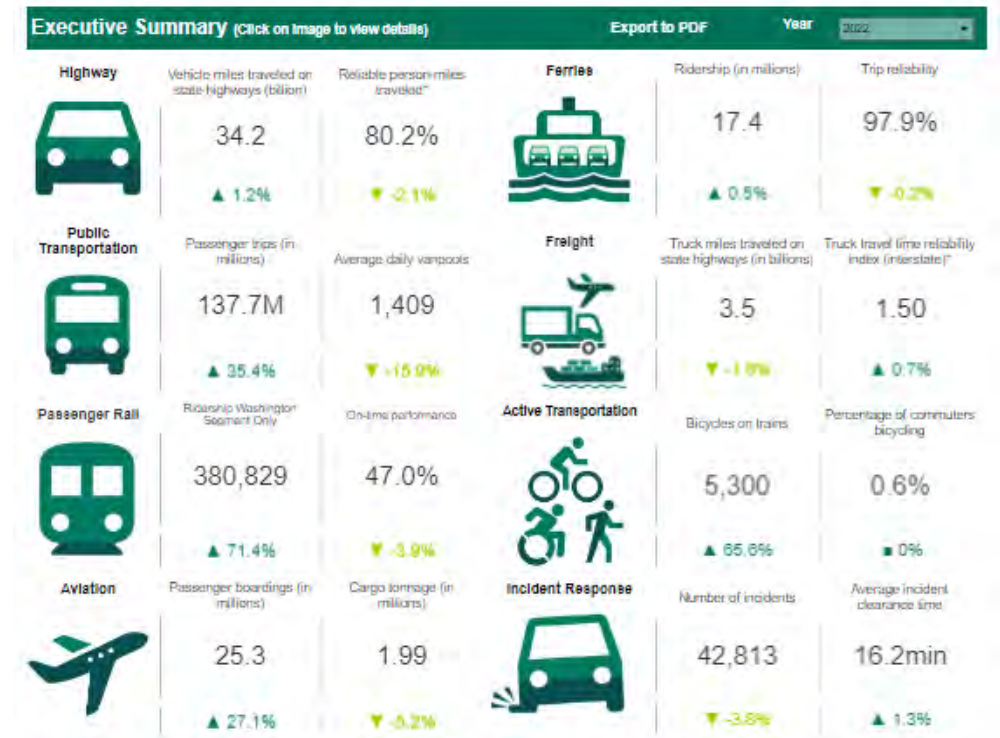
Transit - Reduced travel coupled with social distancing—maintaining a physical distance of six feet from other people to limit the spread of COVID-19—resulted in an average decline in ridership of 77% at 10 of Washington's largest transit agencies on April 22

**-98%**

Amtrak Cascades - Percentage-wise, travel by train was the hardest hit in the state, and from March 26 to May 4, Amtrak Cascades ridership was between 96% to 98% lower than the same days in 2019

# MULTIMODAL MOBILITY DASHBOARD

- Steep learning curve for the Multimodal Mobility Dashboard
- Being part of this process, the GNB team was able to identify best practices to follow



# GNB GOES INTERACTIVE

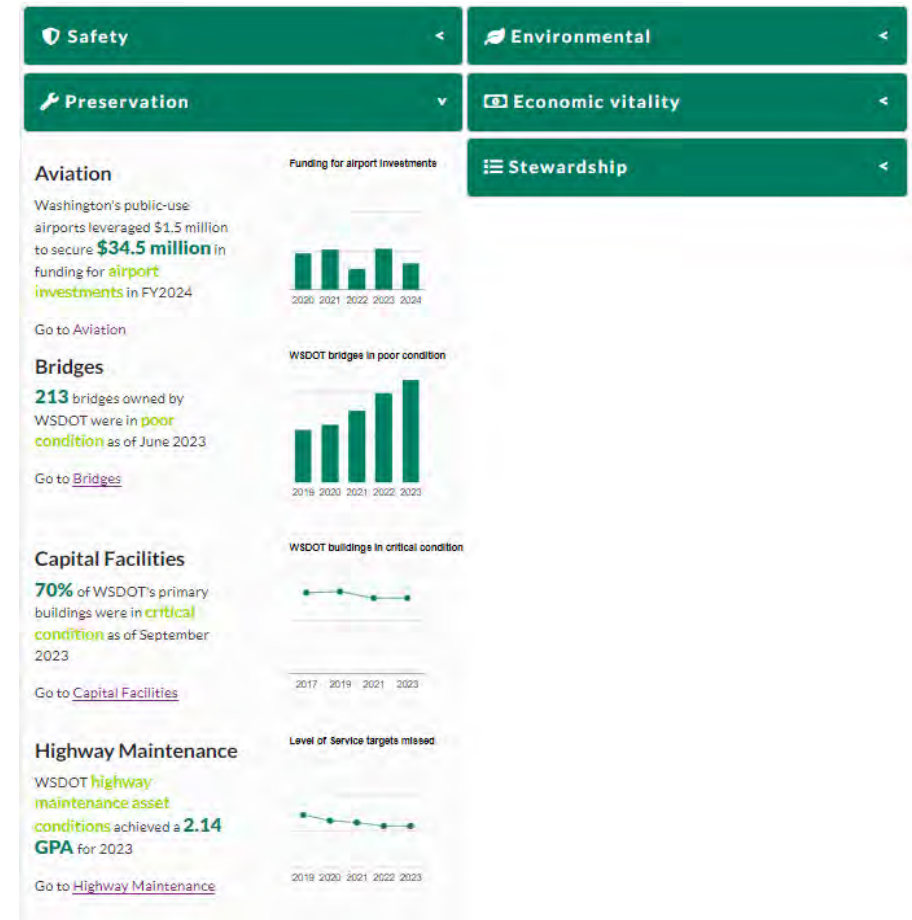


- Worked with the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) during the GNB transition
- TTI's findings validated the direction we were taking with the publication
- The guide TTI created is a reference tool to help others make this change



# GNB GOES INTERACTIVE

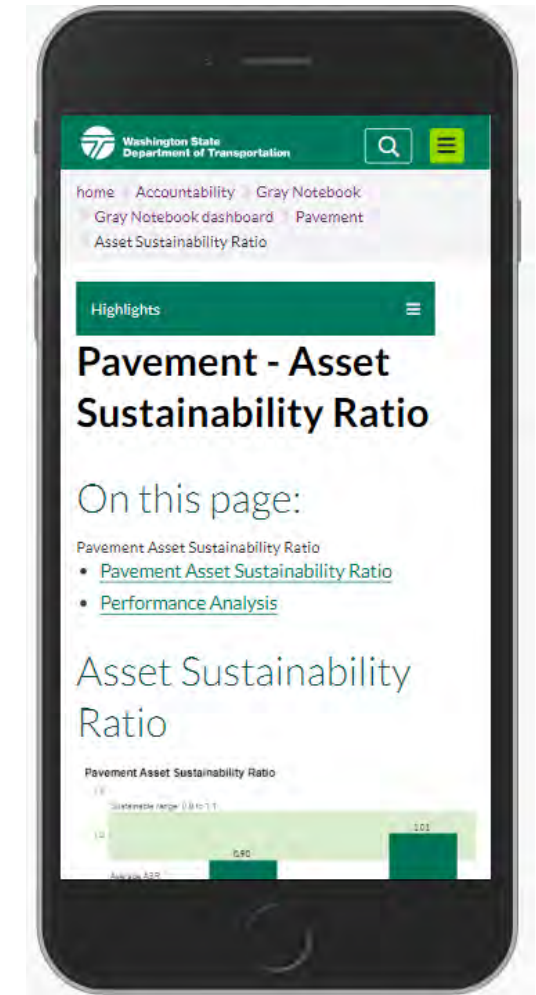
- Highway Safety (updated for the quarter ending September 30, 2024)
- Bridges (updated for the quarter ending September 30, 2024)
- Pavement (updates underway for the quarter ending December 31, 2024)
- Incident Response (updated for the quarter ending September 30, 2024)
- [WSDOT - Gray Notebook](#)





# INTERACTIVE GNB

- Analysis and data are more robust
- Easier to navigate subjects
- Ability to view all subjects in one place
- Five years of data and articles
- Data is downloadable in various formats
- Much more accessible for all readers
- Better readability on smaller screens
- Support from programs
- More options for improvements



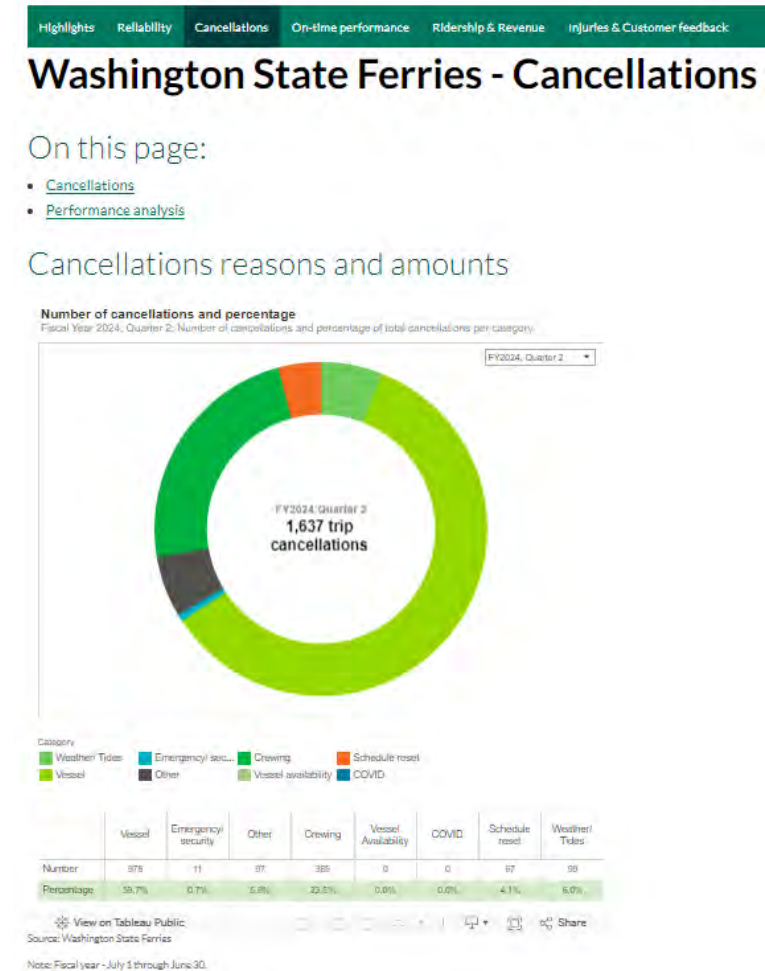
# GNB ALIGNMENT

The GNB's vetted data is used by programs throughout WSDOT in their own reports and communications ranging from internal and external presentations to media outreach. GNB data and messaging aligns with and informs:

- State of Transportation
- Strategic Plan
- Statewide Transportation Policy Goals
- Attainment Report
- Results Washington
- Summary of Public Transportation
- Transportation Performance Management

# WHAT'S NEXT FOR GNB?

- Integrate risk and strategic aspects into performance analyses
- Make GNB a centralized source for decision making
- Integrate Data Governance and Performance Management
- Continuous improvement
  - Charts, maps and text
  - Incorporate Work Zone Awareness into Worker Safety



# QUESTIONS?

For additional information on the WSDOT Gray Notebook,  
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