

2013 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing



# Washington State Patrol



*Service With Humility*

**2013 Herman Goldstein Award Submission  
for  
Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing**



# **Snohomish County Speed Project**

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# **Snohomish County Speed Project**

## **A Reduction of Speed-Related Injury and Fatal Collisions**

### **Summary**

The Snohomish County Speed Project was started on April 2, 2012, in response to the significant increase in speed-related injury and fatal collisions on the interstate and state routes in Snohomish County. In 2011, speed-related fatal collisions on the interstates were up 67% from the previous year, and injury collisions were up 4%. On the state routes, fatal collisions were up 200% and injury collisions were up 6%. During the analysis phase of the project, it was discovered that speed was second only to impaired driving as the causing factor in injury and fatal collisions in Snohomish County. It was further discovered that the majority of the speed-related injury and fatal collisions were occurring during the daytime between 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

A partnership between the Washington State Patrol, Snohomish County Sheriff's Office, and the Everett Police Department (PD) was initiated. Motorcycle officers from each department would participate in designated enforcement zones on a daily basis throughout Snohomish County. Their focus would be high visibility and speed enforcement in an effort to reduce speed-related injury and fatal collisions in Snohomish County. The program would run for one year.

The greatest measure of success for this project was the significant reduction of fatal collisions in Snohomish County in 2012, as compared with 2011. In 2011, there were 15 fatal collisions in Snohomish County. At the end of the project, fatal collisions in Snohomish County for 2012 had been reduced to 7, a 53% reduction.

The Snohomish County Speed Project directly addressed the Washington State Patrol's strategic goal of Target Zero- zero traffic-related deaths on Washington's roadways by 2030.

Autonomous Patrol Areas (APA) 33 and 34 encompass all of Snohomish County. There are two major interstates (I-5 and I-405) and 13 state routes (SR 2, SR 9, SR 92, SR 99, SR 203, SR 522, SR 524, SR 526, SR 527, SR 528, SR 529, SR 530, and SR 531). There is a major mountain pass (Stevens Pass) located on SR 2 between Everett and Leavenworth, connecting Western Washington with Eastern Washington.

## Scanning

The specific issue that prompted this POPS project was the fact that the speed-related injury and fatal collisions in 2011 were up significantly from 2010 in Snohomish County, Washington. Speed-related fatal collisions on the interstates were up 67% and injury collisions were up 4%. On state routes, fatal collisions were up 200% and injury collisions were up 6%. The increase in speed-related collisions was identified by the District 7 command staff during preparations for our yearly Strategic Advancement Forum.

One of the goals of the Washington State Patrol Field Operations Bureau is to save lives by reducing speed-related collisions by 4% each year. This ties in directly with the Target Zero goal of zero traffic fatalities by the year 2030. Unfortunately, the speed-related injury collisions in Snohomish County were trending upward, not downward.

The district command staff met to determine how to address the increase in speed-related injury and fatal collisions in the most effective and efficient manner using our current resources.

## Analysis

The Washington State Patrol investigates injury and fatality collisions on the interstate and state routes in both APA 33 and APA 34.

The Washington State Patrol's primary focus and responsibility is enforcement on the interstates and state routes. When reporting to Washington State's governor at the Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) meeting, one performance measure is the reduction in the total number of fatal collisions that occur on interstates and state routes.

Analysis revealed that speed had become second only to impaired driving as the causing factor in our injury and fatal collisions in Snohomish County. Speed was the primary factor in 38% of all injury collisions in Snohomish County in 2011 compared with 30% in 2010. The increase became the focus of a plan to support Target Zero and guide future enforcement and/or education efforts. Additionally, speed was a factor in 7% of the fatal collisions in 2011, and 5% in 2010. This fact reinforced speed enforcement as a priority of the Target Zero plan. This would prove to be a critical element in the success of the project.

As a district, we needed to know how to address the problem regarding the increase in speed-related injury and fatal collisions. We worked closely with our data analyst and decided that the most effective way to compile the necessary data would be to mirror our efforts after the approach utilized by our Target Zero Team whose sole focus is DUI enforcement. That program had been in effect for two years and it has a proven data analysis methodology that works.

During our analysis, the data analysts focused only on collision data and not criminal data in general in Snohomish County. The data identified areas within Snohomish County where speed-related injury and fatal collisions were the highest. Six areas or “hot zones” within Snohomish County were identified where enforcement efforts would be focused to have the greatest impact.

Three of the hot zones were located along the interstates and state routes in Snohomish County APA 33. They were the Everett zone (I-5 MP 193-196 and SR 2 MP 1-2), Mukilteo zone (I-5 MP 187-190, SR 526 MP 2-4, SR 527 MP 9-11, and SR 99, MP 52-55), and Lynnwood (I-405 MP 26-29, SR 524 MP 7-10, and SR 527 MP 2-5).

Three additional hot zones were located in east Snohomish County APA 34. They were the Lake Stevens zone (SR 9 MP 16-19, and SR 92 MP 1-3), Highway 2 zone SR 2 (MP 3-6 and SR 9 MP 12-15), and Monroe zone (SR 2 MP 13-16, SR 203 MP 22-25, and SR 522 MP 22-24).

The data analyst provided us with the days of the week and the times during the day that speed-related collisions were the most significant. Analysis revealed that speed-related collisions were greatest between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. each day. This information was used to plan our enforcement efforts for the greatest effect on reducing speed-related collisions.

Data was provided every 42 days regarding the number of collisions in each zone, the number of traffic stops, and reported erratic drivers.

We felt that for this project to be successful, it would need to be at least one year in length. This would provide a significant amount of time and data to properly determine the impact of the project on reducing speed-related injury and fatal collisions in Snohomish County.

Further, we realized that we would have to address the identified problem using current resources available to us. We identified our motorcycle detachment as the key available resource. Our motorcycle troopers are proactive and primarily focus on speed enforcement. They are not responsible for handling calls for service or collisions, and they are out seven days a week. Troopers assigned to the Aggressive Driver Apprehension Team (ADAT) would also be used to augment the motorcycle troopers. ADAT troopers drive unmarked patrol cars which would be effective when utilized in the various hot zones.

Our district command realized that our agency could not accomplish the goal of reducing speed-related injury and fatal collisions on our own. We knew we would need to partner with local law enforcement agencies. We reached out to the Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office and the Everett PD. Both agencies were brought on board as stakeholders in the project. These agencies quickly understood the impact the project could have in their jurisdictions. Their motorcycle officers and deputies would work side by side with Washington State Patrol motorcycle troopers within the six identified hot zones. The combination of resources would allow for high visibility emphasis patrols on a daily basis.

The data clearly indicated that the highest number of injury and fatal collisions in 2010 and 2011 were occurring in the APA 33 hot zones.

Data Comparison for 2010 to 2011 for APA 33:

- Injury and fatal collisions in the Mukilteo zone increased from 43 to 44.
- Injury and fatal collisions in the Everett zone increased from 49 to 58.
- Injury and fatal collisions in the Lynnwood zone increased from 41 to 62.

The data also showed a significant increase in injury and fatal collision in the APA 34 hot zones.

Data Comparison for 2010 to 2011 for APA 34:

- Injury and fatal collisions in the Lake Stevens zone increased from 3 to 11.
- Injury and fatal collisions in the Highway 2 zone increased from 4 to 12.
- Injury and fatal collisions in the Monroe zone decreased from 4 to 2.

We realized our response would require partnerships and close coordination with the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office and the Everett PD with the deployment of their motorcycle units.

## Response

After reviewing data from the past two years, a strategy was developed that we believed would have an immediate impact on reducing speed-related injury and fatal collisions in the identified target hot zones. We believed the impact of our efforts in those zones would ripple outward to all of Snohomish County. The Washington State Patrol's motorcycle sergeant for this area implemented a plan to work with the Snohomish County and Everett PD's motorcycle sergeants in setting up daily high visibility emphasis patrols within the targeted hot zones. There were six State Patrol motorcycle troopers tasked with working these zones. Snohomish County and Everett PD would each provide two officers Monday through Friday.

It was determined that for the emphasis patrols to be effective, there would need to be at least two troopers/deputies/officers working in one of the zones for at least two straight hours. This would allow the patrols to have the high visibility impact, and in turn, cause drivers to alter their driving behavior by reducing their speeds. The emphasis patrols would be conducted during mid-day, since this is when the data indicated that speed-related collisions were at their peak.

The data provided by analysts every 42 days would provide the number of collisions, erratic drivers, and traffic stops within each of the six hot zones. This information would allow us to see the effect of our enforcement efforts, and to allow for adjustments as needed.

For this project to have the greatest impact, we would have to get our message out to a large percentage of the general public. Our district Public Information Officer (PIO) would work closely with local television and print media in our area prior to the start of the project, and through to completion of the project. The media was advised the goal of the project was to focus on speed enforcement in the six designated hot zones in an effort to reduce speed-related injury and fatal collisions within Snohomish County.

The PIO explained to the media about why this project was considerably different from routine emphasis patrols; real-time data was being used to focus efforts to have the greatest impact on reducing speed-related collisions. The PIO demonstrated the project was a partnership between the Washington State Patrol, Snohomish County Sheriff's Office and Everett PD. It was emphasized that this would be a year-long project and motorists should expect to see law enforcement presence in the hot zones on a daily basis.

The project was implemented on April 2, 2012, and ended on April 1, 2013. The first day of the project was covered by local TV stations and by the Everett Herald newspaper. The project was well received by the media; their coverage aired during the primetime newscast. This coverage allowed us to reach hundreds of thousands of motorists with our message of reducing speed-related injury and fatal collisions in Snohomish County through targeted speed enforcement and high visibility. The location of the six different hot zones were released to the public.

The project's daily patrols were coordinated by the State Patrol's motorcycle Sergeant Graeme Kennedy. Approximately 150 high-visibility emphasis patrols were coordinated throughout the year long project. The efforts and results were provided to Sergeant Kennedy every 42 days by the data analyst. Sergeant Kennedy was able to monitor and adjust enforcement efforts based on the data.

## Assessment

The Snohomish County Speed Project was completed on April 1, 2013, with one very noteworthy result, a significant reduction in fatal collisions in Snohomish County.

At the start of the project in April 2012, there were 15 documented fatal collisions for calendar year 2011. At the end of the project in April 2013, the fatal collisions in Snohomish County for calendar year 2012 had been reduced to 7, a 53% reduction.

Injury collisions were reduced as well. In 2011, there were 571 injury collisions in Snohomish County. In 2012, that number had been reduced to 543, a 5% reduction.

In 2011, troopers contacted 88,901 total violators in Snohomish County. In 2012, a total of 91,838 violators were contacted, resulting in a 3% increase in total contacts; 29,015 (31%) were contacted within the six designated hot zones.

During 2012, troopers contacted 52,623 violators in Snohomish County for speed violations; 14,046 (26%) of those speed violators were contacted in the designated hot zones.

## Results

Direct results of our enforcement efforts within the six hot zones are as follows:

Total fatal collisions in the zones were reduced from four to three, a 25% reduction.

Fatal collisions from 2011 to 2012, in APA 33 zones:

- Fatal collisions in the Mukilteo zone remained the same, one for each year.
- Fatal collisions in the Everett zone increased from zero to one.
- Fatal collisions in the Lynnwood zone decreased from one to zero.

Fatal collisions from 2011 to 2012, in APA 34 zones:

- Fatal collisions in the Lake Stevens zone remained the same, one for each year.
- Fatal collisions in the Highway 2 zone decreased from one to zero.
- Fatal collisions in the Monroe zone remained the same at zero.

Total injury collisions in the zones were reduced from 151 to 126, a 17% reduction.

Injury collisions from 2011 to 2012, in APA 33 zones, the impact on injury collisions from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.:

- Injury collisions in the Mukilteo zone decreased from 32 to 29.
- Injury collisions in the Everett zone decreased from 48 to 35.
- Injury collisions in the Lynnwood zone decreased from 54 to 44.

Injury collisions from 2011 to 2012, in APA 34 zones, the impact on injury collisions from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.:

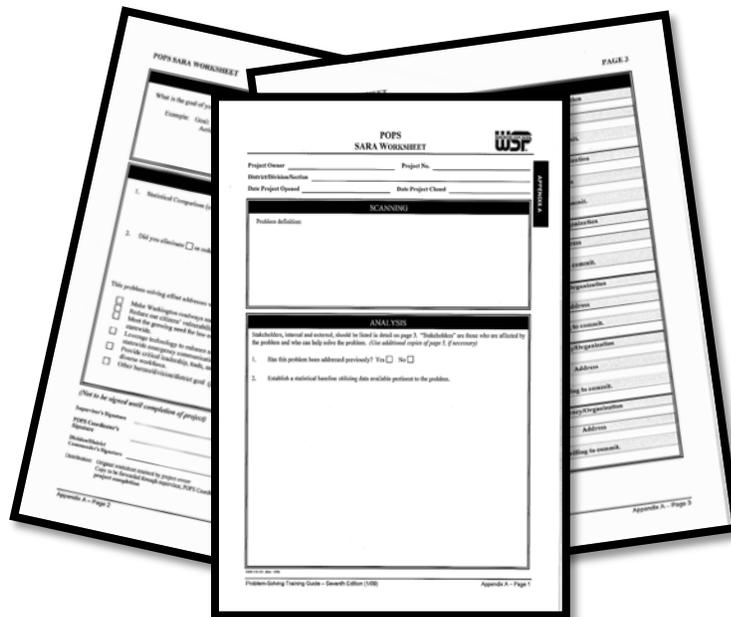
- Injury collisions in the Lake Stevens zone decreased from eight to five.
- Injury collisions in the Highway 2 zone decreased from eight to five.
- Injury collisions in the Monroe zone increased from one to eight.

An important aspect of this POPS project developed out of the assessment phase, the importance of the data analyst. Accurate real time data was instrumental to the project's success, not only in the scanning phase, but more importantly, in the response phase.

Another crucial aspect was the realization that there had to be a highly visible and sustained enforcement effort over a substantial time period to obtain the desired results. Motorists had to become accustomed to seeing law enforcement officers in the hot zones on a daily basis. This continued high visibility began to bring about the change in driver behavior which led to the reduction of speed-related injury and fatal collisions.

# Conclusion

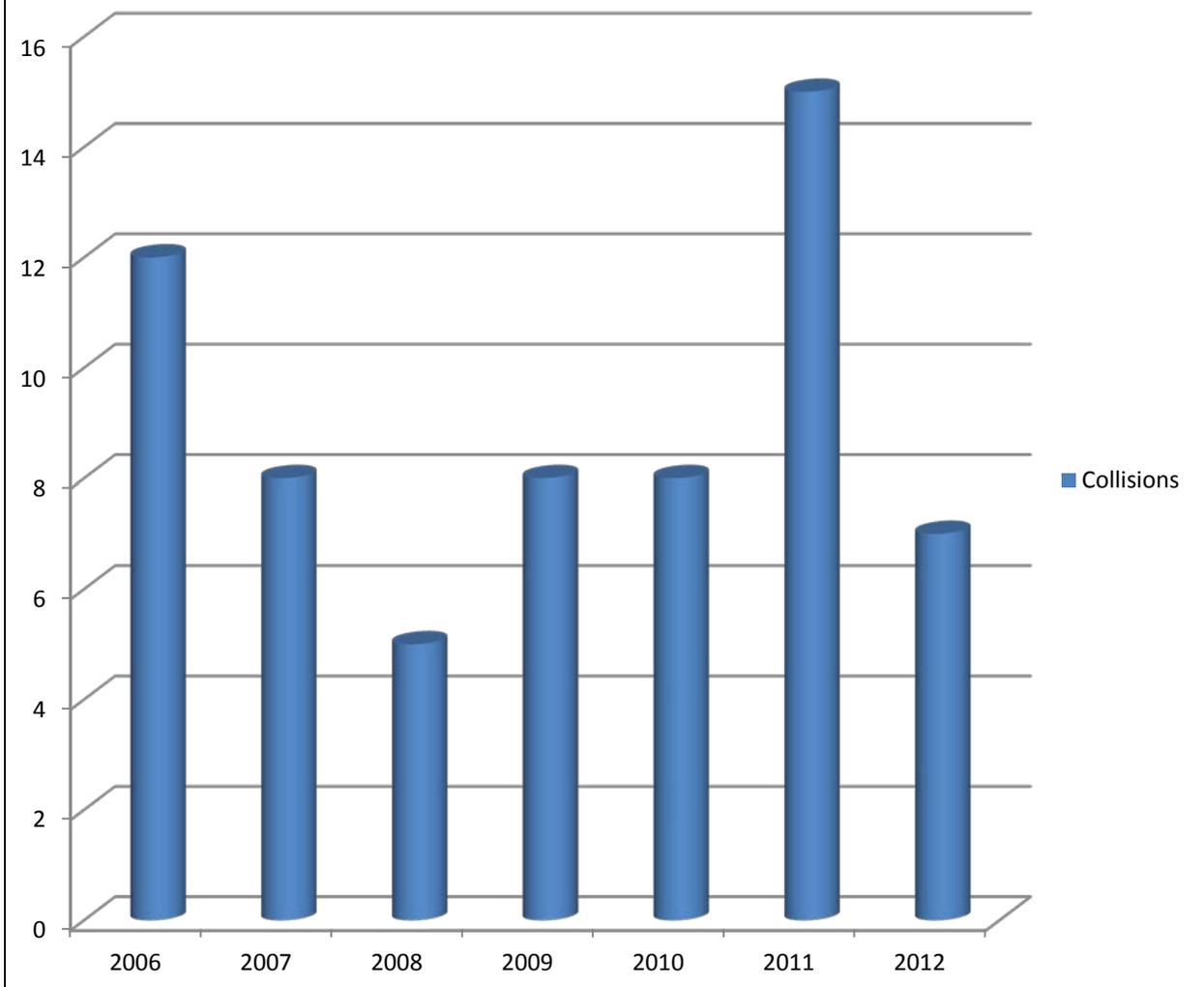
The Snohomish County Speed POPS project addressed the Washington State Patrol's Strategic Goal #1: Making Washington roadways safe for the efficient transit of people and goods by reducing fatal and injury collisions on interstates and state routes by 4%.



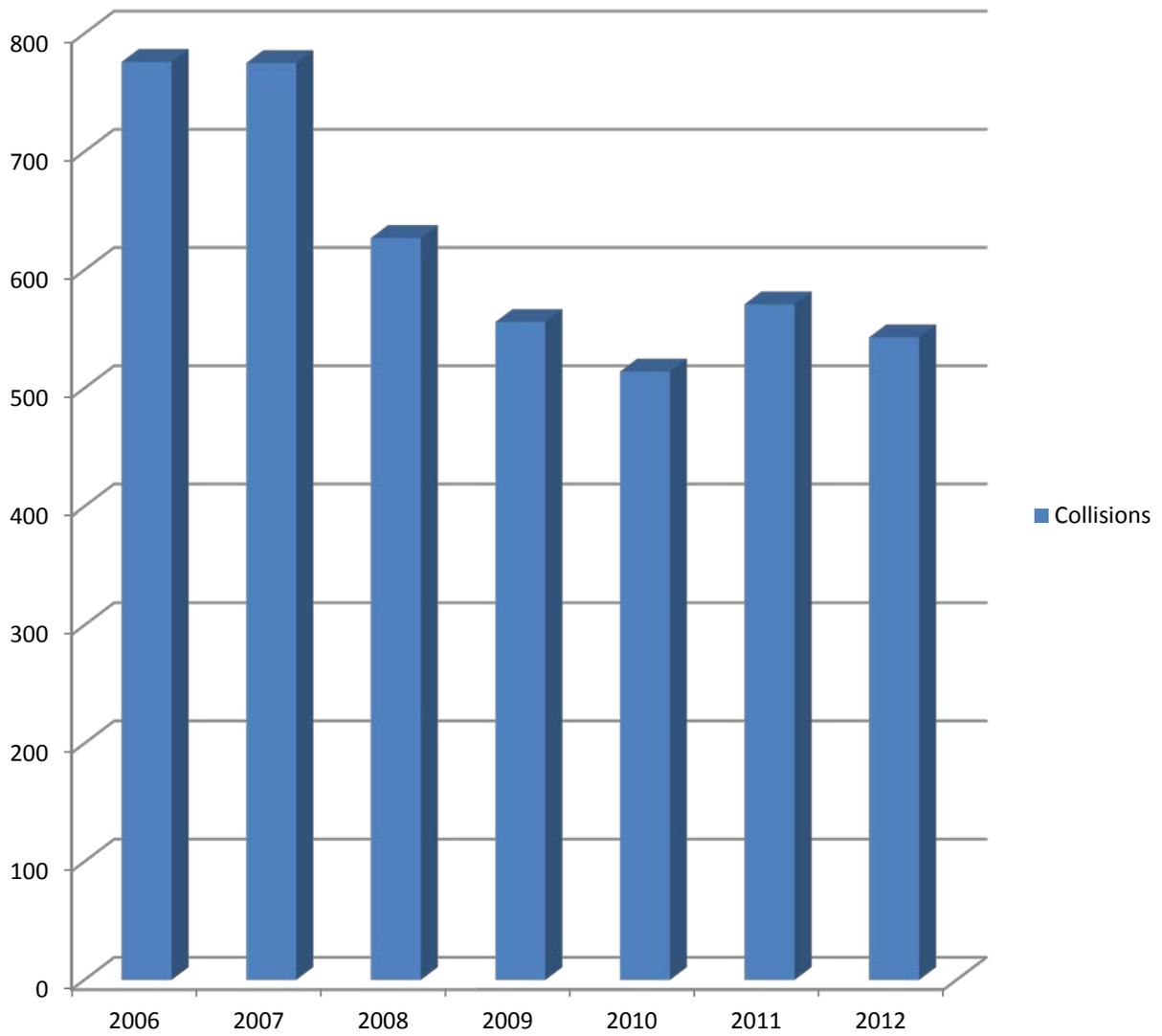
# Appendices



## Fatal Collisions in Snohomish County



## Snohomish County Injury Collisions

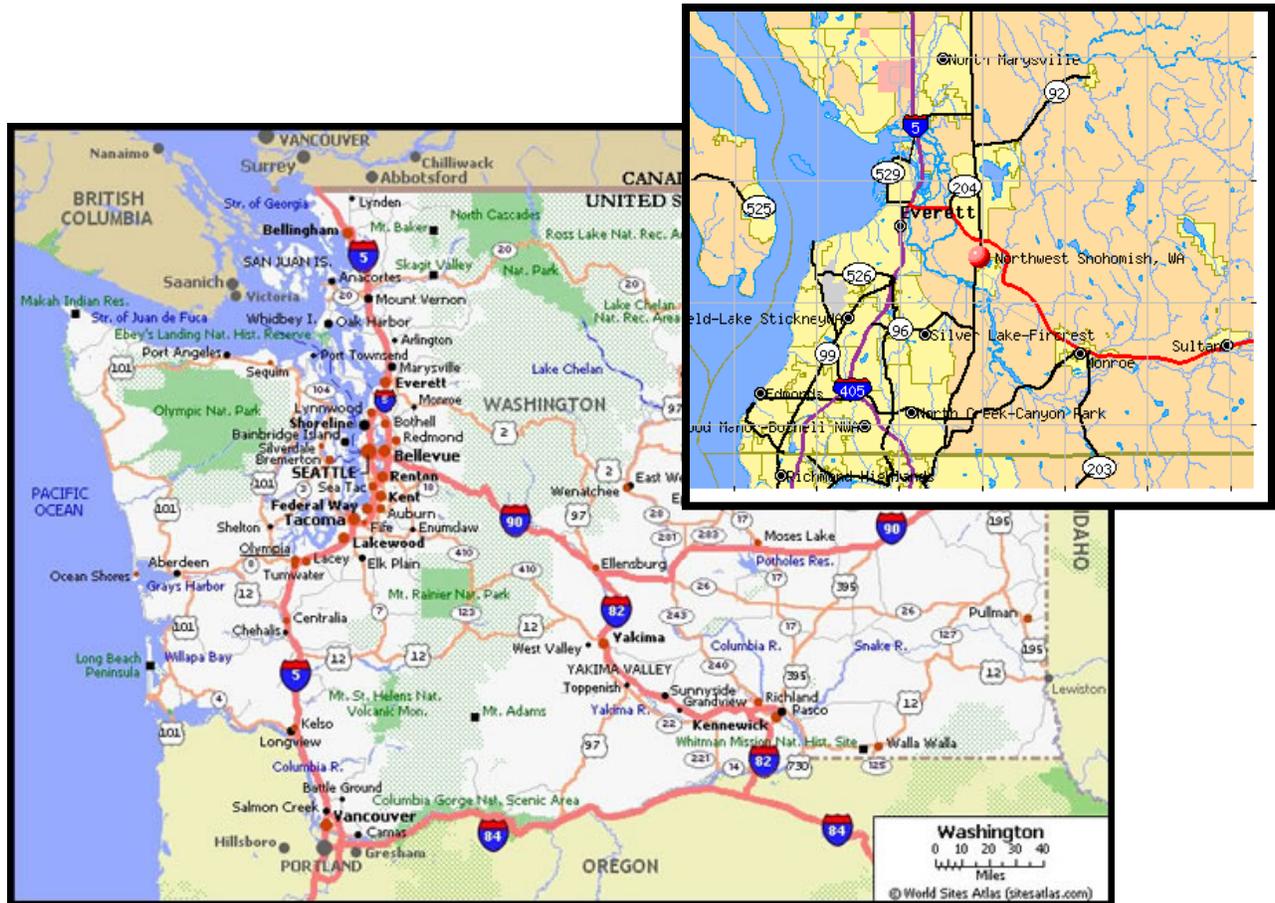


## ■ Washington State Patrol Proactive Enforcement (Snohomish County)

	2011	2012	Difference
Total Violator Contacts	88,901	91,838	+ 3%
Speed Violators	51,717	52,623	+1.7%

## ■ Washington State Patrol Proactive Enforcement (Hot Zones in Snohomish County)

	2011	2012	Difference
Total Violator Contacts	24,436	29,015	+18%
Speed Violators	11,041	14,046	+27%



# Assigned Areas

Six identified “Hot Zones” for target enforcement:

Snohomish County Freeway -

Everett (I-5 MP 193-196, SR2 MP 1-2)

Mukilteo (I-5 MP 187-190, SR 526 MP 2-4, SR 527 MP 9-11, SR 99 MP 52-55)

Lynnwood (I-405 MP 26-29, SR 524 MP 7-10, SR 527 MP 2-5)

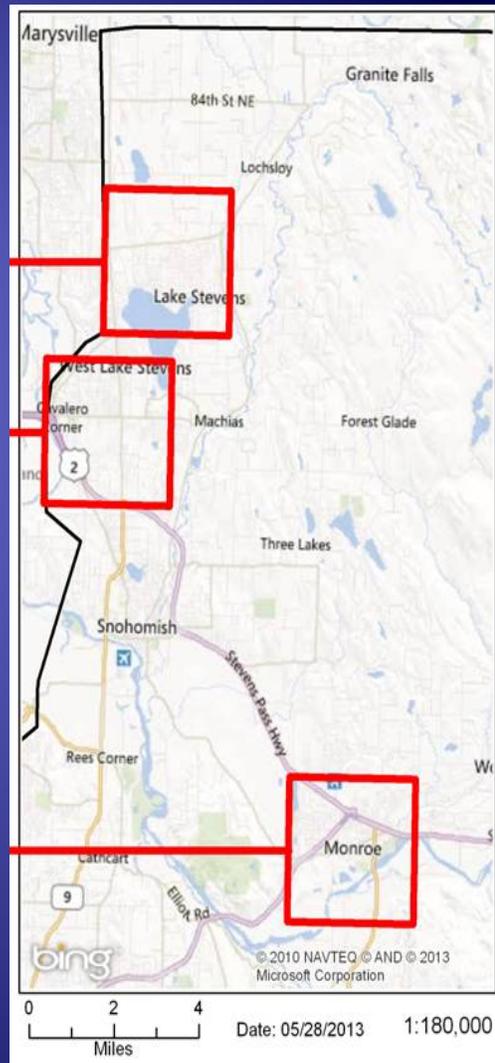


## Snohomish County East -

Lake Stevens (SR 9 MP 16-19,  
SR 92 MP 1-3)

US 2 (US 2 MP 3-6, SR 9 MP  
12-15)

Monroe (US 2 MP 13-16, SR 203  
MP 22-25, SR 522 MP 22-24)



# Stakeholders

## Public Safety

## Media

Washington State Patrol

KOMO 4 TV News

Snohomish County Sheriff's Office

KING 5 TV News

Everett Police Department

KIRO 7 TV News

Q13 TV News

The logo for HeraldNet, featuring the word "Herald" in a bold, black, sans-serif font and "Net" in a red, italicized, sans-serif font.



**Thank you!**