

**A BULLETIN FROM**  
**Fiveshadow**  
**News Network**

November 3, 2053

## **ZipTrains Zoom, Zoom, Zoom — Seattle Leads Way With Innovative Mass Transit Plan**

BY TOM BROWN

**William Rogers Tripp used to sit in traffic for hours, especially if he had to drive to Olympia, Washington, on Interstate 5. Tripp is from Seattle; he's also a Washington state legislator. It was while he was stalled on I-5 one day, looking at other frustrated drivers to his left and right — both ahead and behind him — that he thought about the “other” gridlock. It was the inability to agree on any and every light-rail, mass transit plan to come before the legislature since 2023. Then it dawned on him that perhaps what was needed was an interconnected set of city and county railroads: small railroads that linked together like the toy trains he played with as a boy. On that steamy day in stopped auto traffic, ZipTrains were born.**

Tripp's subsequent bill sailed through the legislature in 2039. It passed mainly because every legislator could support a light-rail system without

having to come up with the massive dollar amounts to fund a full, statewide system.

Sure, there was the state subsidy that was promised to any city or county working to build a ZipTrain. And, yes, there was the federal allocation of funds which also became an incentive, even though it was only a supplement.

But ZipTrains really started to come alive as a reality when Tripp passed another bill, in 2041, which certified that there was to be only one supplier of high-speed ZipTrain equipment — and one standard for ZipTrains — meaning that “all the parts” would ultimately link seamlessly.

Seattle, long clogged with heavy traffic, immediately saw that it could lead the way. Seattle and just about all its suburb communities started ZipTrain referendums, in order to raise bond monies to start building. By slim margins — but with a majority — the referendums passed.

Today, without great fanfare or hoopla (there never was a ribbon cutting), Tripp can zip from his downtown Seattle home to Olympia by hopping on and off six interconnected ZipTrain systems. In his automobile, the drive used to take several hours. He’s now door-to-door in 75 minutes. An average ride on a single ZipTrain has been clocked at around 15 minutes.

By law, the ZipTrain system is free to riders. And the economics of ZipTrains seem to be working out nicely. With the state and federal subsidies, communities were able to avoid slamming citizens with new taxes to build para-electric ZipTrains, mainly by reallocating environmental control dollars which have bulged in the last three decades. Happily, pollution caused by automobiles appears to be sliding downward in direct proportion to the surge in ZipTrain riders.

“This is truly one of the modern wonders of civic and corporate cooperation,” said Tripp from his legislative office yesterday. “No one

tried to hog the spotlight. It was always a question the local communities had to decide on their own, without any high-level pressure. We were fortunate to have venture capitalists willing to underwrite the start-up of the ZipTrain industry. And, of course, as with most social change, the people had to vote for it — and then use it!

“It was community spirit more than anything else that got ZipTrains moving ahead,” Tripp said.

Interstate 5 is still a clogged mess, especially during rush hours. But, each day, there seem to be fewer cars jamming the roadways. And, each day, there seem to be more people zipping to work.

Moreover, since the system connects to all major commercial districts (as well as entertainment and sports facilities), Tripp has found that ZipTrains meet all his transportation needs. A week ago, he sold his car.

“Will I miss driving?” Tripp told reporters. “Does anyone ever really miss traffic jams?” |<

*digital art by dave pierson*

