

# A Citizen's Guide to the Washington State



2012 Transportation Budget

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*The 2012 Citizen's Guide to the Washington State Transportation Budget* is offered as a resource for citizens, members of the senate, their staff, and other interested persons to provide a brief overview of the transportation budget, outline the budget's components and the budget process, and describe the agencies, goods, and services it funds.

Washington State has over 9,000 miles of highway, almost 40,000 miles of county roads, over 16,000 miles of city streets, and more than 7,600 bridges and structures. Twenty-three ferries carry over 10.9 million vehicles and 23 million passengers a year. Thirty-one local transit systems provide over 212 million passenger trips annually, and the state operates 16 airports.

Transportation agencies at the state, regional, and local level monitor and police the state's highways, manage traffic safety programs, license the state's 4.5 million drivers, register 6.9 million highway vehicles, regulate the commercial vehicle and vehicle dealer industries, and collect and distribute taxes and fees.

This guide builds on *The 2012 Citizen's Guide to the Washington State Budget* developed by the Senate Ways and Means Committee. It is complementary to the broader overview of the state budget process, but this guide may stand alone for readers particularly interested in transportation. Questions regarding the guide or requests for additional copies should be addressed to:

### **Senate Transportation Committee**

Post Office Box 40468

313 John A. Cherberg Building

Olympia, WA 98504-0468

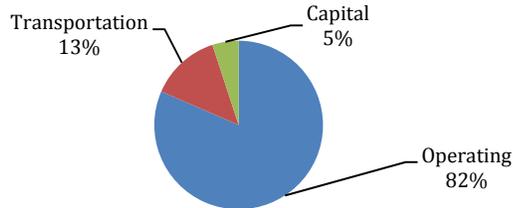
Telephone: 360-786-7300

Fax: 360-786-7368

<http://www1.leg.wa.gov/Senate/Committees/TRAN/>

## HOW BIG IS THE OVERALL STATE BUDGET?

As of the close of the 2012 Legislative Session, the State of Washington will spend a total of \$74.5 billion for the 2011-13 biennium. That is an average of just over \$101 million per day during the two-year spending period. This \$74.5 billion includes amounts from three different budgets, which are plans of how the state will spend the money. The relative size of each of the three state budgets is shown in the following chart:



**2011-13 State Budgets  
(Dollars in Billions)**

Operating Budget	\$60.9
Transportation Budget	\$9.9
Capital Budget*	\$3.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>" \$74.5</b>

\*Excludes Capital Re-appropriations (approximately \$2.1 billion).

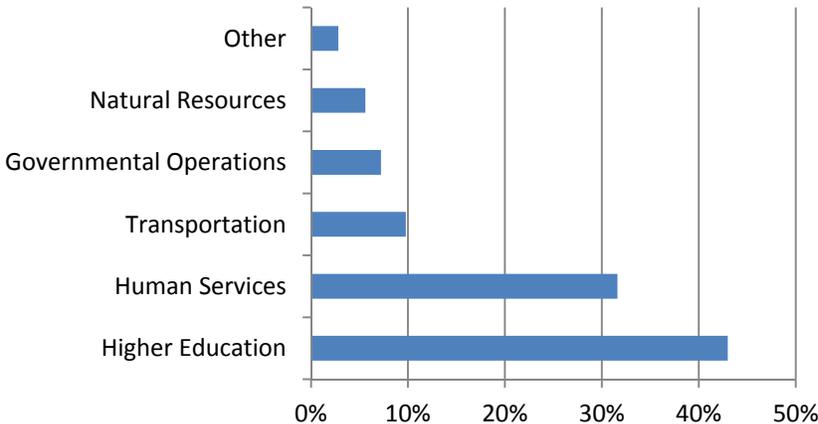
Sources: Winsum and Buildsum budget development systems for the 2012 Session.

- The budget that pays for the day-to-day operations of state government (including federal funds and dedicated funds) is called the **Operating Budget (\$60.9 billion)**.
- The budget that pays for transportation activities, such as designing and maintaining roads and public transit, is called the **Transportation Budget (\$9.9 billion)**. This budget includes amounts appropriated for both transportation operating activities (\$3.1 billion) and transportation capital activities (\$6.8 billion).
- The budget to acquire and maintain state buildings, public schools, higher education facilities, public lands, parks, and other assets is called the **Capital Budget (\$3.7 billion)**.

Budget-related materials frequently refer to the Near General Fund-State ("NGF-S"), which is the largest state fund; it represents more than half of the \$60.9 billion operating budget.

## HOW MANY STATE EMPLOYEES ARE THERE?

For budget purposes, the state counts its employees in terms of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. One FTE equals 2,088 paid hours per fiscal year. Generally, one FTE is thought of as one full-time position, although an FTE may be composed of multiple part-time positions. As the following chart shows, for the 2011-13 biennium, the state's budgets anticipate approximately 105,165 annual FTEs.



**Average Annual FTE Staff for 2011-13**

Higher Education	45,209
Human Services	33,238
Transportation	10,279
Governmental Operations	7,582
Natural Resources	5,900
Other	2,957
<b>Total*</b>	<b>105,165</b>

\*Includes FTEs from Omnibus Operating, Transportation, and Capital Budgets.  
Sources: Winsum and Buildsum budget development systems for the 2012 Session.

**Higher Education** represents the largest category of state employees. The budget for the University of Washington includes just under 20,000 FTEs and there are nearly 15,000 FTEs in the budget for the community and technical colleges. The next largest area is **Human Services**. Just over 16,000 FTEs work for the Department of Social and Health Services and approximately 7,900 FTEs work for the Department of Corrections.

Three agencies in **Transportation** employ 99% of the staff in this area of state government: Washington State Department of Transportation (7,206 FTEs), Washington State Patrol (1,899), and the Department of Licensing (1,088).

"

Similarly, in **Natural Resources**, the largest employers are the Departments of Fish and Wildlife (1,465 FTEs), Natural Resources (1,381), and Ecology (1,553).

"

In the preceding chart, **Other** includes the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) with 234 budgeted FTEs and the Department of Early Learning with 222 budgeted FTEs.

## HOW IS THE BUDGET CREATED?

Through the budget process, the legislature and the governor decide how much money to raise and spend. State agencies, the governor, the legislature, citizens, and interest groups are all involved in this process. Washington State operates on a two-year (biennial) basis, beginning on July 1st of each odd-numbered year. For example, the current budget is for the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013.

**Agency Requests** - In late summer and early fall of each even-numbered year, state agencies submit budget requests to the Office of Financial Management (OFM). The governor reviews the requests and makes the final decisions for his or her budget proposal.

**The Governor's Budget** - By law, as the chief executive officer of the state, the governor must propose a biennial budget in December of even-numbered years, the month before the legislature convenes in regular session. The governor's budget is his or her proposed spending and taxation plan for the biennium.

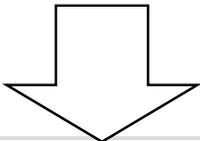
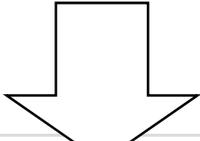
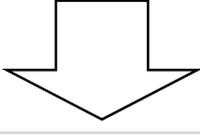
**The Legislative Budget Process** - After receiving the governor's budget proposal, the legislature reviews it and formulates its own budget during the legislative session which begins in January. The chairs of the Senate and House Ways and Means Committees work with their respective members and staff to analyze the governor's budget and develop recommendations and alternative proposals. The transportation portions of the budget are developed by separate committees in the house and senate. By tradition, the initiation of the budget alternates between chambers each biennium.

"

After each chamber has passed its version of the budget, the differences between the two must be reconciled in the budget conference process. Generally, six fiscal leaders representing both chambers and both political parties meet as a conference committee to prepare one legislative budget that is submitted to the full legislature for final passage and then ultimately delivered to the governor for his or her signature.

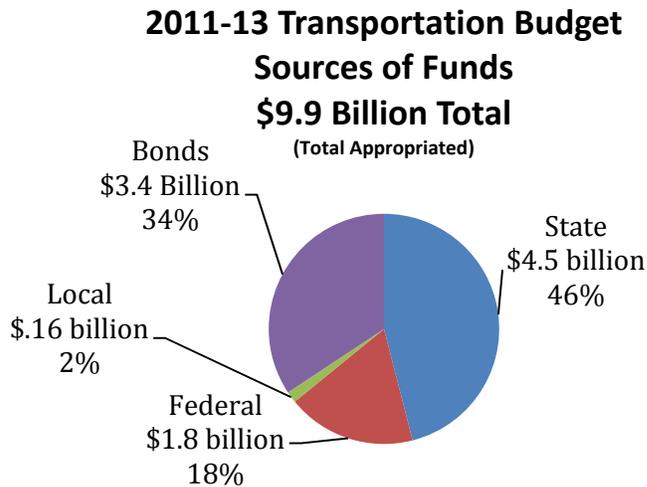
The governor may veto all or part of the budget, thereby eliminating funding for certain activities; however, the governor cannot add money for an activity for which the legislature provided no funding. Only after the legislature passes a budget and the governor signs it has the state created a real budget.

**Supplemental Budgets** - Each year, the legislature considers changes to the biennial budget in what is called a supplemental budget. Generally, such changes represent mid-course corrections to the two-year spending plans to account for changes in school enrollments, prison populations, public assistance caseloads, or significant changes in the state's economy.

<b>Timeline of Budget Decisions</b>		
<b>(2011-13 Biennium)</b>		
Formulation of the Governor's Budget	State agencies prepare budget requests and submit them to the Office of Financial Management	<b>July 2010 - December 2010</b>
	 The governor reviews the requests and makes decisions about what goes in the governor's proposed budget.	
Legislative Action on the Budget	 The Legislature reviews the governor's proposed budget, develops its own budgets, and acts on any proposed revenue bills. The budget is signed or vetoed by the governor.	<b>January 2011 - April 2011</b>
<i>The Biennium Begins</i>		<i>July 2011</i>
	 Agencies execute the enacted budget.	<b>July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2013</b>
Supplemental Budgets	The 2011-13 biennial budget may be adjusted in the 2012 and 2013 legislative sessions.	<b>January 2012 - March 2012</b>
		<b>January 2013 - April 2013</b>

## WHERE DOES TRANSPORTATION MONEY COME FROM?

The revenue available for transportation purposes is classified into four categories: state funds (including taxes and fees), bonds, federal funds, and local funds. These funds are appropriated through the transportation budget.



\*Source: Winsum budget development system for the 2012 Session

**State Funds** are derived primarily through fuel tax, licenses, permits and fees. Tolls are an important component of funding the ferry system, the westbound lanes of the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge on SR 16, and the SR 520 replacement project to pay the debt service on the bonds issued to pay for these projects

**Federal Funds** are provided through extensions to a six year federal transportation act called SAFETEA-LU (which stands for – Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) and also through The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

**Local Funds** primarily represent contracted relationships where local governments ask Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to perform and manage construction projects. However, approximately one-third of state fuel tax collections are distributed directly to cities and counties and do not appear in the state transportation budget.

## **WHAT ARE THE STATE CONSTITUTIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON TRANSPORTATION FUNDS AND FLEXIBLE FUNDING FOR TRANSPORTATION?**

State transportation funds fall into two main categories: those funds that are restricted by the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment of the state constitution for highway purposes (including ferries and traffic enforcement), and those funds that are more flexible and may be spent on any transportation purpose including state highways, transit, passenger and freight rail, vanpools, commute trip reduction, and other purposes.

The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment funds are discussed in the following section and are primarily derived from taxes on motor vehicle fuel and licenses on vehicles. Flexible funds, most often deposited in either the Highway Safety Fund or the Multimodal Transportation Account, are derived from a variety of fees and taxes on driver's licenses, light vehicle weight fees, and a portion of the sales tax on automobiles and rental car taxes.

## **WHAT IS THE 18<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT AND MOTOR VEHICLE FUND?**

Under the 18th Amendment of the Washington State Constitution, which was approved by voters in 1944, certain transportation revenues are required to be placed in a special fund to be used exclusively for “highway purposes.” The Motor Vehicle Fund was established for this purpose and supports highway and highway-related programs. Motor Vehicle Fund revenue comes mainly from state motor vehicle fuel taxes, vehicle registration fees, and federal grants.

The 18th Amendment restricts expenditures of revenues deposited in this fund to the support of state, city, and county highway maintenance and construction, highway-related activities of the Washington State Patrol, auto ferries within the Washington State Ferries system, and other highway purposes. Rail, bus, and air transportation may not be financed with Motor Vehicle Fund dollars (such purposes, though, may be funded out of various other transportation funds and accounts). However, Motor Vehicle Fund revenues may support facilities for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists in the following cases: for existing trails on highway right-of-way, where an existing highway severs a trail, or where the use of a trail will materially increase motor vehicle safety.

When people speak of the Motor Vehicle Fund, they often are referring to the Motor Vehicle Account that is the repository for residual state revenue remaining after statutory distributions of gas tax and vehicle registration fees to cities, counties, and other accounts within the fund. Most federal highway dollars are deposited into the Motor Vehicle Account, which is the largest transportation account in terms of revenue.

## **WHAT ARE STATE AND FEDERAL FUEL TAXES?**

The federal fuel tax is 18.4 cents per gallon on gasoline and 24.4 cents per gallon on diesel. The State of Washington has historically received approximately 95% of the federal tax back as federal appropriations for state transportation expenditures. The current state fuel tax is 37.5 cents per gallon. State fuel taxes on gasoline and diesel are equivalent with some exceptions. Other automotive fuels such as propane and natural gas are taxed on an equivalent volumetric basis.

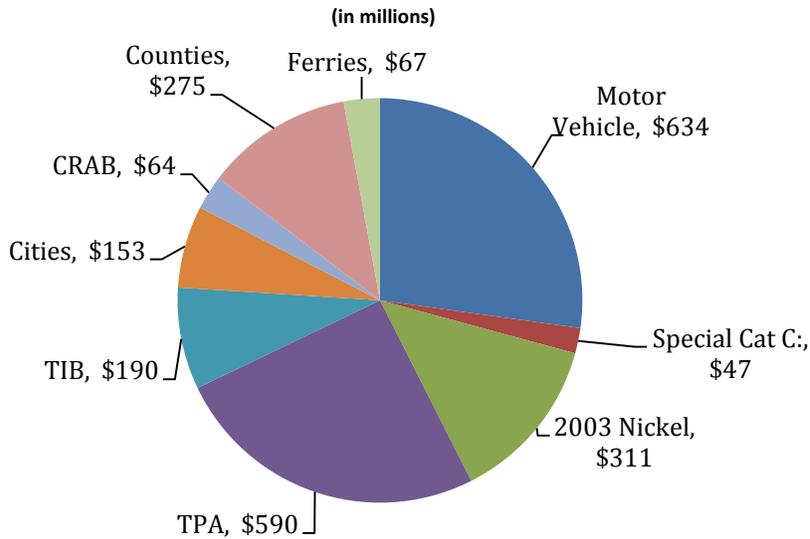
Recent state laws have encouraged the development of alternative fuels such as biodiesel through tax incentives on the production of primary crops and production facilities.

Between 1991 and 2003 the state fuel tax was 23 cents per gallon. Although the number of gallons consumed in Washington increased during that period, the value of the tax was eroded due to inflationary growth in the cost of construction.

In 2003, the legislature passed a 5 cent fuel tax increase for a specific list of projects and activities, and again in 2005, the legislature passed a phased 9.5 cent fuel tax increase for a specific list of safety and congestion projects and activities. These increases are discussed on page 14 entitled, "What are the Nickel and TPA Funding Packages."

## HOW IS THE STATE FUEL TAX DISTRIBUTED?

### 2011-13 Biennium Fuel Tax Distribution \$2,329

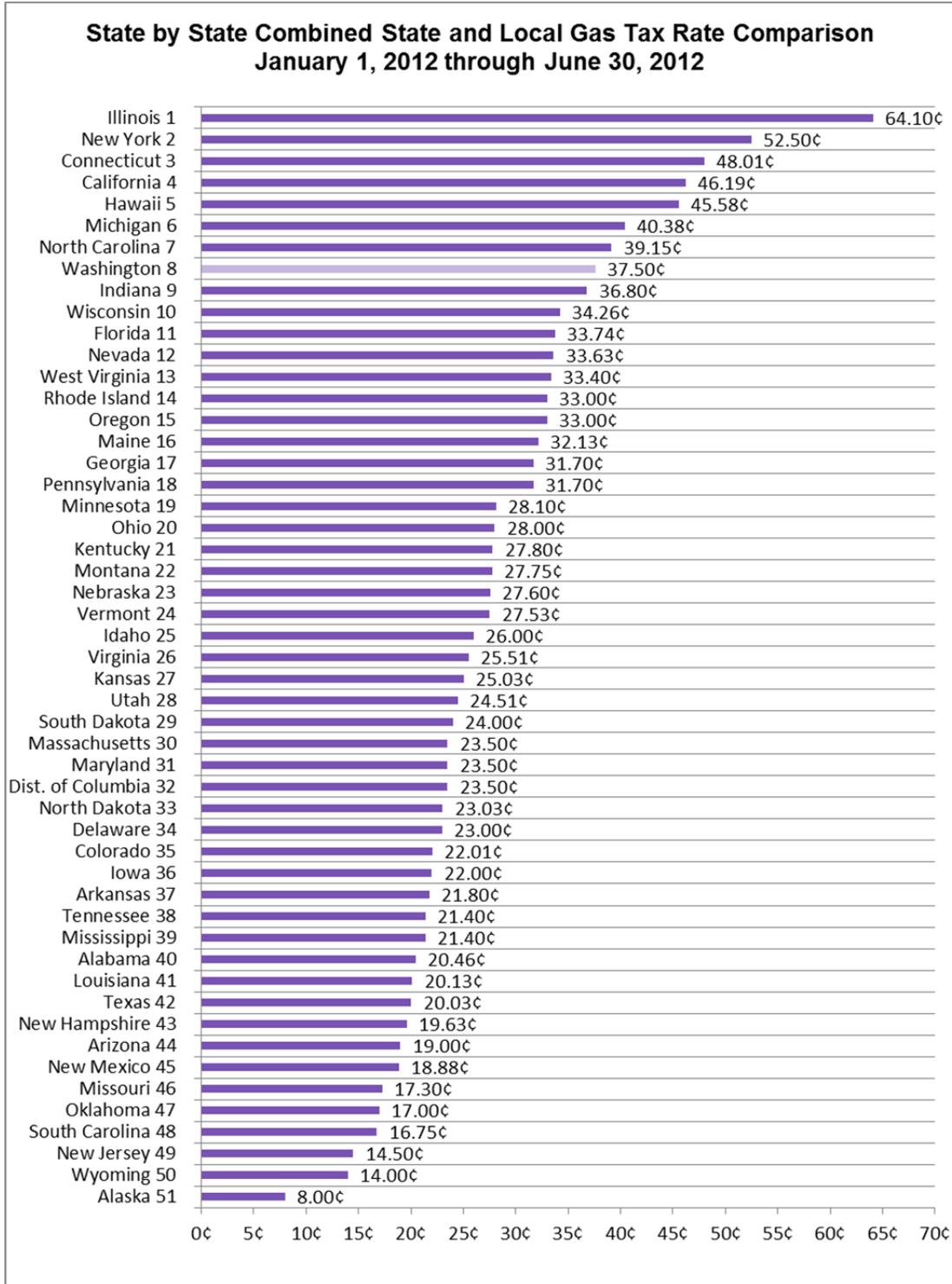


2011-13	Cents	\$ in Millions
<b>Fuel Tax Distribution: 23.0</b>		
<b>Motor Vehicle Account</b>	<b>10.21</b>	<b>\$634</b>
<b>Special Category C Account</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>\$47</b>
<b>Ferries:</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>\$67</b>
<i>Ferries Operations</i>	<i>0.54</i>	<i>\$33</i>
<i>Ferries Capital Account</i>	<i>0.55</i>	<i>\$34</i>
<b>Cities Direct</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>\$153</b>
<b>Transportation Improvement Board:</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>\$190</b>
<b>Counties Direct</b>	<b>4.42</b>	<b>\$275</b>
<b>County Road Administration Board:</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>\$64</b>
<i>County Arterial Preservation Account</i>	<i>0.45</i>	<i>\$28</i>
<i>Rural Arterial Trust Account</i>	<i>0.58</i>	<i>\$36</i>
<b>Total Fuel Tax Distribution:</b>	<b>23.00</b>	<b>\$1,429</b>
<b>Transportation 2003 Nickel Account</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>\$311</b>
<b>Transportation Partnership Account:</b>		
<b>9.5</b>		
Transportation Partnership Account(TPA)	8.50	\$528
Cities TPA	0.50	\$31
Counties TPA	0.50	\$31
<b>Total TPA Account:</b>	<b>9.50</b>	<b>\$590</b>
<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>37.50</b>	<b>\$2,329</b>

June 2012 Forecast

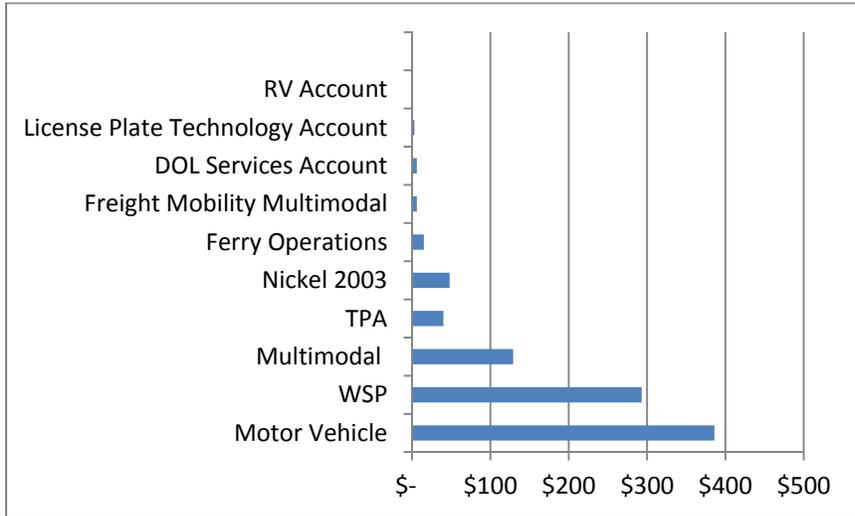
# HOW DOES OUR FUEL TAX COMPARE TO OTHER STATES?

## Combined State and Local Gas Tax Rate Comparison As of June 2012



## HOW ARE LICENSES, PERMITS AND FEES DISTRIBUTED?

### 2011-13 Distribution of Licenses, Permits and Fees \$927 M (Dollars in Millions)



<b>2011-13</b>	
<b>\$ IN MILLIONS</b>	
Motor Vehicle Account - (41.6%)	\$386
Washington State Patrol (WSP) - (31.6%)	\$293
Multimodal Transportation Account - (13.9%)	\$129
Transportation Partnership Account (TPA) - (4.3%)	\$40
Transportation 2003 Nickel Account - (5.2%)	\$48
Ferry Operations - (1.6%)	\$15
Freight Mobility Multimodal Account - (0.6%)	\$6
DOL Services Account - (0.6%)	\$6
License Plate Technology Account - (0.3%)	\$3
RV Account - (0.1%)	\$1
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$927</b>

June 2012 Forecast

## **WHAT ARE THE NICKEL AND TPA FUNDING PACKAGES?**

### ***2003 "Nickel" Funding Package***

The 2003 Legislature enacted the Nickel funding package. The revenue package was estimated to invest \$4.2 billion in more than 150 highway, rail, ferry, transit, and freight projects across the state between 2003 and 2013. The package included:

5 cents per gallon fuel tax increase
15 percent increase in gross weight fees on heavy trucks
0.3 percent increase in the sales tax on motor vehicles

### ***2005 Transportation Partnership Act (TPA) Funding Package***

The 2005 Legislature enacted the Transportation Partnership package. The revenue package was estimated to invest \$8.5 billion in highway, rail, ferry, transit, freight, and local transportation projects across the state between 2005 and 2021. The package included:

9.5 cents fuel tax increase phased in over 4 years
Vehicle weight fee on passenger cars
Light truck weight fee increase
Annual motor home weight fee of \$75

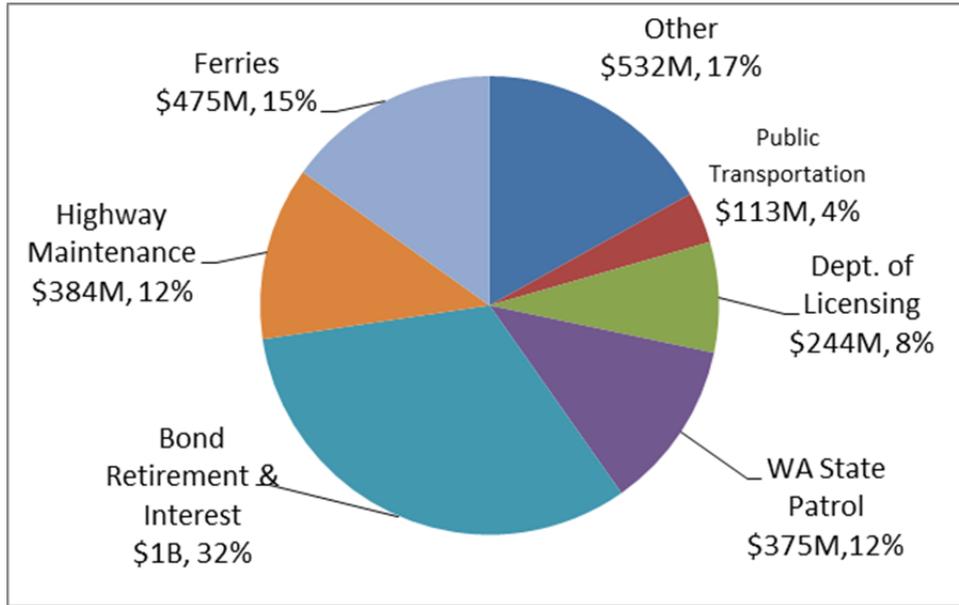
### ***What does the 2005 Funding Package promise for future transportation investment in Washington?***

The 2005 Washington State Legislature provided a 16-year expenditure plan to take care of some of Washington State's most critical transportation needs. Over 270 projects are funded by a package that will make roads and bridges safer as well as ease choke points in the system.

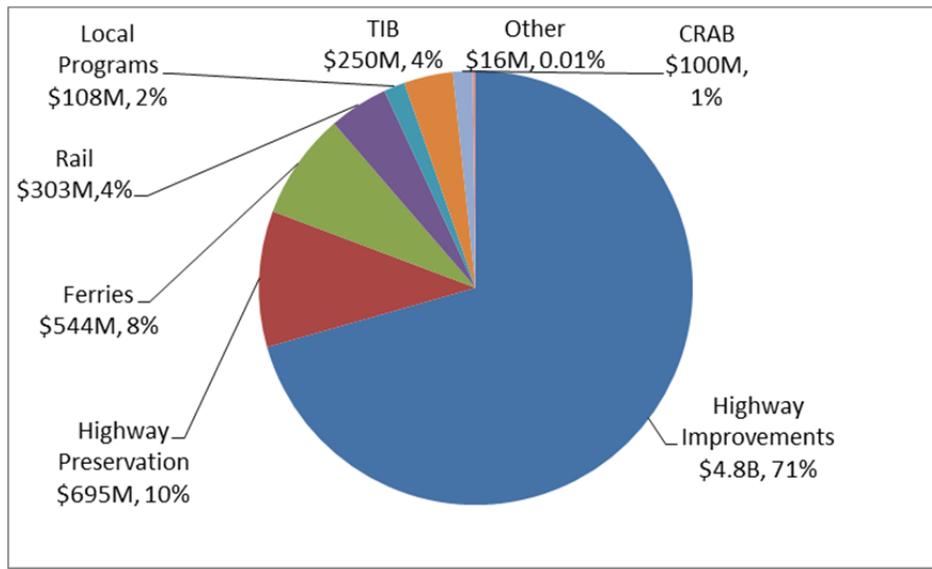
# HOW IS TRANSPORTATION MONEY SPENT?

## 2011-13 Transportation Budget

### Operating Appropriations - \$3.1 Billion



### Capital Appropriations - \$6.8 Billion

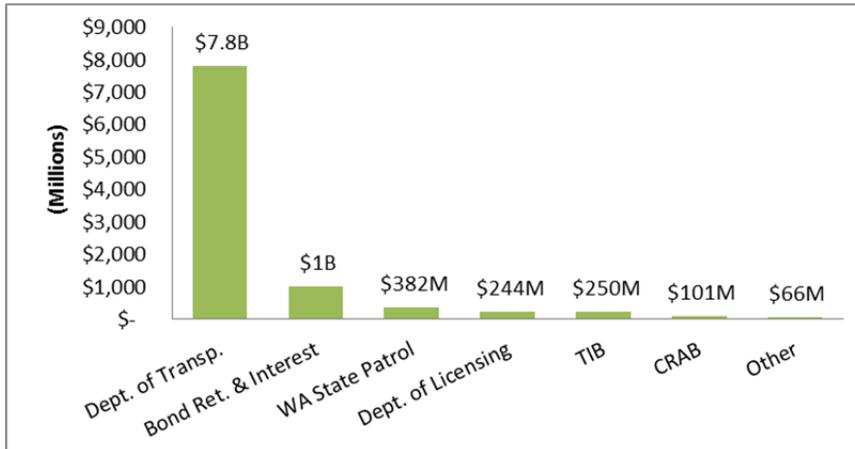


(See Page 19 for descriptions of TIB and CRAB)

## HOW ARE TRANSPORTATION FUNDS SPENT BY AGENCY?

### 2011-13 Transportation Budget by Major Agency

**\$9.9 Billion**



(See Page 19 for description of TIB and CRAB)

### Washington Department of Transportation

The Washington Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) biennial budget is split approximately 82% for capital expenditures and 18% for operating expenditures. Operating programs and activities include maintenance of the state highway system, traffic services, ferry operations and security, highway traffic enforcement, traveler information, aviation services and transportation planning and research. Capital programs and activities include highway preservation and improvement projects, ferry boats and terminal preservation and rail line or car purchases and improvements.

### **Washington State Ferries**

The Washington State Ferries (WSF) system links eight Washington counties and one Canadian province through 10 routes and 20 terminals served by 23 vessels. The system averages 450 departures and 67,000 passengers per day. Average summer peak ridership is close to 100,000 passengers per day. In 2011, WSF transported more than 10 million vehicles and nearly 23 million riders. WSF is the number one tourist attraction in the state and is the second largest transit agency in the state (only King County Metro is larger). The Coast Guard sets safety standards for vessels and crew licensing.

### **Department of Licensing**

The Department of Licensing (DOL) is a multi-funded agency with both transportation and general fund activities. Transportation funding includes 18<sup>th</sup> amendment funding. Transportation functions within DOL are driver and vehicle services.

Vehicle Services is responsible for the titling and registering of vehicles and vessels and collecting the related taxes and fees. This division also administers two international compacts – the International Registration Plan (IRP) and the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA). This division collects and distributes specific taxes for local, state, and foreign jurisdictions. Additionally, the Vehicle Services division is involved in regulating the state vehicle dealer industry.

Driver Services administers and recommends improvement of the laws related to driver examining and licensing, driver improvement, driver records, and financial responsibility. This division also issues identification documents, administers the organ donor program, registers voters, licenses commercial driving schools and instructors, and creates jury source lists.

### **Washington State Patrol**

The Washington State Patrol (WSP) is a multi-funded agency with both transportation and general fund activities. Transportation funding is provided with revenues that are 18<sup>th</sup> amendment funds. The transportation functions within the WSP that the agency has responsibility for is the patrolling of the state highways, commercial vehicle enforcement, investigations related to incidents involving vehicles, and related support activities.

## **HOW ARE CITY AND COUNTY TRANSPORTATION ACTIVITIES FUNDED?**

### **Cities**

Cities and towns are responsible for 16,421 miles of streets and approximately 676 bridges in the 281 incorporated municipalities of the state.

- ❖ Currently about 70% of cities' transportation funding is generated from local revenue sources (generally from their current services fund which is largely sales tax based), 19% from state revenues, and 11% federal.
- ❖ 2.96 cents per gallon of the state motor fuel tax
  - ◆ Referred to as the statutory or normal distribution to cities.
  - ◆ Distributed to cities on per capita basis.
- ❖ Federal aid programs
  - ◆ Surface Transportation Program (STP)
    - Regional allocations
    - Transportation Enhancements
  - ◆ Bridge Replacement Program
  - ◆ Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CM/AQ)
  - ◆ Emergency Relief
- ❖ General purpose local revenue sources including local retail sales and use taxes, real and personal property taxes, local real estate excise taxes, other licenses, impact fees, and other fees and taxes.
- ❖ Transportation local option taxes
  - ◆ Commercial parking tax.
  - ◆ Border area motor fuel tax (for cities along Canadian border).
  - ◆ Portion of countywide local option motor fuel tax.

- ❖ Grants from *Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)* (Counties also eligible)
  - 
  - ◆ Transportation Improvement Program
    - 3.04 cents per gallon of state motor vehicle fuel tax (total). Historically, approximately 0.72 cents has gone to county projects.
    - Competitive
  - ◆ Small City Pavement and Sidewalk Program
    - .03 cents per gallon of state motor vehicle fuel tax (total).
    - Competitive
  
- ❖ Grants from the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) (Counties also eligible)
  - ◆ Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Program
    - Competitive

## **Counties**

*County Road Administration Board (CRAB)* sets administrative standards and provides oversight for the county road departments of each of the 39 counties.

- ❖ Counties are responsible for managing 39,828 miles of roads and approximately 3,264 bridges in the unincorporated areas across the state.
  
- ❖ Currently, about 62% of counties' transportation funding is generated from local revenue sources (primarily the county road levy which is a property tax), 27% from state revenues, and 11% from federal sources.

## **Counties (continued)**

- ❖ 4.92 cents per gallon of state motor fuel tax

- ◆ Referred to as statutory or normal county distribution.
- ◆ Distributed to counties using formula based upon mileage, needs, resources, and population.
  
- ❖ Grants and distributions from County Road Administration Board (CRAB)
  - ◆ County Arterial Preservation Program
    - 0.45 cents per gallon of state motor vehicle fuel tax.
    - Distributed to counties according to percentage of arterial lane miles.
  
  - ◆ Rural Arterial Program
    - 0.58 cents per gallon of state motor vehicle fuel tax.
    - Regional distribution based on rural land area and mileage of county rural arterials and collectors. Within each region, distribution is competitive based on statutory criteria.
  
- ❖ Grants from the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) (Cities also eligible)
  - ◆ Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Program
    - Competitive

## **WHAT ARE OTHER LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION JURISDICTIONS?**

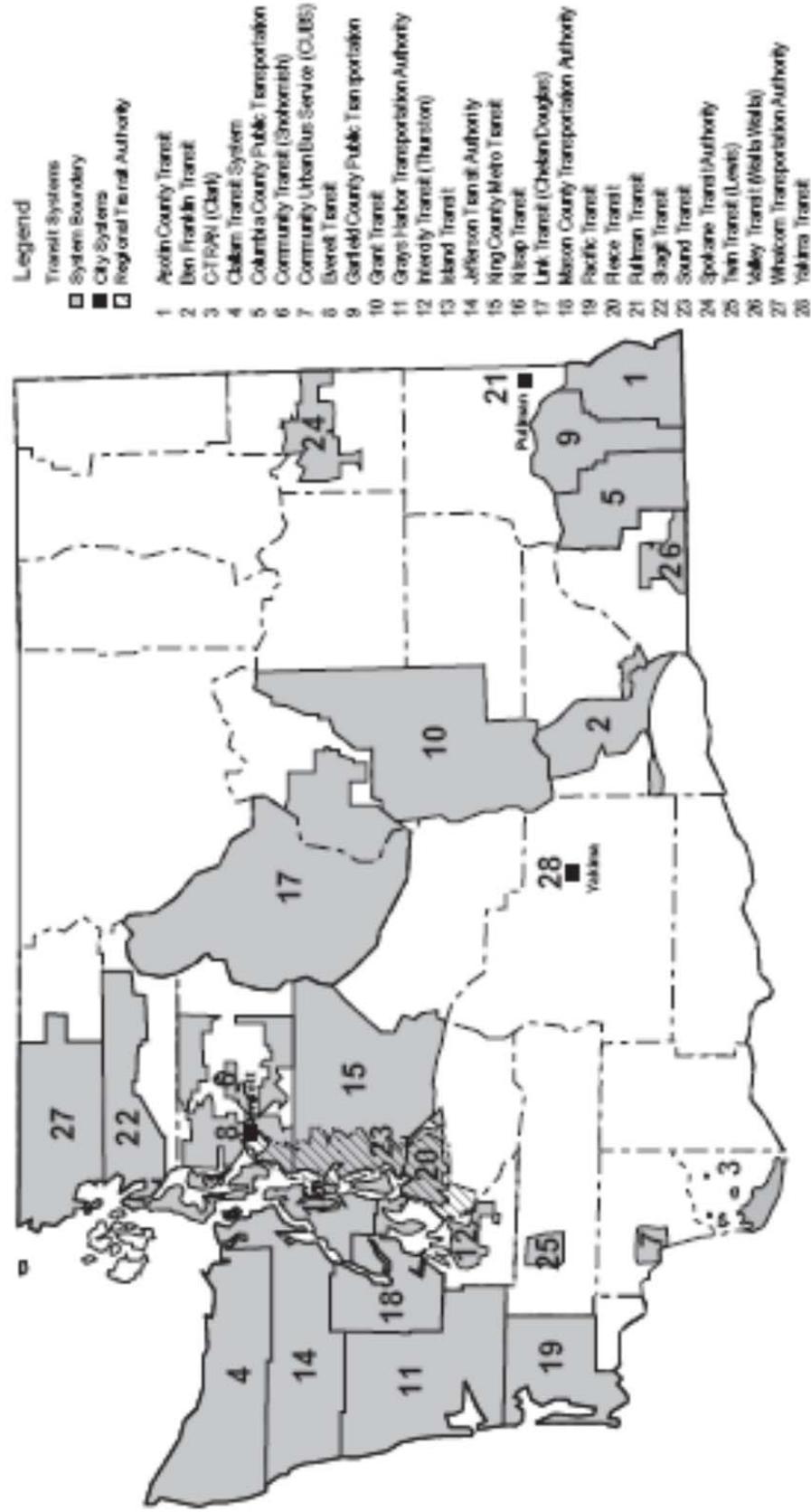
### *Local/Regional Jurisdictions*

Numerous local and regional entities exist for the purpose of delivering various transportation projects and services. Some of the better known entities include local transit agencies, regional transit authorities, transportation benefit districts, and regional transportation investment districts. These local and regional entities are funded primarily through voter-approved taxes, farebox revenues, and issuing bonds.

Local transit agencies are created to provide public transit services. A regional transit authority provides high capacity transportation services throughout the urbanized areas within King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties. See the map on page 22 for more information concerning the various transit authorities in Washington. Visit this website for a more reader friendly view:

[http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/12C4068D-A854-437A-81A2-4CA5792DF334/0/WTPIVBMapsy\\_WashingtonPublicTransportationAuthorities.pdf](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/12C4068D-A854-437A-81A2-4CA5792DF334/0/WTPIVBMapsy_WashingtonPublicTransportationAuthorities.pdf)

# Washington State Public Transportation Transit Authorities



## **APPENDIX**

### ***COMMONLY USED TRANSPORTATION WEBSITES***

#### ***Washington State Legislative Agencies***

**Senate Transportation Committee (STC)**

**<http://www1.leg.wa.gov/Senate/Committees/TRAN/>**

**House Transportation Committee (HTC)**

**<http://www1.leg.wa.gov/House/Committees/TR/>**

**Joint Transportation Committee (JTC)**

**<http://www1.leg.wa.gov/JTC/>**

**Legislative Evaluation & Accountability Program Committee (LEAP)**

**<http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/default.asp>**

**Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC)**

**<http://www1.leg.wa.gov/jlarc/>**

**Washington State Legislature Home Page**

**<http://www1.leg.wa.gov/legislature>**

#### ***Washington State Transportation Agencies***

**Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL)**

**[www.dol.wa.gov](http://www.dol.wa.gov)**

**Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)**

**[www.wsdot.wa.gov](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov)**

**Washington State Ferries (WSF)**

**[www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/index.cfm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/index.cfm)**

**Washington State Patrol (WSP)**

**[www.wsp.wa.gov](http://www.wsp.wa.gov)**

**Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC)**

**<http://www.wtsc.wa.gov>**

**County Road Administration Board (CRAB)**

**<http://www.crab.wa.gov/>**

**Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB)**

**<http://www.fmsib.wa.gov/>**

**Transportation Improvement Board (TIB)**