

### Background

In 1972, the Washington State Legislature transferred the responsibilities of rural public transit and nonprofit transportation grant administration from the Department of Community Development to the newly created Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). At that time, Governor Dan Evans designated WSDOT as the agency responsible for distributing federal public transportation funds to rural and non-profit agencies – initially from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, renamed the Federal Transit Administration.

In 1992, the Department of Transportation was asked by the Washington State Legislature to administer state grants to local agencies. A Multimodal Programs and Projects Selection Committee, administered by the Department, was established to distribute \$5 million in the Public Transportation System Account and \$25 million in the Central Puget Sound Public Transportation System Account. The next year, the Department also began distributing the Rural Mobility grant funds. In 1996, the two transit accounts were transferred to the Transportation Improvement Board for project selection and project oversight. The Rural Mobility Grant program remained within the Department of Transportation, Public Transportation Office.

WSDOT's focus on local development of transit services and the coordination between public transit and social service programs influenced the structure of the state and federal grants programs. To reduce duplication and increase system efficiency, the Department discouraged individual programs from starting their own client-based transportation service, and encouraged nonprofit transportation agencies to take a lead in providing services to a variety of programs as well as the general public. In many rural areas, the value of the nonprofit transportation program's was confirmed when a successful ballot measure would establish a new public transportation benefit authority. WSDOT promoted the establishment of public transit systems by providing technical assistance and demonstration grants throughout the state. Between 1980 and 1999, six small urban public transportation benefit authorities and nine rural transit systems were formed.

### **SHB2124, Section 6**

*“Beginning in 2005, and every other year thereafter, the department shall examine the division’s existing grant programs, and the methods used to allocate grant funds, to determine the program’s effectiveness, and whether the methods used to allocate funds result in an equitable distribution of the grants. The department shall submit a report of the findings to the transportation committees of the Legislature.”*

In 2003, the Legislature provided transit with additional grant funds. Through the Nickel Package and other revenues of the 2003 budget, the Paratransit/Special Needs Grants, Vanpool Grants and Trip Reduction Performance Program grants were initially funded. The Rural Mobility grant program was also significantly expanded to include both competitive and formula funds.

### What Grant Programs Were the Focus of the Evaluation?

The following chart (Figure 1) illustrates the 2005-2007 Washington State budget appropriations from the multimodal account. The Public Transportation Division was appropriated \$65 million for mobility needs across the state. The bolded funds indicate state funds that are part of this grant report. Figure 2 shows federal funds appropriated in 2006 for Washington State.

Rural Mobility funds are broken into formula and competitive sections, each with \$7 million for the biennium.

Special Needs/Paratransit also has formula and competitive sections, each with \$19.5 million and \$5.5 million respectively.

In 2005-2007, the Public Transportation and Commute Options Office administered the following state and federal grant programs.

#### Non-competitive Distribution

- FTA funding for small urban transit agencies (49 U.S.C. 5307)
- FTA funding for bus and bus related projects (49 U.S.C. 5309)
- State Paratransit/Special Needs Grants for Transit

- State Rural Mobility formula grants based on transit tax equity

#### Competitive Distribution

- FTA funding for rural and intercity transportation (49 U.S. C. 5311)
- FTA funding for elderly and people with disabilities (49 U.S.C. 5310)
- FTA Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants (49 U.S.C. 5316)
- FTA New Freedom (49 U.S.C. 5317)
- State Rural Mobility Grants distributed competitively

Figure 1

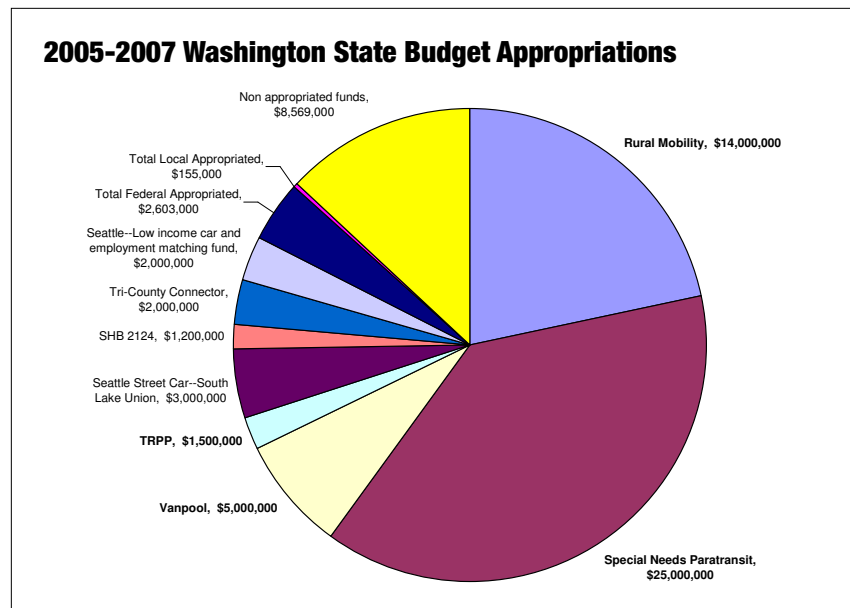
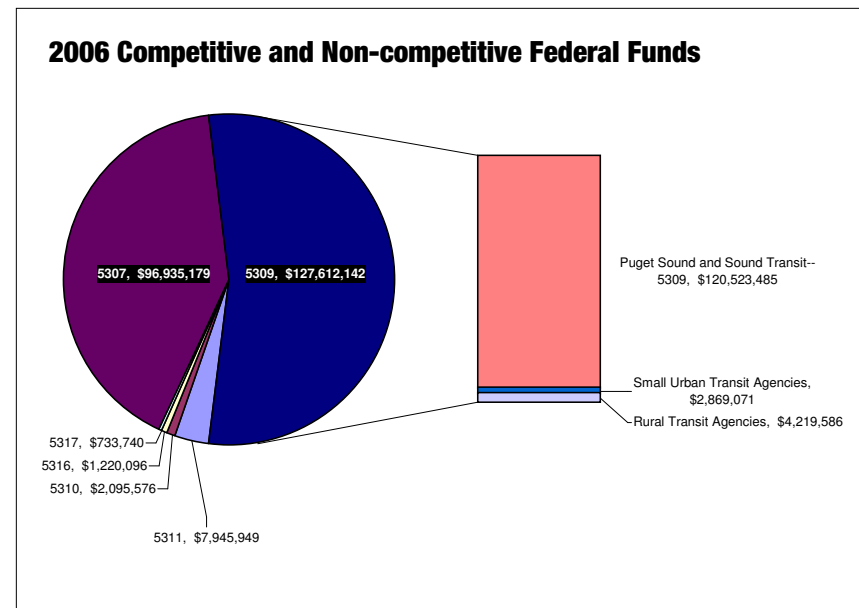


Figure 2



- State Paratransit/Special Needs for Nonprofit Agencies
- Trip Reduction Performance Program – State Grants for Ridesharing (RCW 70.94.996)

**Collaborative Distribution**

- Vanpool Enhancement Grants

Figure 2 illustrates the amount of total federal funds appropriated for 2006. The bolded funds are competitive and require the Public Transportation Division (PTD) to solicit grant applications from interested parties. These grants constitute a part of the consolidated grant process whereby one application can be for a variety of grant funds. The Department

then selects which funds are most appropriate for the project in the grant application. This helps to ensure equity and program effectiveness through distribution of grant funds. These two concepts will be discussed in detail later in this report.

**Non-Competitive Distribution**

The funds used for non-competitive distribution are a combination of federal and state funds. Focusing just on 2006 grant funds, federal formula funds account for approximately 95 percent of total federal funds, while also accounting for 95 percent of total formula funds during the entire 2005-2007 biennium (see Figure 3).

**Federal Formula Funds**

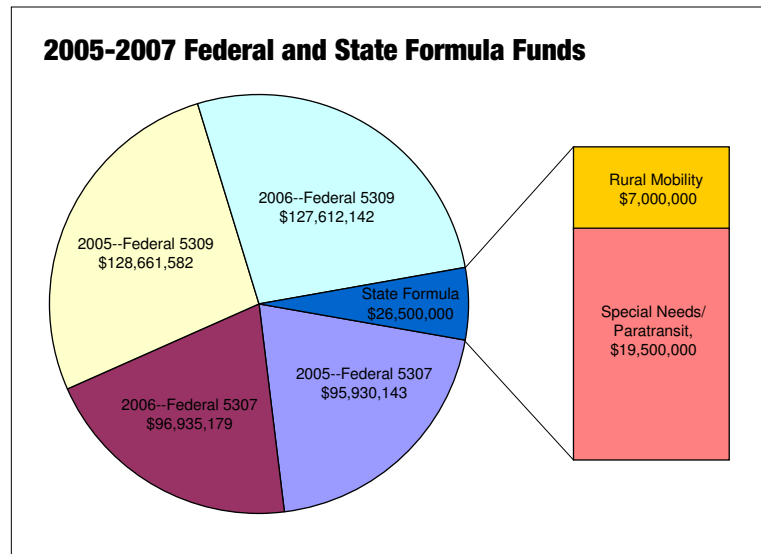
The two federal funding sources that illustrate non-competitive distribution are commonly referred to by the section of the bill in which they are mentioned. Section 5307 formula funds are distributed to urban and small urban transit agencies with populations greater than 50,000. These funds can be used for either capital or operating and offer ways for transit agencies to meet the costs of providing public transportation in urbanized areas.

Section 5309 funds are distributed for capital purchases of transit vehicles and bus related equipment and facilities. These discretionary funds can be distributed to transit agencies regardless of size. In most years, these funds are earmarked by congress for specific projects. Figure 3 illustrates the amount of funding that comes from the Federal Transit Administration during the same biennial period to show comparisons with state funding. Many transit agencies use 5309 funds to update their aging fleet of vehicles, or to invest in facilities to improve the transit infrastructure. Figure 4 illustrates the breakdown of 5309 funds to the respective transit agencies over the past three years. In 2006 Washington state transit agencies received 0.8 percent less section 5309 funds than in 2005. For a full list of projects funded with 5309 funding see Appendix 2.

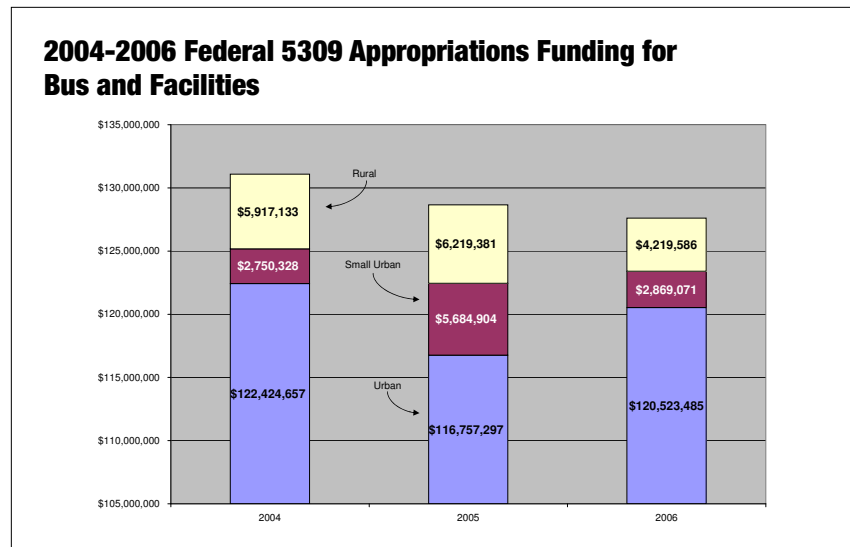
**State Formula Funds**

Over the 2005-2007 biennium, the Washington State Legislature appropriated \$26,500,000 in formula funds through two programs. Rural Mobility formula funds account for \$7 million, and are more appropriately referred to as transit tax equity. These funds are distributed to rural transit agencies that are not able to generate at least 80 percent of the state’s per capita sales tax. Figure 5 shows the distribution of rural mobility formula funds. Rural Mobility formula funds were increased to \$8.5 million for the 2007-2009 biennium.

**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**



Special Needs/Paratransit formula funds account for \$19.5 million from the multimodal account. To receive these funds, transit agencies must show levels of service for special needs that are not below the previous years level of service. No transit agency may receive more than 30 percent of the Special Needs/Paratransit funds. Formula funding for paratransit services are part of the overall funds used for many demand response services. Performance of these grants can be seen in transit statistics of demand response and deviated route service. Figure 6 shows operating expenses per revenue hour over a three-year period. See Appendix 4 for details on demand response service.

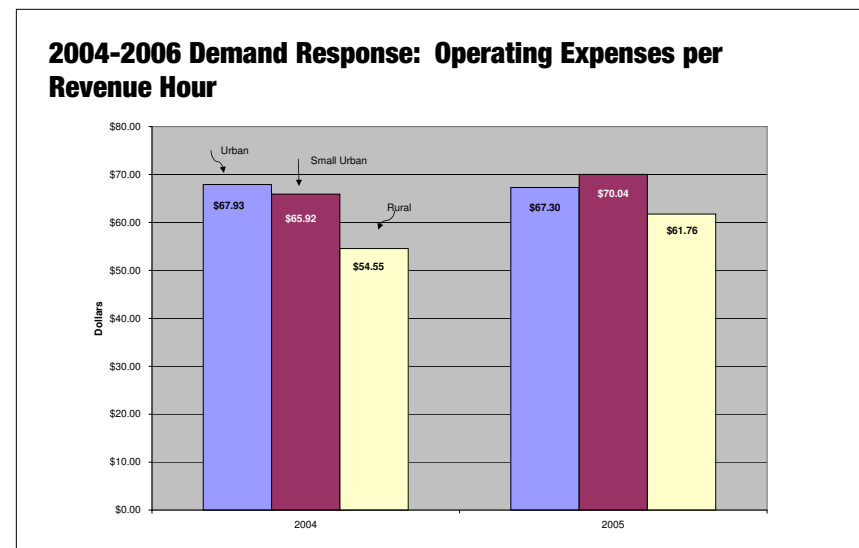
For a full list of projects funded with state formula funds, see Appendix 2.

**Figure 5**

**2005-2007 Rural Mobility Transit Tax Equity Distribution**

Transit Agency	July 2005	July 2006	July 2007
Asotin County	N.A.	\$92,072	192,360
Columbia Transit	—	—	47,166
Grant Transit	263,083	244,472	113,281
Grays Harbor	690,512	502,637	585,651
Island Transit	1,201,045	1,151,800	1,491,181
Jefferson Transit	—	—	62,665
Mason Transit	952,060	1,035,717	1,228,383
Pacific Transit	203,166	181,955	253,584
Pullman Transit	—	205,653	227,930
Valley Transit	190,134	85,695	47,797
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,500,000</b>	<b>3,500,000</b>	<b>4,249,998</b>

**Figure 6**



### Competitive Distribution

Competitive funds are made up of federal and state funds. In 2006, competitive funds accounted for 5 percent of the total federal distribution, totaling nearly \$12 million. In comparison, state competitive funds totaled \$12.5 million for the 2005-2007 biennium. The consolidated grant process distributes grants on a biennial basis.

#### Federal Competitive Grants

- 5310 funds to provide services to the elderly and persons with disabilities,
- 5311 funds for the general public in rural areas; capital and operating,
- 5311(f) funds for intercity services,

- 5316 funds (JARC) to provide employment transportation and related expenses to low-income persons,
- 5317 funds to provide services that go beyond the required Americans with Disabilities Act, and employment related transportation for persons with disabilities.

Figure 7 illustrates the levels of federal competitive funding from 2005-2007.

All of the competitive grant programs have received progressively more funding over the past three years, except for the 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) whose funding is determined by a formula based on the percentage of low income persons that reside in a state. Prior to 2006, JARC funds were given to WSDOT and Washington state transit agencies through congressional earmarks.

**Federal 5310** capital funding for non profit agencies for purchases serving the elderly and persons with disabilities was appropriated at \$2 million for 2006. These capital purchases provide vehicles and other related equipment that assist in complying with standards stated in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Examples of capital purchases include: buses with wheelchair lifts, low floor buses, and technologies that aid the hearing and visually impaired.

**Federal 5311** funding for the general public in rural areas was appropriated at nearly \$8 million, less the 15 percent for administrative and technical assistance costs and 15 percent for the intercity bus program (5311 (f)). Performance of these funds has been measured in traditional transit performance measures of cost effectiveness. These measures were initially reported in the 2005 Summary of Community and Brokered Transportation published by the Department of Transportation. Many of the community transportation providers featured in the report use demand response, intercity, and deviated route services. These services typically cost more per trip to operate given the unique characteristics of transportation providers in rural areas. Rural areas have lower population densities and wide geographic areas to serve, meaning that the standard passenger per mile ratio is lower than are seen in urbanized areas.

Figure 8 illustrates the complex relationship between funding, population density, and geographic area.

This shows that as population density increases, subsidized funding from federal 5311 funds is reduced. This occurs because urban systems are able to generate additional funding from farebox revenues and sales taxes because of their larger population densities.

Figure 7

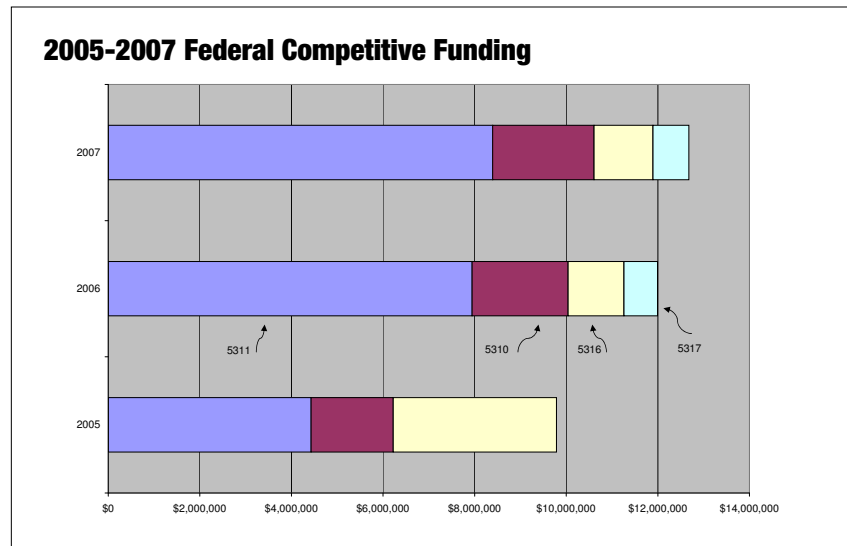
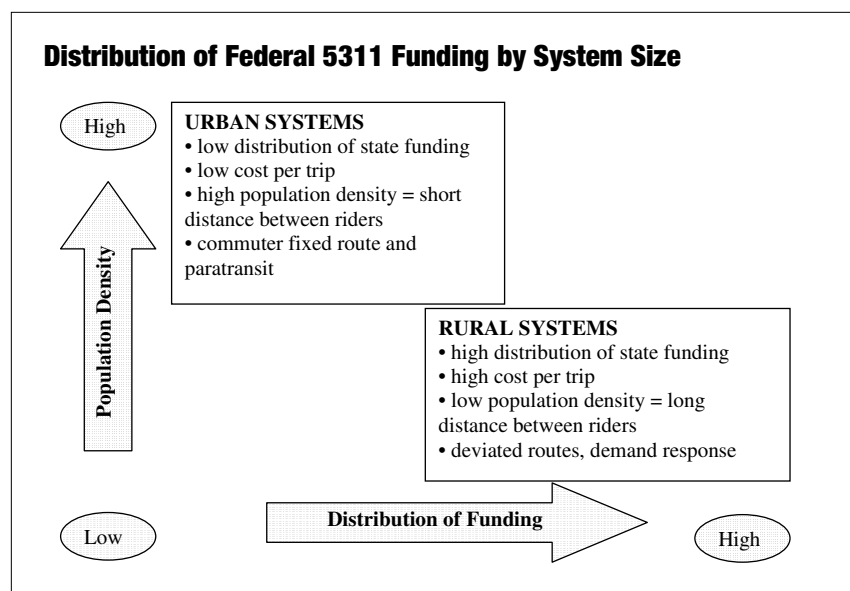


Figure 8



Population density also affects the type of service that is cost effective. For example, rural transportation providers use demand response and deviated route as more cost effective services because of the flexibility that these services allow.

**Federal 5311 (f)** funds for intercity bus service are 15 percent of total 5311 funds distributed to each state. Washington’s appropriation for 5311 (f) funds account for almost \$1.2 million of federal competitive funds. In 2005, Greyhound Bus Lines eliminated many of their rural routes in Washington State leaving some communities with no consistent intercity service. The Department has since worked

aggressively to re-establish intercity service to rural communities. This program is also known as Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and can be used for both operating and capital purposes. During the 2005-2007 biennium over \$3 million in grant funds were distributed to 5316 JARC projects across Washington to assist low income people with employment related transportation needs. Section 5316 funds have been used for a variety of projects linking out of service area employment centers to residential areas. These projects can be used to target employment centers with non traditional work hours thereby increasing ridership by people who work alternate, swing, and graveyard shifts.

aggressively to re-establish intercity service to rural communities. Nearly \$1.7 million has been distributed during the 2005-2007 biennium in grant funds to intercity providers. Figures 9 and 10 show transportation statistics for rural providers over a variety of transportation services.

**Section 5316** funds are used to provide employment transportation for low income persons to get to work, work related childcare, and

**Section 5317** funds for employment services for persons with disabilities is a new program started in 2006. Approximately \$1.5 million was appropriated for the combined years of 2006 and 2007. Of the \$1.5 million, all but \$200,000 of the funds were obligated for grant projects for the 2007-2009 biennium. Since the 5317 program is relatively new, federal guidance on required measurement have been slow. The Department has implemented new performance measure requirements for the 5317 grant fund recipients. Initial baseline data should be forthcoming during the second quarter of the 2007-2009 biennium.

For a list of projects detailing the competitive federal grants, see Appendix 2.

**Competitive State Funds**

State funds that are part of the consolidated grant process include Rural Mobility and Special Needs/Paratransit. These funds total \$12.5 million over the 2005-2007 biennium and account for over 36 percent of total competitive funds, federal and state.

**Rural Mobility** competitive funds are from the multimodal account and are half of the total rural mobility funds appropriated by the legislature. The competitive funds can be distributed to any transportation provider in the Washington that has applied for grants through the consolidated grant process. Funds can be used for operating, capital, and program development projects.

**Special Needs/Paratransit** competitive funds are also from the multimodal account for \$5.5 million of the total \$25 million appropriated by the legislature for the Special Needs/Paratransit fund. The competitive funds can be distributed to non profit transportation providers that operate special needs/paratransit services. Funds can be used for either operating or capital expenditures.

See Figures 9 and 10 for performance measures of community transportation providers funded with competitive federal and state grants.

**Trip Reduction Performance Program (TRPP)** funds are used in a unique way to provide funding for public and private businesses and entrepreneurs to get their employees to try alternative methods of traveling to work. TRPP was funded \$1.5 million for the

2005-2007 biennium, and obligated approximately \$1.3 million in grant projects. TRPP promotes reducing the number of single occupancy vehicles traveling to work by offering incentives to businesses. TRPP performance shows that in many cases it is cheaper for the State of Washington to pay people to try alternative commuting options than it is to build roadway capacity that would reduce the same congestion from driving alone. Visit our Web site at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/tdm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/tdm) for more information on the Trip Reduction Performance Program.

### Collaborative Distribution

The Vanpool Investment Program (VIP) is different than both the formula or competitive distribution processes. The VIP represents a collaborative effort to distribute the \$5 million appropriated by the Legislature for the 2005-2007 biennium, and an additional \$3.8 million in supplemental funds in 2006. This grant program is restricted to transit agencies and only for the capital costs of new vans. When vans have exceeded their useful life and are scheduled for surplus, the Department acts as a broker to lease the surplus vans to other transit agencies thereby reducing waiting time for newly formed vanpoolers.

The 2005-2007 biennium proved the success of the vanpool program in the reduced number of surplus vans available. This was paralleled by the 200 requests for new vans in 2006 compared to the 170 vans requested at the beginning of the 2005-2007 biennium. Using demand as a measurement of program effectiveness, the VIP illustrates a successful program targeting commuters. Figure 11 illustrates the vanpool program's strong growth as commuters realize the benefits of using alternative transportation options.

### Program Effectiveness

The 2005 Legislature asked the Department to evaluate grant programs to determine program effectiveness. Through research, the Department has found many definitions for the term "program effectiveness". In this chapter, we

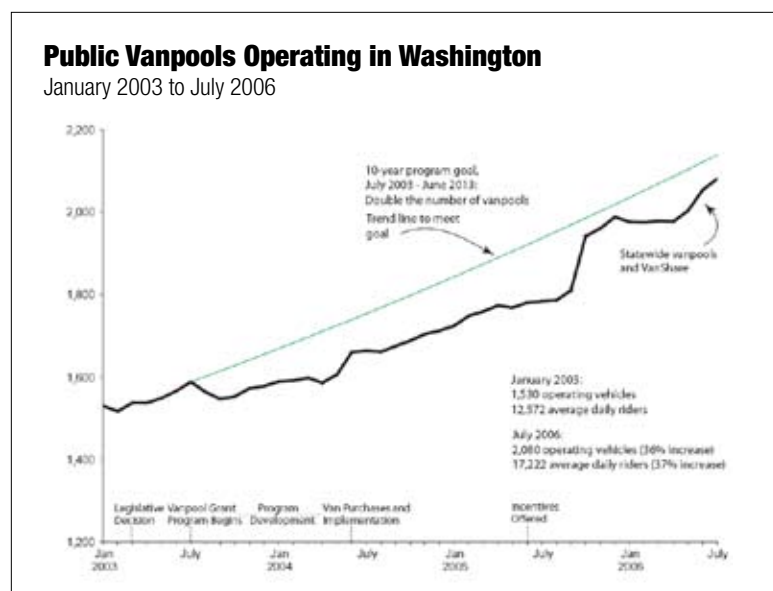
**Figure 9**

<b>Community Transportation Providers' Performance Measures by Service, 2005</b>		
	<b>Passenger Trips/ Revenue Vehicle Hour</b>	<b>Passenger Trips/ Revenue Vehicle Mile</b>
Fixed Route	1.58	0.13
Intercity	2.94	0.08
Deviated Fixed Route	9.15	0.60
Demand Response	1.94	0.10
Vanpool	6.03	0.22
<b>Statewide Average</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>0.18</b>

**Figure 10**

<b>Community Transportation Providers' Performance Measures by Cost, 2005</b>	
Operating Cost per Passenger Trip	\$11.60
Operating Cost per Revenue Vehicle Hour	\$41.37
Operating Cost per Revenue Vehicle Mile	\$2.23

**Figure 11**



will present several examples of illustrating the effectiveness of the grants including: goal attainment, assessing value of rural transportation services, and transit performance measures.

**Goal Attainment in the Competitive State and Federal Grant Program**

Effectiveness of the grant programs can be determined through evaluation of goal achievement.

1. **Goal:** Communities are to address need in paratransit/special needs, rural public transportation, and intercity connections.

**Finding:** The availability of grant and technical assistance funds has helped bring the interested agencies and organizations together to define their community public transportation needs. Targeted grant funds for special needs populations and rural communities helps maintain mobility for basic transportation services.

2. **Goal:** Assist local areas in identifying community benefits and support.

**Finding:** Through letters of support that are submitted with each grant application, a certain level of community support

can be measured. The value of the service is also determined by the concerns of the communities when funds are no longer available for specific projects or agencies. Overall, the grant funds have provided significant benefit to communities.

3. **Goal:** Provide funding for the preservation and enhancement of services, special needs or rural service, and intercity connections.

**Finding:** Grant funds have been used to maintain services, begin new services in areas where a specific need has been identified, provide services to individuals with special needs (the elderly, children, people

with disabilities, people with low incomes), and begin services in rural communities. Reduction in funds used for basic community transportation would reduce quality of life for many special needs persons.

4. **Goal:** Develop a sustainable network of services within and between communities.

**Finding:** When Greyhound announced in 2005 the abandonment of services to many communities in Washington State, the local communities looked to the Department and the grant programs to assist in short-term solutions while developing long-term plans. The grant funds in some communities have been used to develop intercity connections, although there remains much work to be done in this area. The Department completed a new Intercity Plan in December of 2006 and believes that this document provides a framework for the future.

5. **Goal:** Work collaboratively and encourage stakeholder involvement in projects and cost sharing.

**Finding:** Matching funds indicate cost sharing of projects. Overall, the grants have leveraged significant local funding, and have resulted in collaboration with other organizations and agencies in each community. The number of partnerships within a community can also measure collaboration.

6. **Goal:** *Coordinate regional transportation providers to reduce duplication and promote more efficient and effective public transportation.*

**Finding:** The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) was established in 1998 to identify gaps in services to special needs populations, and to eliminate barriers to efficiency. Visit the ACCT Web site at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/acct/](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/acct/) and click on the "ACCT Publications" tab to see the 2007 ACCT report.

***Assessing Value of Community and Rural Transportation Services***

Effectiveness of community and rural transportation services is based on the real and perceived value provided. The National Technical Assistance Center for Senior Transportation identifies value in a community-based public transportation by the following five categories:

- Availability** Transportation exists and is available when needed.
- Accessibility** Transportation can be reached and used.
- Acceptability** Transportation is clean, safe and user-friendly.
- Affordability** Transportation costs, fares and fees are affordable.

**Adaptability** Transportation can be modified or adjusted to meet special needs.

Reporting on the value of the service is a very individualized measure and is often only captured when surveys are conducted by the local agencies.

Unfortunately, surveys are not done consistently or comprehensively, and reporting on the program effectiveness by using value measures is generally anecdotal. Reporting requirements for the 2007-2009 biennium will consist of standardized qualitative questions that grantees submit on a quarterly basis. This will better identify the unique characteristics of transportation providers across Washington.

***Measuring Program Effectiveness with Transit System Benchmarks and Individual Program Goal Attainment***

The benchmark law required the Transportation Commission to establish a cost efficiency benchmark for the state's public transit agencies. To accomplish this mandate, the Commission worked with the Washington State Transit Association (WSTA), who proposed four measures to address cost efficiency, cost effectiveness, and service effectiveness. These measures had been reported annually in the Department's Grey Notebook.

The adopted transit benchmarks compile statewide averages for fixed route (scheduled) service at urban, small urban, and rural transit agencies, and statewide averages for demand response (on-call paratransit) and vanpool services. This allows comparisons of the state's similar transit agencies with each other, although there are still important differences between the agencies. Identifying national peers for benchmarking is difficult due to the large variation among systems in size, government support, fare levels, costs, and purposes, as well as data collection processes.

The information that was collected for Transit Benchmarks included:

- Operating Cost per Total Hour
- Boardings per Revenue Hour
- Cost per Passenger Mile
- Cost per Boarding

The 2007 Washington State Legislative session refocused transportation under Substitute Senate Bill 5412 amending RCW 47.01.012. New performance measures will align with policy goals of safety, preservation, mobility, environment, and stewardship.

### **Summary of Program Effectiveness**

- The Department distributes grants using three types of processes: statewide competition, formulas developed either by the Legislature or Congress, and collaboration. The Legislature and Congress may target the grant program investments to specific agencies for specific purposes, or give broader guidance on the use of the funds.
- Currently projects are developed at the local level and grant requests are submitted by the individual agencies or businesses to the State. The Department provides the eligibility and selection criteria using broad guidelines on how funds are to be used.
- Contractually, each agency or business that receives a grant from the Department is required to submit quarterly reports and invoices. The quarterly reports include both operational and financial information.
- The quality and the timeliness of the quarterly and annual reports from the local agencies and businesses that receive grants continue to improve. Currently, the Department reports using non-standardized, qualitative data supplied by grant recipients to report program effectiveness.
- Establishing performance measures for the grants program is a complex process due to the wide variety of grant applicants, transportation systems, and projects. Current anecdotal success stories are useful in

comparing results with stated community needs. Finding meaningful performance criteria that apply to all grant applicants is an ongoing process.

- The vanpool grants program illustrates a growing trend within public transportation that is outpacing the funds appropriated. The management of vanpool grants is indicative of the successful combination of public interest and program effectiveness. Equity is ensured through the collaborative grant program that encompasses vanpool investment.

### **Equity in the Public Transportation Grant Programs**

The Department uses several definitions of equity to evaluate the distribution of grant funds.

#### **Equity by Geography**

- Is funding provided throughout the state? See Appendix 2 for an illustration of the geographic distribution of grant funds.

*The only county that did not receive funding in 2005-2007 was San Juan County. There was no request for funding from that community.*

#### **Need**

- Is the absence of local funding taken into consideration when awarding grant funds?

- In the State Rural Mobility Transit Tax Equity grant program, a transit agency must have collected less than 80% of the state's per capita sales tax to qualify. (See Figure 5 for the distribution of transit tax equity funds.)

When the applications for grants are reviewed, consideration is given to communities and agencies that can show an ability to provide the service and a financial need for the grant funds. In the distribution of the federal dollars, an operating deficit must exist to be eligible to receive the operating assistance funds. In some cases, a deficit is created by the local transit agency when they create reserve accounts to cover future or anticipated costs for insurance liability and capital replacement or purchase.

#### **Population**

- Are funds provided to agencies proportionately based on the number of persons living in their service area?
- Do areas with denser populations get more money than areas with sparser populations?

The Federal Transit Administration provides urban and small urban transit agencies Section 5307 Formula Grants based on population and population density. The rural public transportation grants, FTA Section 5311, are distributed to Washington State based on the rural population and are awarded through a competitive process by the Department for rural public transportation services.

### ***Amount of Trips Provided or the Amount of Expenditures of a Specific Type of Service***

- Does the distribution methodology or formula consider the costs of providing a certain type of service? Or the amount of trips provided?

The formula for Paratransit/Special Needs funds for transit uses the expenses of both demand response and deviated route to determine the pro rated share of the funds.

The proportional share of the budget for the demand response and deviated route services in the rural areas is higher than in the urban areas. Urban transit agencies provide more hours of service to fixed route and commuter route service due to the shorter distances between passenger locations typically found in higher population density areas. The state Paratransit/Special Needs grant funds subsidize the rural services at a higher rate than the services in the urban or small urban areas due to the longer distances traveled between passenger locations found in lower population density areas. The differences between rural and urban services regarding distances and population densities explain the disparity in funding. (See Figure 8 for an illustration of the disparity in funding.)

### ***Type of Governmental Unit***

The federal government requires Tribal Governments have access to grant programs. In the past two biennia, the Department has awarded \$1.4 million to seven different tribes and has also provided funding to nonprofit agencies for public transportation services that are provided to tribal lands.

### ***Summary of Equity***

- The Department distributes grants to a variety of grantees based on diverse criteria of equity such as: geography, need, population, and government type.
- One form of equitable distribution is by geography. The Department wants to ensure that all areas of the state that apply for grants stand an equal chance of receiving funds.
- Need is also a consideration of equity for the Department. Funds are distributed to rural transit agencies in Washington State through the rural mobility transit tax equity funds. These funds help equalize the amount of funding that larger transit agencies receive through larger tax bases.
- Population is another variable considered for equitable distribution of grant funds. Larger populations mean greater ridership over smaller geographic areas. Federal 5310, 5311, rural portions of JARC and New Freedom funds, and state rural mobility funds comprise the funds distributed to rural transit and community transportation providers.
- Federal requirements also ensure that state grant funds are distributed to tribal governments. In 2005-2007, tribes in Washington State received nearly \$800,000 in state funds for tribal transportation.
- The intersections of population, need, and geography illustrate some of the special considerations given when distributing grant funds through the consolidated grant process.

**Conclusions of the 2006 Grant Program Evaluation**

- The Department distributes a wide variety of federal and state grants through three processes: Competitive, Formula, and Collaborative. Each program has a specific focus, although the State has identified some overarching goals.
- Program success or project effectiveness is currently measured by anecdotal stories from community providers that detail the quality of service. Due to the difference in system sizes, and geographic and demographic areas served, there has historically been a lack of standardized data points to quantify how much service-per-dollar is achieved through grant funding.
- The Department is currently developing performance criteria for all grant recipients to report that will further clarify performance effectiveness within the public transportation grant program.
- Grants are distributed in an equitable manner using geography, population, percentage of tax revenue as criteria in determination. Current methods of equitably distributing grants were met with minimal suggestions by a Grants Program Advisory Committee (G-PAC) in 2006.
- Grant applicants want more guidance from the Department on applying for grants. Training on grant writing and technical application assistance will be provided by the Department for grant applicants before final applications are due.
- The passage of new federal transportation legislation will require Washington state public transportation agencies and planning organizations to respond appropriately to the new requirements. Examples include accurate reporting of the federal grant programs. In addition, there will continue to be clarity to federal definitions in a new grant program called New Freedom and its focus to fund projects that are beyond all the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.
- The Department is planning to distribute “customer satisfaction” surveys to grant recipients concerning quality of assistance. This survey data will ask standardized quantitative measures concerning the Department’s success in meeting the needs of grant recipients by providing technical assistance.