

Each year, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) reports on the status of public transportation in Washington State. The annual report provides data to transit providers, the Legislative Transportation committees, and local and regional governments.<sup>1</sup>

Today, there are 28 local governmental public transportation systems in Washington State—20 of which are public transportation benefit areas. This introduction includes a statewide map showing the location and service areas of these systems. There were no new transit agencies reporting in 2006.

Not included in this report are Washington State Ferries and the many non-profit and for-profit public transportation providers across the state. See the 2005 Summary of Community and Brokered Transportation at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/acct](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/acct) for information on community transportation providers that received grants from the Public Transportation Division.

## Organization of the Summary

This year's summary is organized in four sections and six appendices.

## Statewide Operations Overview

This section presents a statewide picture of transit performance:

- fixed route ridership increased 3.56 percent over 2005, reaching 164,825,977 passenger trips,
- demand response ridership increased 2.57 percent over 2005,
- vanpool ridership increased 10.14 percent over 2005, nearly the same as 2004 vanpool passenger trip levels,
- light rail revenue vehicle hours decreased by 49.41 percent,
- statewide ridership reached 180,167,381 in 2006 across all modes of transportation,
- local taxes increased 8.66 percent.

## Operating Characteristics for Each System

The bulk of the report is devoted to profiles of each transit system's operating characteristics, services, and achievements for 2006, accompanied by its objectives for 2007 and plans through 2012. The profiles are divided into three sections according to the size of the transit system and then organized alphabetically.

### Systems Serving Urbanized Areas

- C-TRAN
- Community Transit
- Everett Transit
- King County Metro Transit
- Pierce Transit
- Sound Transit
- Spokane Transit Authority

### Systems Serving Small Urban Areas

- Ben Franklin Transit
- Cowlitz Transit Authority d.b.a. CUBS
- Intercity Transit
- Kitsap Transit
- Link Transit
- Skagit Transit
- Whatcom Transportation Authority
- Yakima Transit

<sup>1</sup>The annual summary of public transportation is required by Section 35.58.2796 RCW.

**Systems Serving Rural Areas**

- Asotin County Transit
- Clallam Transit System
- Columbia County Public Transportation
- Garfield County Public Transportation
- Grant Transit Authority
- Grays Harbor Transportation Authority
- Island Transit
- Jefferson Transit Authority
- Mason County Transportation Authority
- Pacific Transit
- Pullman Transit
- Twin Transit
- Valley Transit

**Appendices**

The appendices include a glossary of terms related to public transportation and statewide statistical summaries of operating and financial characteristics. The biennial report of the public transportation grant program was added this year as Appendix 6.

Appendix 1 – Glossary

Appendix 2 – Public Transportation Grant Program Project Lists

Appendix 3 – Statewide Operations Summary

Appendix 4 – Statewide Operating Statistics

Appendix 5 – Statewide Financial Statistics – 2006

Appendix 6 – Grant Report to the Legislature – 2006

**Changes to the Public Transportation Summary**

This year, the summary will feature a new three-column format to save space, ultimately reducing the amount of paper used in publication.

The Public Transportation Grant Report to the Legislature is required by Substitute House Bill 2124, and is located at the end of the summary in Appendix 6.

The highlights section has changed locations and will not be included in the summary this year. Transit highlights will instead be included in monthly Public Transportation newsletters published by the Washington State Department of Transportation, Public Transportation Division. Visit our Web site at [www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/news](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/news) to view our monthly newsletters.

The transit benchmarks report provided by the Washington State Transit Association will no longer be included in the Summary of Public Transportation as decided in the 2005 Washington Legislative session under Substitute House Bill 1969, amending the Revised Code of Washington 47.01.012.

## A Year of Demand for Public Transportation

This past year, public transportation in 2006 has proven its effectiveness in helping to mitigate congestion during construction and peak travel times. With more routes and services being introduced by transit agencies, travel options have increased mobility for many people living near public transportation benefit areas. As the population in Washington State increases, more demand will be placed on our transportation infrastructure. Public transportation will play an important role in providing alternative transportation options when construction and maintenance of our roads occurs in the near future. Public transportation will also play a vital role in helping transport Washington's aging population (aged 65 and over) that is estimated to increase by 7.9 percent by 2030.<sup>2</sup>

An election in 2006 also posed some interesting challenges for Washington residents regarding the funding of roads. Citizens across Washington seemed to understand the role that the transportation infrastructure plays by opposing the repeal of the 9.5 cent gas tax. Even though the gas tax is mandated to be spent on roads, investing in an infrastructure that everyone uses is a great public benefit. Voters narrowly defeated Initiative 912 that demonstrated two things:

1. The majority of voters recognize the necessity of supporting the transportation infrastructure, and
2. Outreach to help additional voters recognize the broad social benefits of a well funded transportation infrastructure that supports commuting alternatives and public transportation should be an area of emphasis.

Public transportation in 2006 represented the fourth consecutive year of ridership growth with over 180 million passenger trips. This 3.78 percent increase over 2005 ridership levels perhaps points to the effects of high gas prices, and increased service capacity from the transit agencies. Whether it is going to school, work, running errands, or various other trips, public transportation offers a wide selection of modes to travel between origin and destination.

The most obvious growth in public transportation around the Puget Sound is the construction of the light rail infrastructure that weaves its way from downtown Seattle to Sea-Tac Airport. Fixed route service supplied the majority of trips, whereas the services with the largest growth in ridership were commuter rail, deviated route, and vanpooling. Light rail service was strong in 2006, although declined remarkably with the removal of the Waterfront Streetcar in Seattle.

<sup>2</sup>Forecast from Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2007. Based on population forecasts for Washington residents aged 65 and older.

# Washington State Public Transportation Transit Authorities

