

*The Washington
Transportation Plan : A
Public Transportation
Perspective*

Presented By
The Washington State Transit Association

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Problem Statement

- The historic partnership between the State of Washington and its public transportation providers has endured assaults from many directions beginning with an initiative that forever changed transit's traditional funding.
- In order for public transportation systems to fulfill their vital role, the State and the transit agencies must form new partnerships and develop funding approaches that ensure the transit network across the state meets current and future challenges.

Principles

Washington State Citizens:

- Require mobility for a thriving economy
- Need access to basic transportation to enhance quality of life
- Require an efficient transportation system

Background

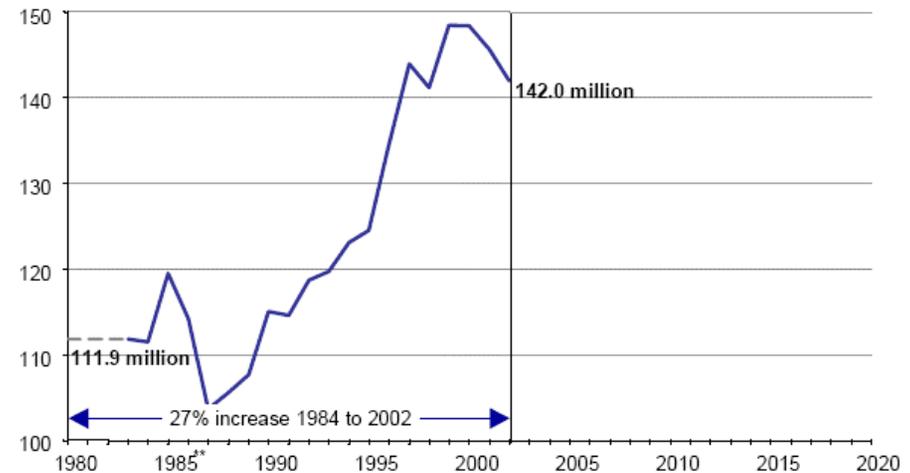
- Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) legislation established in 1974
- State funding of public transportation virtually eliminated in 2000
- How did this impact the vital role of transit?

Background

- Transit ridership increased rapidly prior to passage of Initiative I-695
- Service reductions and the economic slowdown have slowed growth
- Rural service reductions due to I-695 have cut ridership sharply

Transit Ridership Will Continue to Grow

(Fixed Urban Passenger Trips displayed)



**In the 1980 US Census, some suburban population areas were reclassified as urban areas. As a result, the transit systems serving these areas were then required to begin submitting yearly operating data to the National Transit Database - many of these beginning reporting in 1983. Data before 1983 is not compatible

Background



- 14 of 26 transit districts increase local sales tax between 2000 and 2004
- “Nickel Package” provided in 2003 – (less than 5% of MVET funding)

WTP Issue Areas

- System Preservation
- System Efficiencies
- Safety
- Transportation Access
- Bottlenecks and Checkpoints
- Contributing to the Economy and Good Jobs
- Moving Freight
- Building Future Visions
- Health and Environment

Maintain Current Fleets and Facilities

- **Current Fleets**

- 2709 buses
- 948 paratransit vehicles
- 1940 vanpool vehicles
- Annual replacement cost \$89,375,000

- **Facilities**

- Deferral of investment will lead to spiraling costs to retain or recapture existing facilities and capacity

- **Safety and Security Measures**

Keeping Pace With Population Growth

- Requires similar growth in transit operations and capital facilities
- Recommends establishing a public transportation capital program

Approach to System Efficiencies



- Focus on moving people and freight
- Transit makes the highway system more efficient
- Transit moves more people per vehicle
- Transit makes efficient use of limited road capacity
- Transit can relieve traffic

Public Transportation Improvements to Increase Efficiency

- HOV Lanes
- Park-and-Ride Lots
- Signal Preemption for Buses
- Express Bus Service
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Vanpool and Rideshare Programs
- Commute Trip Reduction and Transportation Demand Management

System Efficiency Recommendation

- Use gas tax revenues
- Invest in peak period transit
- Increase support for the Commute Trip Reduction program
- Increase interest in Corridor Transit and TDM



Safety



- Build on successful “Safe Paths to Schools Program
- Create “Safe Paths to Transit” Program

BOTTLENECKS AND CHECKPOINTS

- Fund increased public transportation service and TDM



Contributing to the Economy and Good Jobs



- Increase role as partner in funding public transportation capital equipment, facilities and service
- Provide stable and predictable flexible financing for public transportation service

Health and the Environment



- Provide incentives and funding for public transportation systems to use cleaner technologies
- Establish a partnership to address the cost of cleaner technologies

Transportation for Everyone

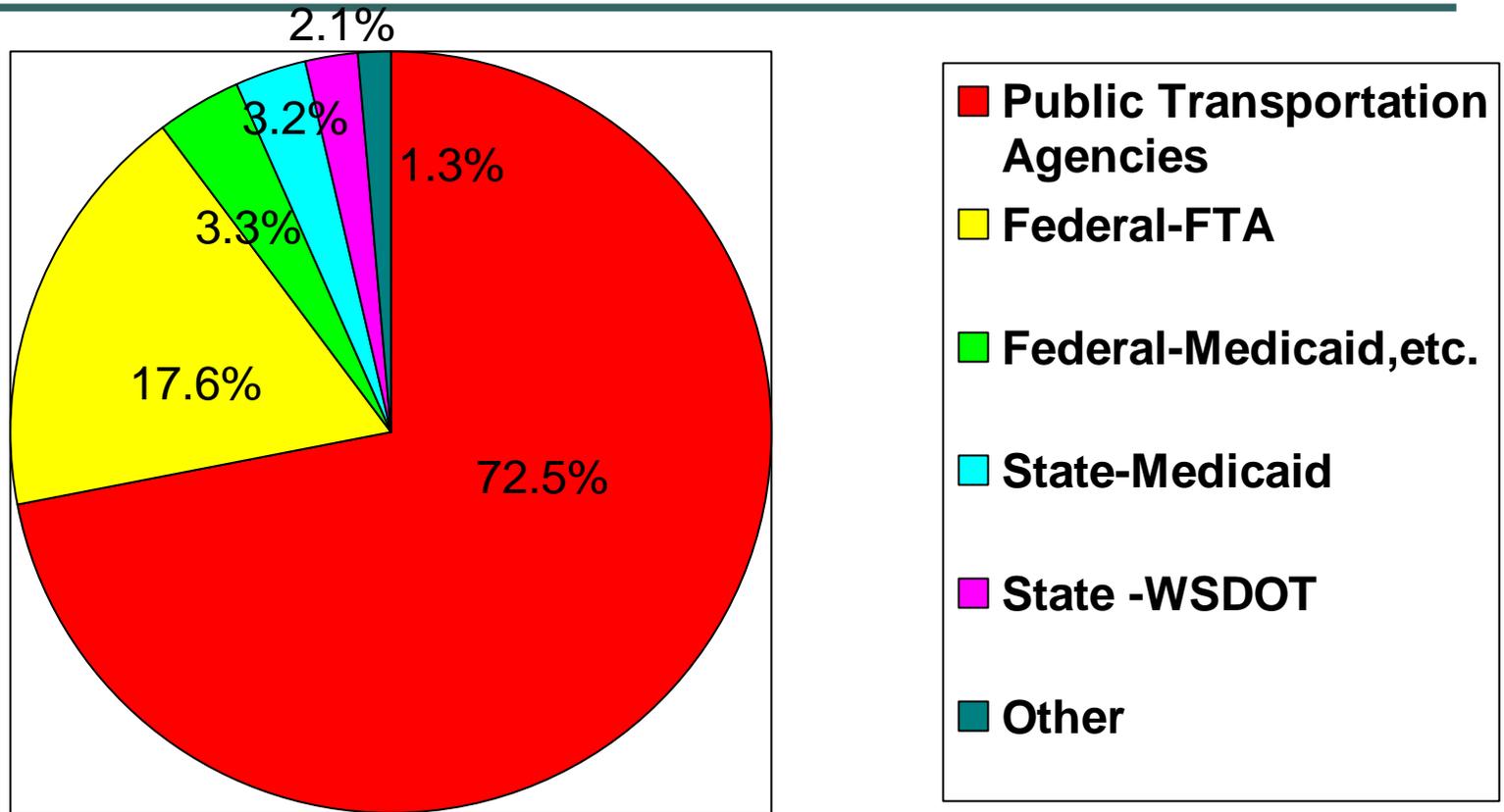


- **Elderly**
 - 17% of the population over 65 do not drive
- **People with disabilities**
 - 17.5% of the population report some disability
- **Children**
 - 25.7% of the population is under 18
- **People with low incomes**
 - 10.6% of the population have incomes below poverty level

Who Provides Special Needs Transportation

- **Public Transportation Agencies**
 - Fixed-route: 150,000,000 annual trips with \$536 million operating cost
 - ADA Paratransit: 4,500,000 annual trips with \$99.8 million operating cost
 - Other
- **Private and Private Non-Profit Agencies**
 - Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation
 - Service outside of PTBAs
 - Intercity transportation
 - Population groups in PTBAs not adequately served

Who Pays for Special Needs Transportation



Provide Access

- Recognize and declare state interest in providing access to all Washington citizens
- Provide funding to address special transportation needs in each county
- Identify a network of intercity transportation necessary to ensure basic mobility for citizens in rural and small town Washington and provide funding to support these services
- Fund and strengthen the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT)



Regional transportation

- Building regional connection
- Complementing local/state services
- Leveraging regional investments
- More efficient systems



Partnerships up and down the Sound

- Local providers operate Sound Transit services
- Close partnership with WSDOT on HOV system
- Railroad improvements enhance freight mobility
- Joint operation at transit centers, park-and-ride lots

The next phase of regional investments

- Continued strong partnerships
- More regional transit services
- Absorbing growth
- Supporting road network



Future Visions

- Achieving the efficiency, environmental, social, and economic goals of the total transportation system cannot occur without a strong, partnership with the state including policy and funding assistance.

