

Local Roadways: The County System

Washington State Transportation Commission
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Gary Nelson,
Snohomish County
Council member

Jim Whitbread, PE
Stevens County Engineer

This presentation was prepared and presented by the Washington Association of Counties and may not be representative of the Washington State Transportation Commission and the Department of Transportation's viewpoint.

An Overview of Washington's Counties

- 39 counties (281 cities and towns)
- The total population living in unincorporated areas is 2.423 million (40% of the total state population of 6.041 million).
- The county road system makes up 66% of the center line miles and carries 16.5% of the vehicle miles traveled.

Diversity of County Road System

- **Approximately 85,000 lane miles of roads.**
 - 57,800 miles paved (68%)
 - 27,200 miles unpaved (32%)
- **Freight and Goods system is comprised of over 21,000 lane miles.**
 - Many of these roads have deficiencies that require closures or restrictions.
- **Four counties operate ferries and they have similar operations and maintenance issues as the state ferry system.**

Major County Responsibilities County Wide

- Law & Justice
(except
Police/Sheriff)
- Assessment, Tax
Collection
- Records, Elections
- Public Health
- Human Services

Unincorporated

- Police/Sheriff
- Road
Construction &
Maintenance (in
unincorporated
areas funded
with dedicated
property tax)
- Land Use

Major Funding Sources

Counties

- Sales Tax
- Property Tax

Cities

- Sales Tax
- Property Tax
- Utility Tax
- B & O Tax
- Business License Fees

Major Funding Sources –

General Fund County Wide

- \$1.80 Property Tax Levy
- Sales Tax (15% of City Tax)
- 0.1% Sales Tax Correctional Facilities
- 0.1% Sales Tax - Criminal Justice (shared with cities)

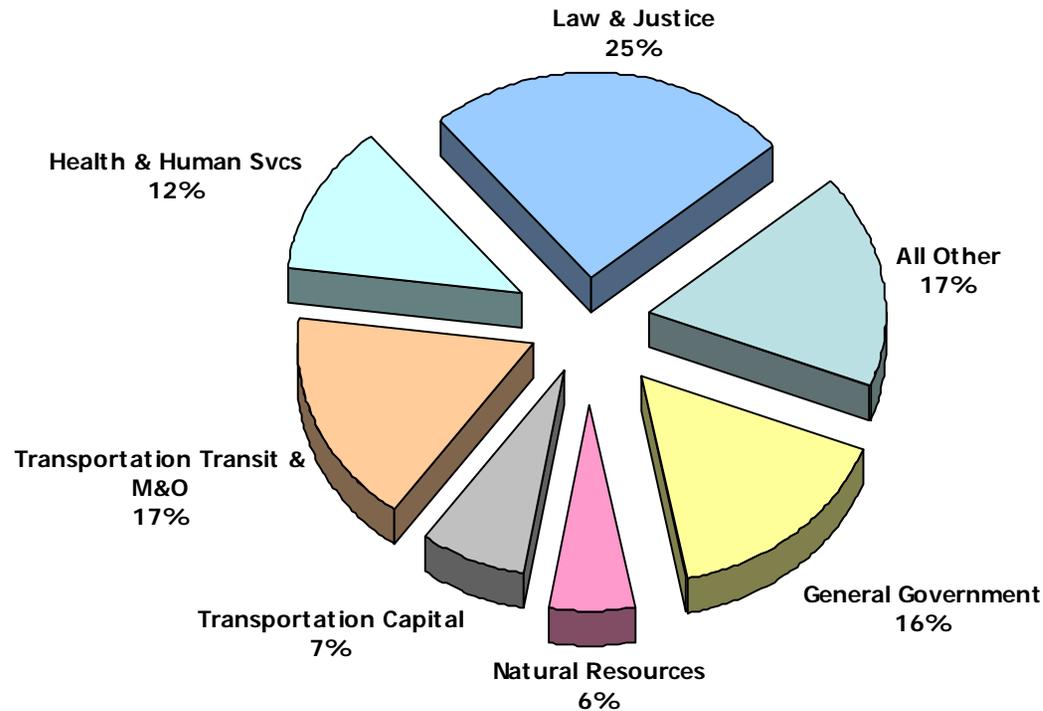
Unincorporated

- Up to 1% Sales Tax

County Road Levy Summary

- **2002 Revenue produced by full levy of \$2.25/\$1,000**
 - \$386 million – if full levy applied
 - \$327 million – actual revenue produced
 - **\$306 million in revenue to the road fund**
 - **\$21 million diverted for traffic enforcement and other purposes**

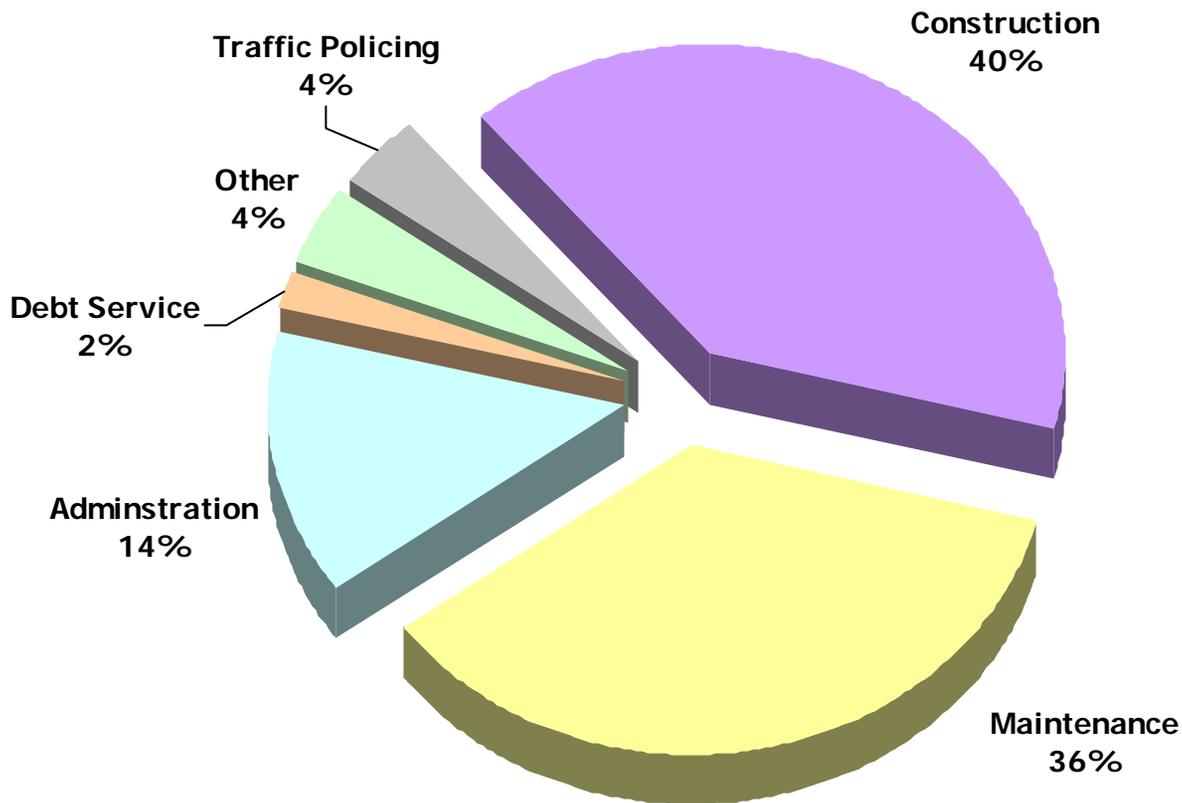
2002 County Expenditures



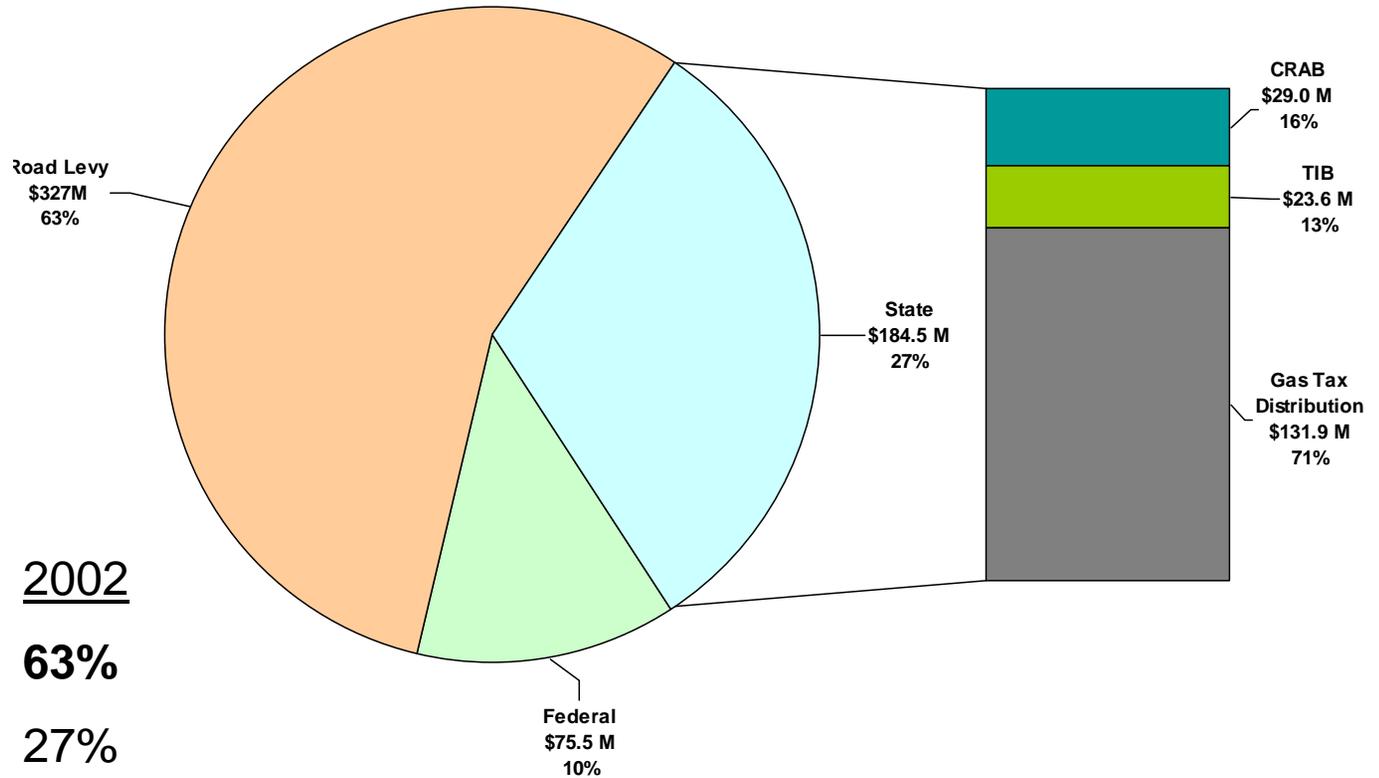
Source = State Auditor's Office
2002 Audited data from the
Local Government Financial Reporting System

2002 County Transportation Expenditures

\$756.8 Million



Local Funds are paying for the majority of the system



	<u>1991</u>	<u>2002</u>
Local	56%	63%
State	34%	27%
Federal	11%	10%

Numbers are rounded and do not include all funds

Washington's Transportation Plan

You asked us:

- Have we identified the right issues?
- Have we collected the right data?
- Do we interpret the data in the right way?
- What are the implications for capital investment?

Issues we agree on

- ✓ System Efficiencies
- ✓ Transportation Access
- ✓ Health & the Environment
- ✓ Strong Economy & Good Jobs
- ✓ Building Future Visions

Preservation

- The current state funding programs through WSDOT, TIB and CRAB are not keeping up with the need.
- Counties are trying to balance competing needs between safety, preservation and maintenance and falling short on all three.

Freight

- We agree with the emerging directions.
- For counties, many of the roads have deficiencies that necessitate weight restrictions and/or road closures during certain times of the year, making them unusable for reliable freight transport. Estimated costs range from \$2.4 Billion for upgrading all roads to all weather standards to \$1.8 Billion for making improvements that would still necessitate moderate restrictions on the roadways.

Strong Economy & Good Jobs

- We agree with the statewide perspective.
- And, we must note: urban areas need the rural areas to survive and rural areas need the urban areas to survive. Urban areas provide the jobs and markets. The rural areas provide the food and resources for the urban areas.
- We must work together in order to be successful.

Safety

- We agree with the emerging directions and findings.
- Two lane rural roads have the highest accident rates and deserve special attention.
- Investments are needed for both the roadways, and education and enforcement.

So...

- Every trip begins and ends on a local road.
- Urban counties are using preservation funding for construction to meet growth needs.
- Rural counties are using construction money to preserve the system.
- Inflation pressures exceed road levy growth rate limits.
- Criminal justice costs are significant and are placing increased pressures on the road levy.

What do Counties need?

- We need additional program funding for
 - Preservation;
 - Maintenance;
 - Safety improvements;
 - Congestion relief and;
 - Local freight improvements in order to maintain and improve the system.
- The funding should be flexible enough to allow local elected's and professional staff to manage diverse demands.