

# Joint Transportation Committee

## Public Transportation Fiscal Health Study

- Evaluate the fiscal health of public transportation in Washington state
- Make a comparison with fiscal health of state transportation funding

# Study Approach

- Study used existing databases
- Transit agencies were grouped by size
  - Rural
  - Small urban
  - Large urban
  - King County Metro; Sound Transit
- An extended period for analysis: 1991-2011
- Dollars adjusted for inflation in some graphs
- Input from stakeholders

# What is transit fiscal health?

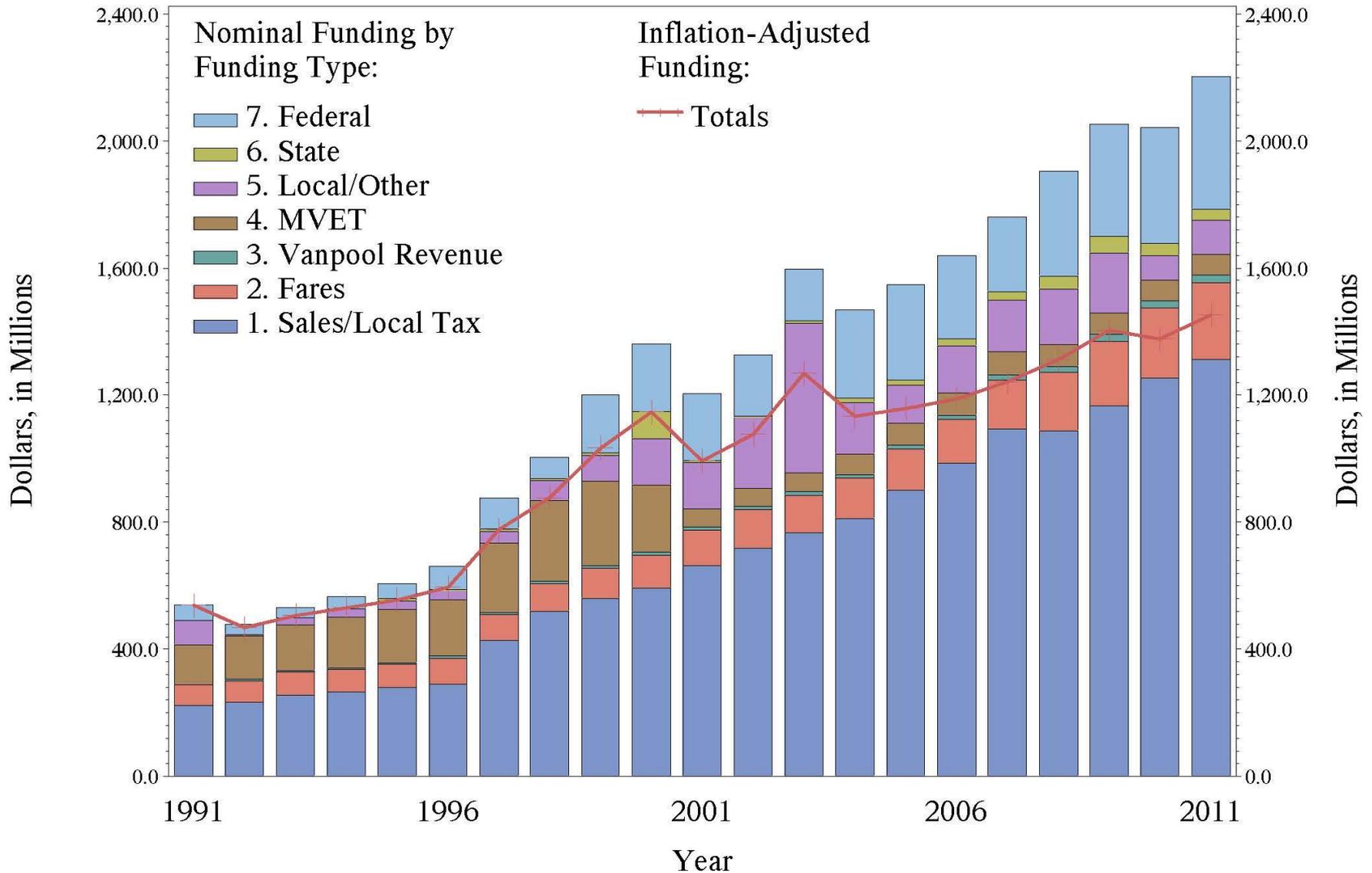
- In many ways, it is in the eyes of the beholder
  - Stable revenues and expenditures?
  - Cost effective service?
  - Customer satisfaction, service quality & frequency?
  - High fare-box recovery & less tax subsidy?
  - Cost containment—cost / hour or cost / rider?
  - Peak hour service / safety-net service?
- Do revenues cover the services the community wants?
- Some measures may conflict with others

# Update since November JTC meeting

- 2011 transit data added to the report
- Added 5 Transit system case studies
- Updated with stakeholder comments:
  - Information and data refinement
  - Additional interpretations of data
- Separation of transit system groupings into individual transit systems for analysis

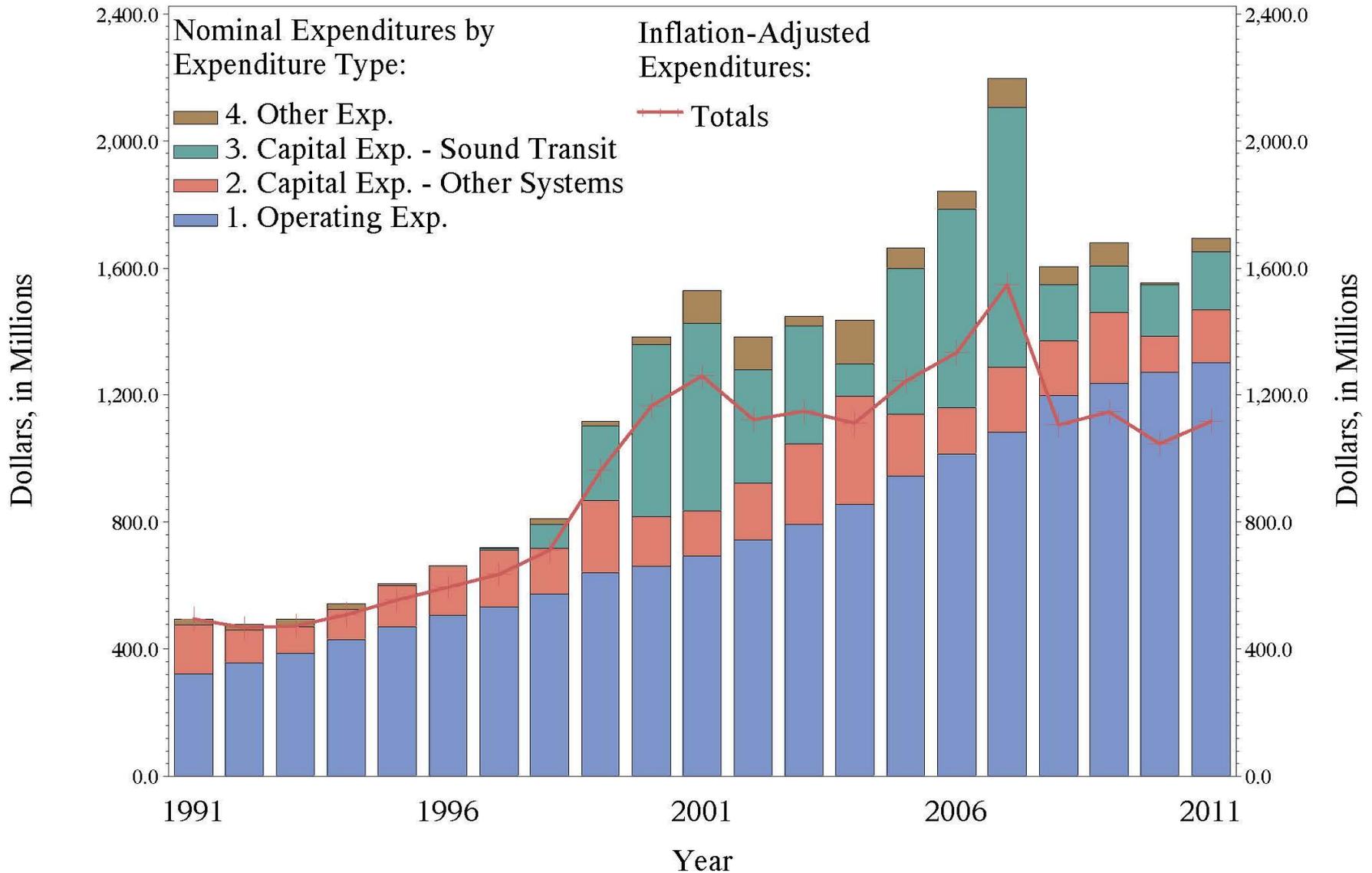
# Annual Funding, for All Systems Statewide

## Nominal vs. Real (Inflation-Adjusted, 1991=100%) Funding



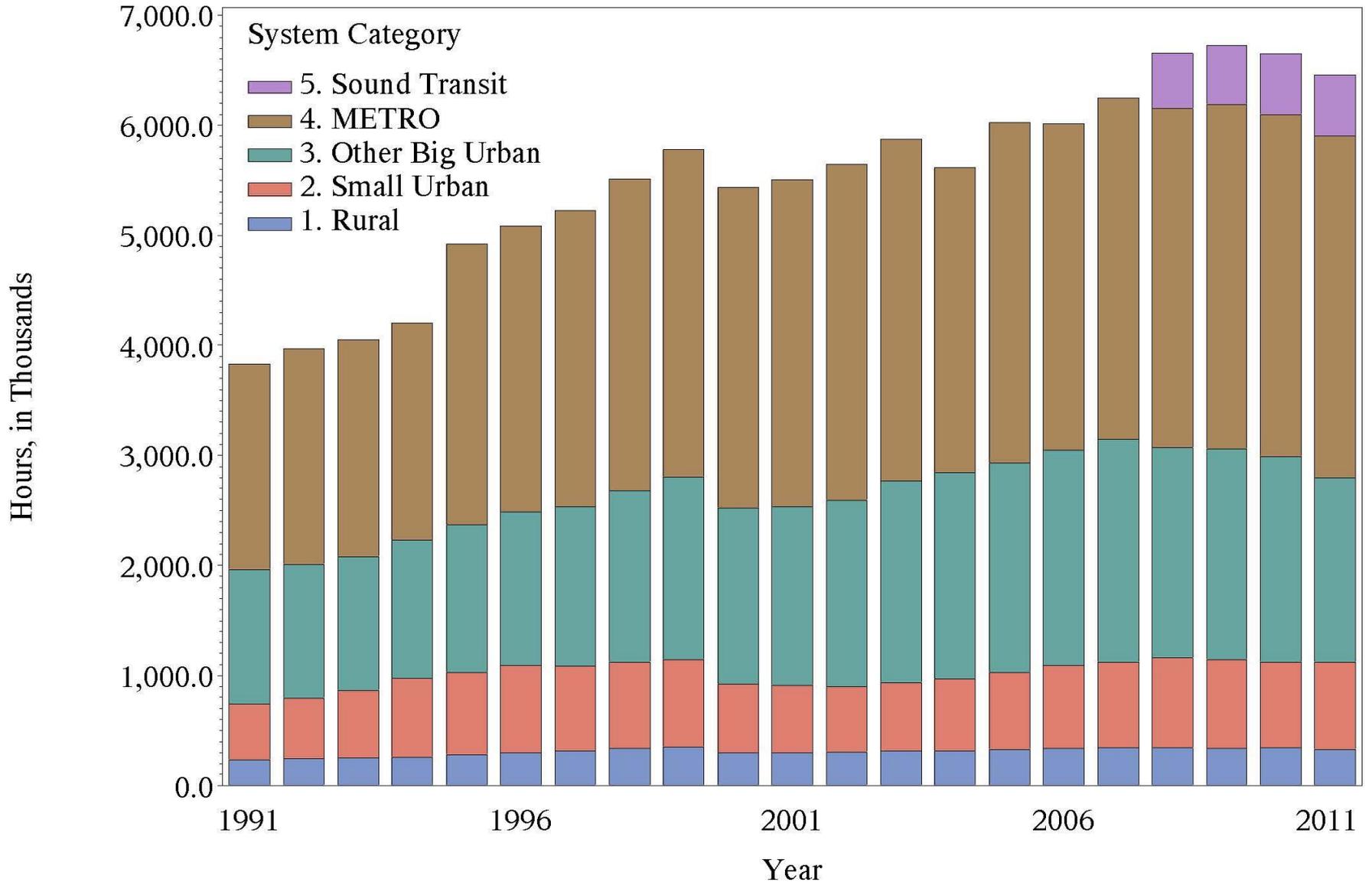
# Annual Expenditures, for All Systems Statewide

## Nominal vs. Real (Inflation-Adjusted) Expenditures



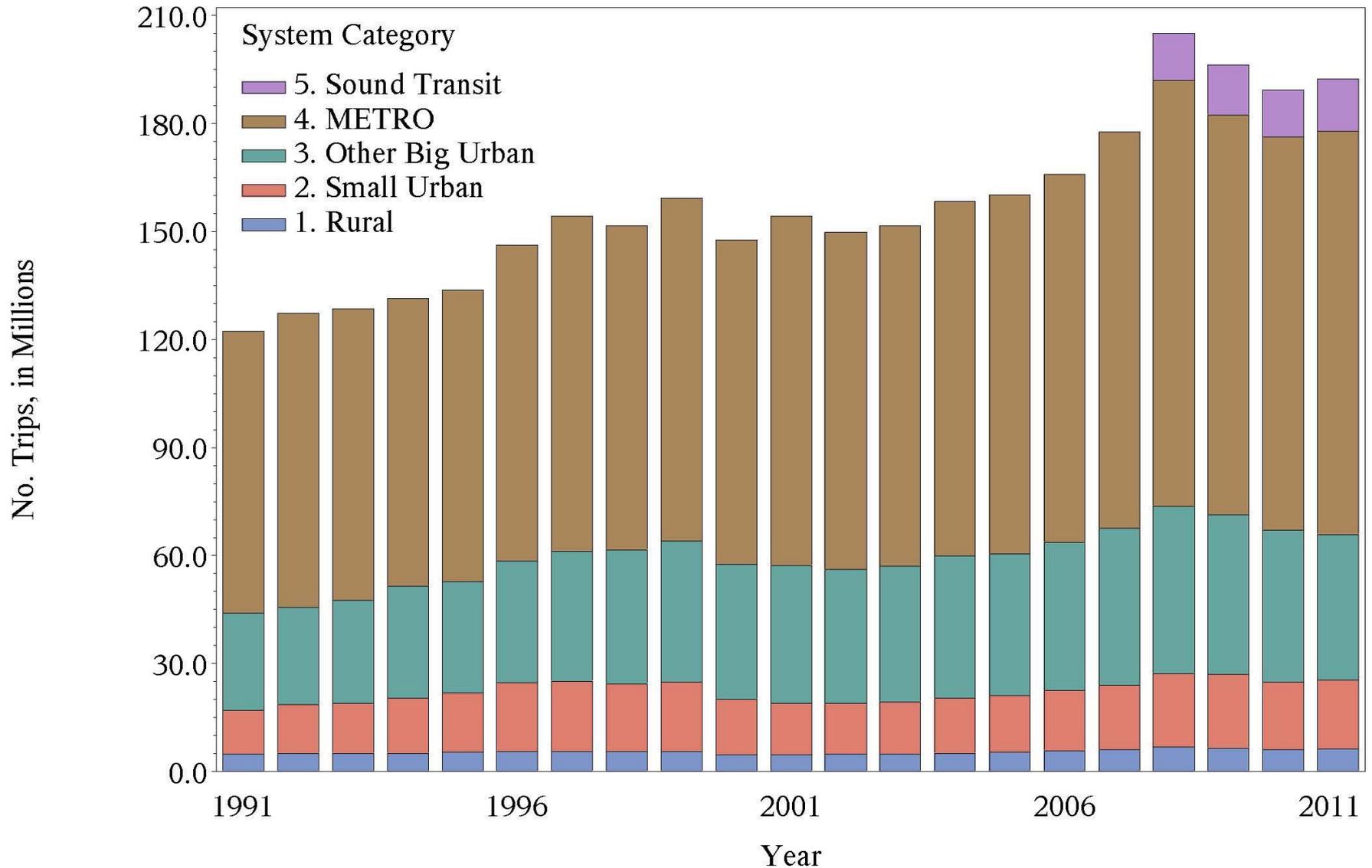
# Revenue Vehicle Hours by Year, For All Systems Statewide, Fixed\_Route Services

## Subgrouped by System Category



# Passenger Trips by Year, For All Systems Statewide, Fixed\_Route Services

## Subgrouped by System Category

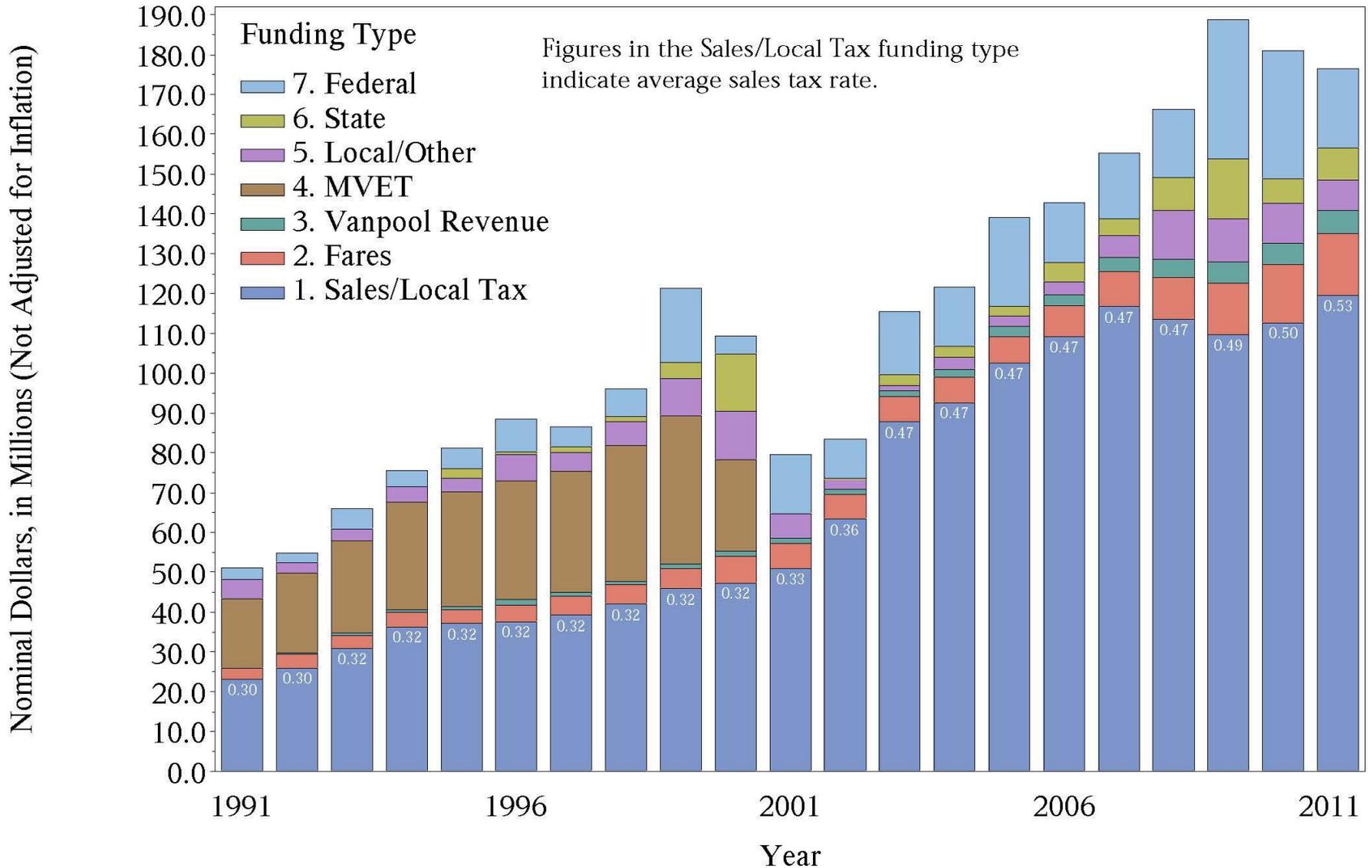


# System Category Detail

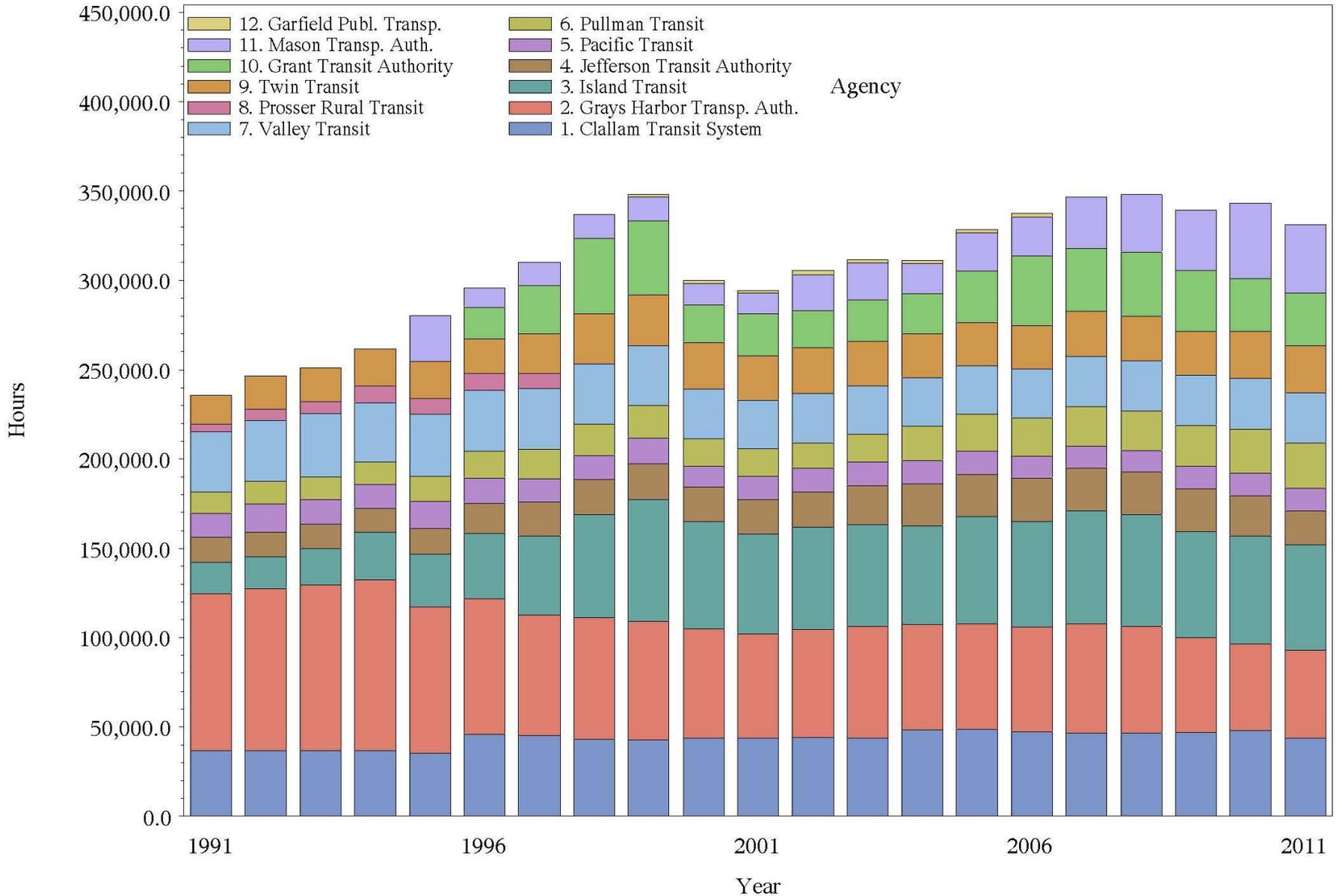
- The statewide graphs provide an indication of how the transit systems as a whole are performing across the state.
- However, statewide graph totals are dominated by data from King County Metro and Sound Transit.
- A drill-down look at system categories (e.g., rural, small urban, large urban) provides a finer level of performance detail.

# Annual Funding, for Small Urban Systems

Amounts Shown are Nominal (Not Adjusted for Inflation)



# Revenue Vehicle Hours by Year, For Rural Systems, Fixed\_Route and Deviated Route Services



# Transit System Case Studies

- General case studies:
  - Grays Harbor
  - Ben-Franklin
  - Pierce Transit\*
- Financial and Reserves Case studies:
  - King County Metro\*
  - Sound Transit\*

\* These case studies utilize financial projections

# Study Wrap-up:

- Incorporate additional comments
- Update all graphics with 2011 data
- Add one more system case study
- Breakdown transit groupings into individual systems
- Provide links for data
- Identify data limitations

# Observations:

- Fiscal health is in the eyes of the beholder
- A single statewide data metric obscures the differences among transit systems
- Transit systems use reserves for capital investment, the state uses bonds
- Two fiscal shocks:
  - 2000, service cuts and/or additional funds
  - 2008, reserves, service cuts, less unused tax capacity
- Changing demands
- Imperfect set of data