
Local/Regional Jurisdictions

Overview and Table of Contents

This section summarizes the responsibilities of local jurisdictions and regional organizations in planning, constructing, operating, and managing transportation systems within the state.

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JURISDICTION: **Cities**

RCW: Various chapters within Title 35, including 35.72–35.7

BACKGROUND

- Cities and towns are responsible for 18,242 miles of streets and approximately 740 bridges in the 281 incorporated municipalities of the state.
- Currently about 79% of cities' transportation funding is generated from local revenue sources, 12% from state revenues, and 9% from federal sources.

PROGRAM

- Maintenance, construction, and management of city streets and bridges.
- Cities also have various responsibilities for city streets that are part of the state highway system (Chapter 47.24 RCW). For example, cities must (1) provide street illumination, except on limited access facilities, (2) clean the streets, including storm sewer inlets and catch basins, (3) regulate and enforce traffic and parking restrictions on the streets, and (4) install and maintain traffic control signals/devices on the streets, if in cities with a population greater than 25,000.
- Six-year comprehensive transportation programs must be adopted before July 1 of each year and submitted to the Washington State Department of Transportation within 30 days of adoption (per RCW 35.77.010). The purpose of the program is to assure that each city has an advanced plan looking to the future as a guide in carrying out a coordinated transportation program.

FUNDING

- 2.96 cents per gallon of the state motor vehicle fuel tax
 - Referred to as the statutory or normal distribution to cities
 - Distributed to cities on a per capita basis
- Grants from the Transportation Improvement Board and the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB).
- Federal-aid programs (MAP-21)
 - National Highway Performance Program
 - Surface Transportation Program
 - Distribution by Population
 - Bridge Program (off the federal aid system)
 - Statewide
 - Highway Safety Improvement Program
 - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
 - Transportation Alternatives
- General-purpose local revenue sources, including local retail sales and use taxes, real and personal property taxes, local real estate excise taxes, other licenses, impact fees, and other fees and taxes.
- Transportation local option taxes
 - Commercial parking tax
 - Border area motor vehicle fuel tax (for cities along the Canadian border)
 - Portion of countywide local option motor vehicle fuel tax
 - Business & occupation tax, residential excise tax, and sales & use tax (limited to public transportation system purposes)

(See the *Local Taxes* section, page 111 of this manual for information on *Local Option Taxes*.)

OTHER RESOURCES

For more information on local jurisdictions, see the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington at www.mrsc.org.

JURISDICTION: Counties

RCW Various chapters within Title 36, including Chapters 36.75-36.87 RCW

BACKGROUND

- County Road Administration Board (CRAB) sets administrative standards and provides oversight for the county road departments of each of the 39 counties.
- Counties are responsible for managing 39,869 centerline miles of roads and just over 3,300 bridges in the unincorporated areas across the state.
- Currently, about 62% of counties' transportation funding is generated from local revenue sources, 27% from state revenues, and 12% from federal sources.

PROGRAM

- Maintenance, construction, management, and operation of county roads and bridges.
- Six-year comprehensive transportation programs, including plans for county road, trail, and ferry construction, must be adopted by each county prior to adoption of its annual budget and be submitted to the Washington State Department of Transportation and CRAB within 30 days of adoption (per RCW 36.81.121). Annual programs must be adopted prior to adoption of annual road budget. The purpose of the program is to assure that each city has an advanced plan looking to the future as a guide in carrying out a coordinated transportation program.

FUNDING

- 4.92 cents per gallon of state motor fuel tax
 - Referred to as statutory or normal county distribution
 - Distributed to counties using formula based upon mileage, needs, resources, and population
- Grants and distributions from County Road Administration Board (CRAB)
 - County Arterial Preservation Program
 - 0.45 cents per gallon of state motor vehicle fuel tax
 - Distributed to counties according to percentage of arterial lane miles
 - Rural Arterial Program
 - 0.58 cents per gallon of state motor vehicle fuel tax
 - Regional distribution based on rural land area and mileage of paved county rural arterials and collectors. Within each region, distribution is competitive based on statutory criteria.
- Grants from the Transportation Improvement Board and the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board.
- Federal-aid programs (MAP-21)
 - National Highway Performance Program
 - Surface Transportation Program
 - Distribution by Population
 - Bridge Program (off the federal aid system)
 - Statewide
 - Highway Safety Improvement Program
 - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
 - Transportation Alternatives
- County road levy (property tax, maximum \$2.25/\$1,000).

- Transportation local option taxes
 - Countywide motor vehicle fuel tax (10% of state fuel tax)
 - Commercial parking tax
 - Local option taxes for high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes
 - MVET or employer tax
 - Eligible counties are King, Pierce, and Snohomish

(See the *Local Taxes* section, page 111 of this manual for information on *Local Option Taxes*.)

OTHER RESOURCES

For more information on local jurisdictions, see the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington at www.mrsc.org.

JURISDICTION: County Ferry District

RCW: RCWs 36.54.110-36.54.190

BACKGROUND

- Established by county legislative authority
- County legislative authority, acting independently, is ex-officio governing body
- District can be county-wide or a portion of a county
- Authority to operate passenger-only ferry service
- On April 30, 2007, the Metropolitan King County Council created the King County Ferry District to expand transportation options for county residents by enabling potential operation of passenger-only ferry service to various parts of the county. Currently, the District provides service between downtown Seattle and both Vashon Island and West Seattle.

FUNDING

- Annual ad valorem property tax levies of up to 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation (councilmanic) (36.54.130). The levy limit in King County is up to 7.5 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.
- Voter-approved annual excess property tax levies (RCW 36.54.140)

OTHER RELEVANT STATUTES

Any county may operate ferries under the direction and control of the Board of County Commissioners (RCW 36.54.010). Such service may include auto-carrying capacity and may be funded from general county revenues. Currently Pierce, Skagit, Wahkiakum and Whatcom Counties operate ferries under this general authority.

A Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) having a boundary on the Puget Sound may operate passenger-only ferries (RCW 36.57A.200). Currently, Kitsap Transit offers foot ferry service under this authority.

Port Districts may operate passenger vessels (RCW 53.08.295). The Port of Kingston ran SoundRunner service up until September 2012.

JURISDICTION: **Local Improvement Districts/Road Improvement Districts**

RCW: 36.94.220 - 36.94.300; Chapters 35.43 – 35.56 (LID), & 36.88 (RID)

BACKGROUND

LIDs:

- A special purpose financing mechanism that may be created by local governments to fund improvements in specific areas which are smaller than the unit of government.
- Local improvements must directly benefit nearby property owners (e.g., water main, sewers, or streets).
- Local governments that can create LIDs include cities, counties, port districts, water districts, transportation benefit district, and others.
- LIDs can be initiated by petition of property owners in an area or by resolution of local governments.
- Voter approval is not required for LID formation, but may be challenged by property owners.

RIDs:

- A Road Improvement District (RID) is similar to a LID, except that it funds county road improvements in unincorporated areas.
- RIDs can be initiated by county resolution or by petition of affected property owners.

FUNDING

- Special assessments - property owners who benefit from improvements are assessed at proportionate levels to pay for the improvements.

*(See the **Local Taxes section, page 111** of this manual for information on **Local Option Taxes.**)*

JURISDICTION: **Metropolitan Planning Organizations**

REQUIRED BY: [23 USC Section 134](#) & [23 CFR parts 420 and 450](#)

BACKGROUND

- Federal law requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in urban areas of at least 50,000 people. MPOs must promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems to serve mobility and freight needs and to foster economic growth and development, while minimizing fuel-consumption and air pollution.
- In areas with greater than 200,000 people, MPOs are designated Transportation Management Areas (TMAs), which have expanded responsibilities. The Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Authority (FTA) certify that TMAs follow federal planning requirements every four years.
- MPOs are designated by local governments and the governor to perform basic transportation planning functions. These functions include development of a long-range multimodal transportation plan, preparation of a transportation improvement program, and general coordination within the metropolitan area.
- In urbanized areas, the MPO is the same as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) created in state law ([Chapter 47.80 RCW](#)).
- Planning efforts are federally funded and follow federal planning requirements. WSDOT certifies that each MPO follows federal planning requirements, as required by federal law. Acceptance of these funds requires a local match. It also requires compliance with:
 - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
 - The Americans with Disabilities Act;
 - Presidential Executive Order on environmental justice;
 - Presidential Executive Order “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency;”
 - Federal Transit Administration circulars; and
 - Other federal laws, regulations, and guidance.
- There are eleven MPOs in Washington (The Walla Walla Valley MPO is required to be designated by March 2013. It was created as a result of the 2010 Census):
 - Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) – TMA
 - Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG)
 - Lewis-Clark Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (LCVMPO)
 - Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) – TMA
 - Skagit Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMPO)
 - Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) – TMA
 - Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) – TMA
 - Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC)
 - Wenatchee Valley Transportation Council (WVTC)
 - Whatcom Council of Governments
 - Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG)

- Under federal law the membership of an MPO is composed of local elected officials, officials of public agencies that administer major modes of transportation in the metropolitan area, and appropriate state officials (which may include state legislators). State law requires that the Puget Sound Regional Council include specific state and local entities as voting members on its executive board (RCW 47.80.060).
- As state RTPOS, each MPO must have a policy board which also allows participation by representatives of major employers, WSDOT, transit agencies, and port districts. Any state legislators whose districts are (wholly or partly) within the boundary of the MPO are considered *ex-officio*, non-voting policy board members (RCW 47.80.040).

PROGRAM

MPOs are required to:

- Carry out a continuing, coordinated, and comprehensive (3C) transportation planning process.
- Prepare a financially constrained 20-year metropolitan transportation plan to serve as the basis for the selection of projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Develop a four-year TIP including a prioritized list of projects and a financial plan for the program. The TIP must be updated at least every four years.
- Work with regional clean air authorities to develop transportation control measures for the air quality State Implementation Plan (SIP) if national air quality standards have not been met in the MPO area.

MPOs designated as TMAs are additionally required to:

- Develop a system for monitoring and managing congestion in their metropolitan area.
- Select projects for federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) program funding.

FUNDING

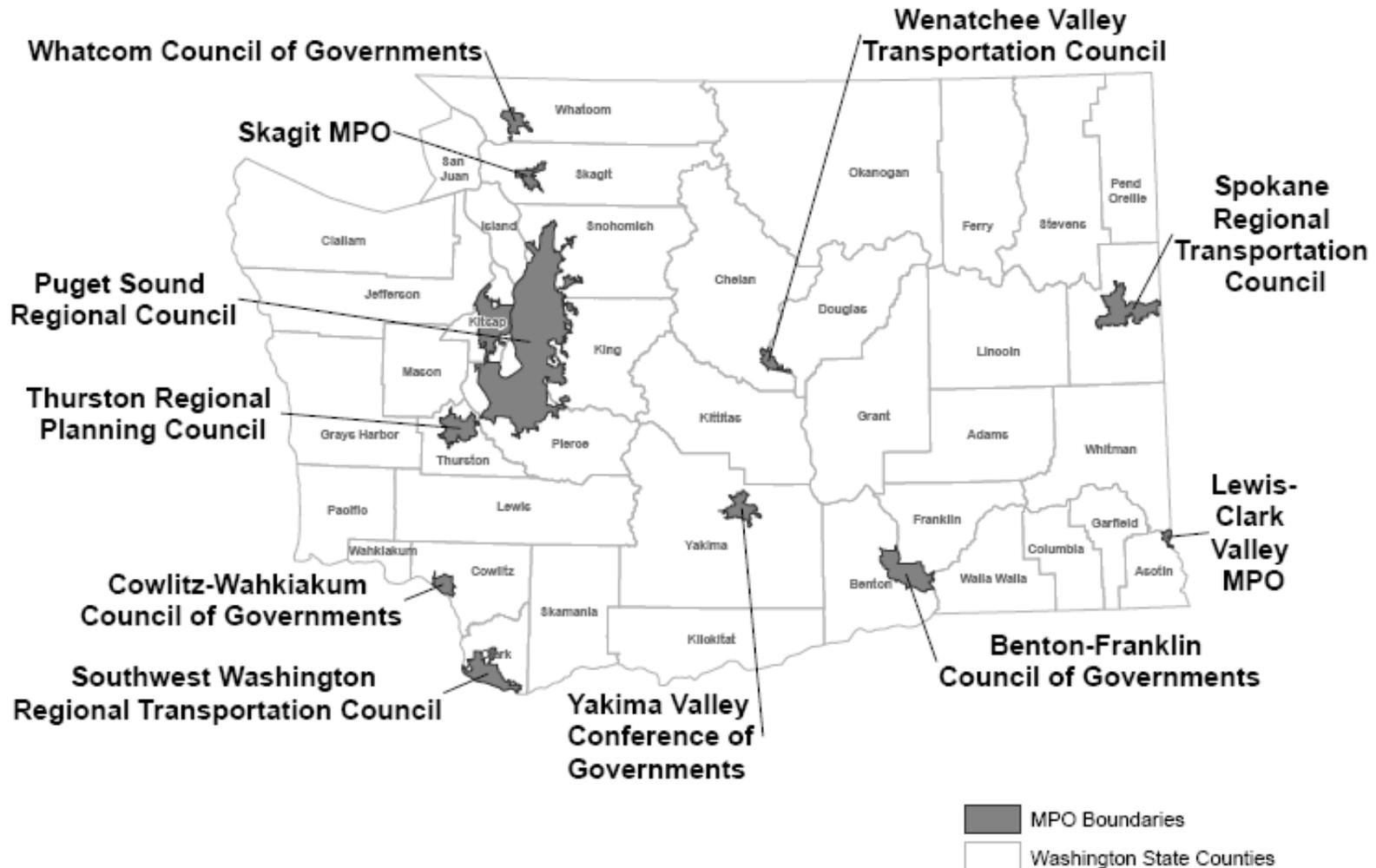
In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2012, Washington State received a combined \$8.1 million from the FHWA and the FTA to support MPO planning activities. In FFY 2013, Washington received a combined \$9.2 million.

Certain federal funds are sub-allocated by WSDOT directly to MPOs and RTPOs for project selection at the local and regional level. The programs include Surface Transportation Program (STP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

ON THE WEB

[WSDOT webpage: What is an MPO?](#)
[MPO/RTPO Directory](#)
[Map of RTPOs and MPOs](#)

Metropolitan Planning Organizations



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JURISDICTION:

Ports

RCW:

Title 53 RCW

BACKGROUND

- Port districts are one of the oldest types of special purpose districts in Washington State, originally authorized by legislation in 1911. A history of Washington State's ports can be found [on the Washington Public Ports Association](#) website.
- Until 1953, port districts could only be formed in maritime areas and programs focused on harbor improvements and associated rail and terminal facilities. Currently, port districts possess the broadest array of powers of any special purpose district.
- Ports are municipal corporations of the state and are classified as "special purpose districts" (organized to provide one or a small number of specific services)
- Can be smaller than a city or town, or as large as an entire county
- 75 public port districts in 33 of 39 counties
- 22 of the 75 districts located in two counties (12 - Kitsap County and 10 - Grant County)
- In 2011, \$64.8 million in total commodity exports and \$46.7 million in total commodity imports moved through Washington State ports. In 2011, 4.4 percent of total U.S. exports and 2.1 percent of total U.S. imports transited through Washington's gateways. For more information, see [US Census Bureau, International Trade Data by State](#).

GOVERNANCE

- Port districts are governed by boards of elected commissioners. Generally three-member boards, district voters may approve a ballot proposition expanding membership to five commissioners.
- A port district may be formed with simple majority approval of voters residing within the proposed district's boundaries.
- A proposition to form a port district may be placed on the ballot by either the board of county commissioners or county voters' petition.

PROGRAM

- Transportation facilities and services: marine shipping, airports, rail facilities, ferries, marinas, fishing terminal development, roads, toll facilities
- Commercial facilities and services: general industrial, general commercial, economic development activities including tourism promotion, trade centers, and community renewal
- Utilities and other services: pollution control, sewer and water, heating systems, telecommunications, watershed management, salvage and disposal of abandoned vessels, parks and recreation facilities, pilotage, police and fire protection

FUNDING

- User fees, property lease and rental fees, property tax levies, interest income, federal grants and bond proceeds, bond proceeds (general obligation and revenue)
- Port districts have unique constitutional powers:
 - May expend public funds for industrial development or trade promotion that otherwise would violate prohibitions against lending of credit and gifting of public funds (Article VIII, section 7).
 - Port property tax levies are exempt from the one percent limitation (Article VII, section 2).

OTHER RESOURCES

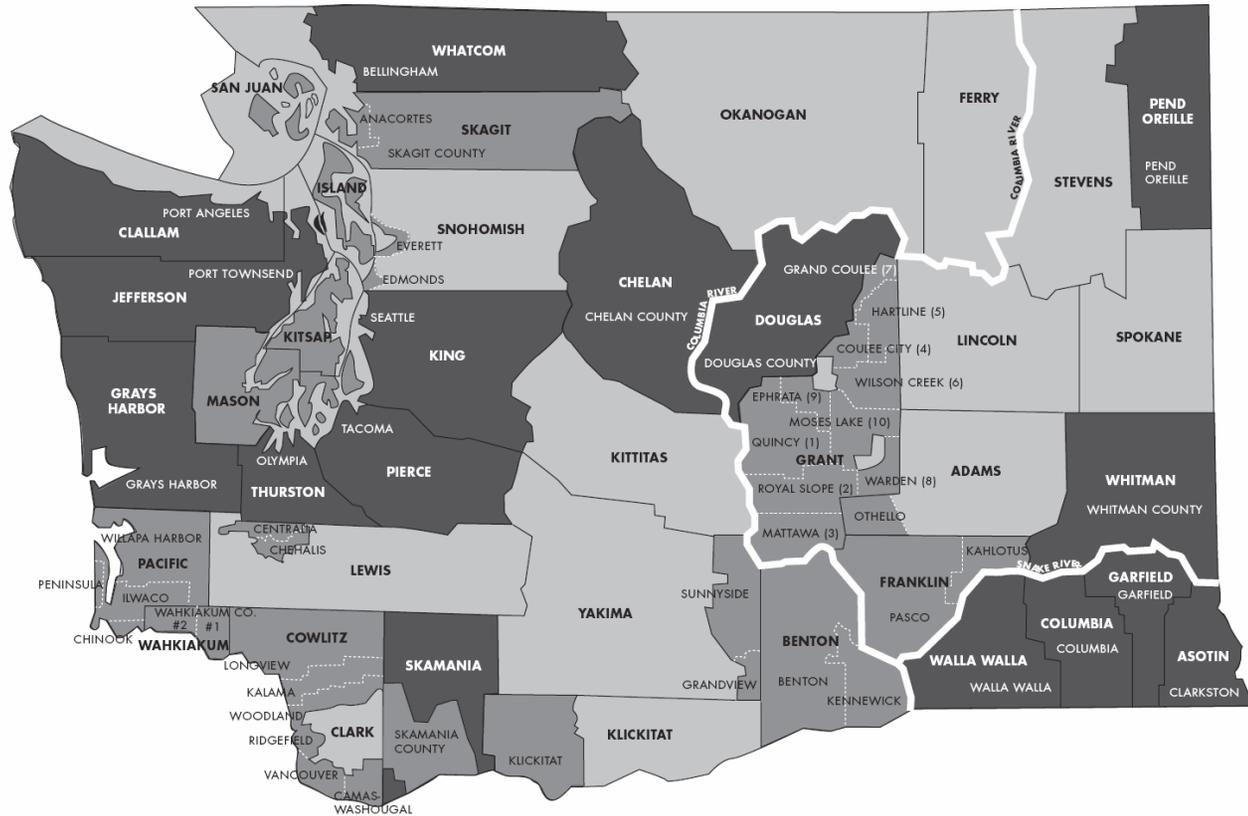
Washington Public Ports Association: <http://washingtonports.org/>

Lundin, Steve. The Closest Governments to the People: A Complete Reference Guide to Local Governments in Washington State, Washington State University Press, 2007.

DETAIL OF SAN JUAN, ISLAND, KITSAP AND MASON COUNTIES



WASHINGTON PUBLIC PORT DISTRICTS



JURISDICTION: Public Transit Systems

RCW: See below

BACKGROUND

- Organized as locally controlled, special-purpose municipal governments to provide public transportation services.
- 31 operating transit systems, each using one of six different governance structures.
- Public Transportation Benefit Areas (PTBA) (Chapter 36.57A RCW)
 - 20 systems
 - Established by public transportation improvement conference convened by the county legislative authority.
 - Governed by up to nine elected officials selected by the legislative bodies of the county and the component cities (multicounty, up to 15). Citizen members permitted in Thurston County. In Mason County, the elected officials include school board members, fire district members, and public hospital district members.
 - Additional authority for PTBA bordering Puget Sound to operate passenger-only ferry service, including additional tax sources. (*See Local Taxes section, page 111*).
- County-assumed Metropolitan Municipal Corporation (Chapter 36.56 RCW)
 - One system: King County Metro
 - Assumed the responsibilities of a metropolitan municipal corporation established per Chapter 35.58 RCW
 - County must have population of at least 210,000
- Cities (RCW 35.58.2721 and Chapter 35.95A RCW for city transportation authorities--monorail)
 - Five systems
 - Established by elected city officials
 - Cities: Yakima, Everett, Pullman, Selah and Union Gap
 - City Transportation Authority (monorail), cities with population over 300,000 (*see page 345*).
- County Transportation Authority (CTA) (Chapter 36.57 RCW)
 - Two systems: Grays Harbor and Columbia County
 - Separate legal entities
 - Established by resolution of the county legislative body
 - Governing body is statutorily comprised of three county legislative members, three mayors, and a labor representative.
 - A county transportation authority may be created to offer services limited to persons with special needs (RCW 36.57.130): none established
- Unincorporated Transportation Benefit Areas (UTBA) (RCW 36.57.100 and .110)
 - Garfield and Whitman counties
 - Formed by county commission
 - Unincorporated areas only
- Regional Transit Authority (Chapter 81.112 RCW)
 - One created in Central Puget Sound in 1992, Sound Transit
 - Board consists of 18 members: 17 members are local elected officials and the 18th member is the State Secretary of Transportation; local elected officials include mayors, city council members, and county executives and council members from within the Sound Transit District.
 - Develop and operate a high capacity transportation system, which may include commuter/express bus, commuter rail, and light rail.

- High Capacity Transportation Corridor Area (RCW 81.104.200 - 210)
 - Transit agency in a county with more than 400,000 people that adjoins a state boundary may establish one or more HCTCAs.
 - Governed by the establishing transit agency's governing body (ex officio and independently).
 - An HCTCA may establish finance and provide a high, capacity transportation system.

PROGRAM

- Primarily fixed route services in a specified geographic area (i.e., area of governance). In rural areas, transit agencies often provide deviated fixed route services to meet the needs of individuals unable to get to a routed service.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public transportation agencies to provide accessible demand response transportation services complementary to the fixed route service for persons with functional disabilities.
- Sometimes provide transportation services or funding for the following:
 - Transportation demand management strategies in urban areas
 - Job access transportation for persons with disabilities or low incomes
 - Commute Trip Reduction activities in urban areas
 - Vanpool/carpool coordination
 - Vehicles for commuter and community vanpools
 - Ambulance service (CTA only)

FUNDING

Public Transit Operating Revenue for 2010 (\$ millions)

Sales Tax	\$1,228
Farebox	\$223
Fed Operating	\$140
MVET	\$66
Other	\$48
Utility Tax	\$23
Vanpool	\$21
State Operating	\$17
TOTAL	\$1,766

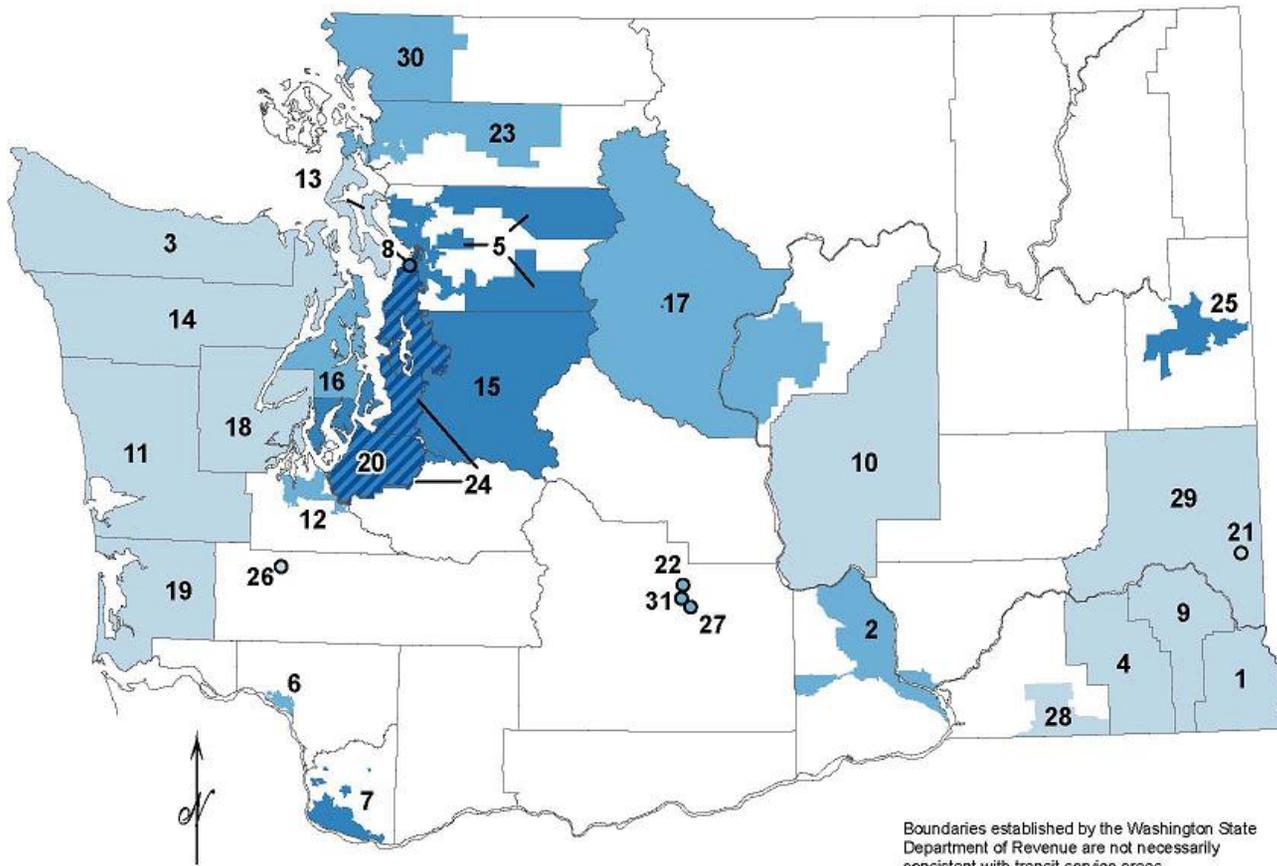
- Fares accounted for the second largest source of transit agency revenue. In 2010, the average farebox recovery rate for transit agencies in the state was 12.6%.
- Other revenue sources include advertising revenues, contracts for service to colleges and universities, pass programs for schools, vehicle and building rental, and investment income.
- Under SAFETEA-LU, Federal Transit Administration operating grants have included, but are not limited to: Urbanized Formula Funds (Section 5307), Fixed Guideway and Bus (Section 5309); Special Transportation for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (section 5310); Non-urban Public Transportation Formula Funds (Section 5311); Job Access and Reverse Commute Competitive Grants (Section 5316); New Freedom for Accessible Transportation beyond ADA (Section 5317).
- State operating grants include: Regional Mobility Grants, Rural Mobility Grants, Paratransit/Special Needs grants; and Vanpool grants.

- Transit system capital funding for 2010 was \$245 million, of which Federal Transit Administration programs provided \$225 million and the state transportation budget provided \$20 million.
- Local tax options (require voters' approval) (*See Local Taxes section, page 111*)
 - Sales and use tax – can levy up to 0.9%
 - Household – cannot exceed \$1 per month for each housing unit; no transit agency is currently using this tax option.
 - Business and Occupation (B&O) – no limit on the amount of tax; only the City of Pullman has levied a utility tax (equivalent to .314% sales tax).
 - Additional tax authority for PTBAs for passenger-only ferry service.
 - *Additional regular property tax authority for King County Metro. Does not require voter approval.*
- High capacity transportation taxes (require voters' approval) (*See Local Taxes section, page 111*)
 - Sales and use tax – up to 0.9%
 - Motor vehicle excise tax – up to 0.8% (Repealed by I-776, except Sound Transit which collects 0.3% MVET since tax revenues are pledged against bonds).
 - Sales tax upon retail car rentals - up to 2.172%
 - Employer tax – up to \$2/month/employee
- City Transportation Authority (monorail) (Chapter 35.95A RCW)
 - Taxes (require voters' approval)
 - Sales and use tax on car rentals – Up to 1.944%
 - Motor vehicle excise tax – Up to 2.5% (includes authority for rental car tax)
 - Car tabs – Up to \$100
 - Other revenue
 - Revenues earned by activities not associated with public transportation services such as sales of maintenance services, rental of vehicles and buildings, non-transit parking lots, and investments.
 - Revenue bonds
- "Urban passenger transportation systems" are eligible for a motor vehicle fuel tax refund under RCW 82.36.275 and a special (diesel) fuel tax exemption under RCW 82.38.080.

(See the *Local Taxes* section, page 111 of this manual for information on *Local Option Taxes*.)

Transit Agencies

- 1) Asotin County Transit – Public transportation benefit area (PTBA) serving Asotin County
- 2) Ben Franklin Transit – PTBA serving Benton and Franklin Counties
- 3) Clallam Transit System – Countywide PTBA serving Clallam County
- 4) Columbia County Public Transportation – County Transportation Authority (CTA) serving Columbia County
- 5) Community Transit – PTBA serving urban and rural areas of Snohomish County
- 6) Cowlitz Transit Authority (CUBS) – PTBA serving Kelso and Longview
- 7) C-TRAN – PTBA serving urban communities and small cities of Clark County
- 8) Everett Transit System – City operation
- 9) Garfield County – Unincorporated county benefit area serving Garfield County
- 10) Grant Transit Authority – Countywide PTBA serving Grant County
- 11) Grays Harbor Transportation Authority – CTA serving entire county
- 12) Intercity Transit – PTBA serving urban portions of Thurston County
- 13) Island Transit – Countywide PTBA serving Island County
- 14) Jefferson Transit Authority – Countywide PTBA serving Jefferson County
- 15) King County Metro Transit – County transportation system serving King County
- 16) Kitsap Transit – Countywide PTBA serving Kitsap County
- 17) Link Transit – PTBA serving Chelan County and a portion of Douglas County
- 18) Mason County Transportation Authority – Countywide PTBA serving Mason County
- 19) Pacific Transit System – Countywide PTBA serving Pacific County
- 20) Pierce Transit – PTBA serving Pierce County
- 21) Pullman Transit – City operation
- 22) Selah Transit – City operation
- 23) Skagit Transit – PTBA serving Skagit County
- 24) Sound Transit – Regional Transit Authority serving urban areas of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties
- 25) Spokane Transit Authority – PTBA serving Spokane County
- 26) Twin Transit – PTBA serving Centralia and Chehalis
- 27) Union Gap Transit – City operation
- 28) Valley Transit – PTBA serving Walla Walla County
- 29) Whatcom Transportation Authority – PTBA serving Whatcom County
- 30) Whitman County Unincorporated Transportation Benefit Authority – serving unincorporated areas of Whitman County
- 31) Yakima Transit – City operation



Transit Size

- Urban
- Small Urban
- Rural
- Regional District
- City

- 1 Asotin County PTBA
- 2 Ben Franklin Transit
- 3 Clallam Transit System
- 4 Columbia County Public Transportation
- 5 Community Transit
- 6 Cowlitz Transit Authority (CUBS)
- 7 C-TRAN
- 8 Everett Transit
- 9 Garfield County Public Transportation
- 10 Grant Transit Authority
- 11 Grays Harbor Transportation Authority
- 12 Intercity Transit
- 13 Island Transit
- 14 Jefferson Transit Authority
- 15 King County Metro
- 16 Kitsap Transit
- 17 Link Transit
- 18 Mason County Transportation Authority
- 19 Pacific Transit
- 20 Pierce Transit
- 21 Pullman Transit
- 22 Selah Transit
- 23 Skagit Transit
- 24 Sound Transit District
- 25 Spokane Transit Authority
- 26 Twin Transit
- 27 Union Gap Transit
- 28 Valley Transit
- 29 Whitman County UTBA
- 30 Whatcom Transportation Authority
- 31 Yakima Transit

JURISDICTION: **Regional Transit Authority ("Sound Transit")**

RCW: Chapter 81.112 RCW

BACKGROUND

- Separate legal entity.
- Formed by vote of county councils of two or more contiguous counties each having a population of 400,000 or more
 - Approved by King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties in 1993
- Currently authorized in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties only and may include all or portions of counties
- Eighteen-member governing board composed of city and county elected officials appointed by county executives and confirmed by the county legislative authorities, with at least half serving on transit boards in member counties, and the Secretary of the Washington State Department of Transportation,

PROGRAM

- To develop and operate a high capacity transportation system.
 - Intercity bus operations and facilities (Regional Express) contracted through Community Transit, King County Metro Transit, and Pierce Transit.
 - Light rail operations (Link Light Rail) in Tacoma and Seattle – SeaTac
 - Commuter rail operations (Sounder) between Seattle and Tacoma and Everett contracted through BNSF, maintenance through Amtrak.

FUNDING

- High capacity transit tax options (must be voter approved)
 - Sales and use tax - up to 0.9%
 - Sales and use tax on retail car rentals - up to 2.172%
 - Motor vehicle excise tax - up to 0.8%
Revoked with the passage of I-776; however, the Washington Supreme Court ruled that the tax may continue to be imposed by Sound Transit at the rate of 0.3% to meet contractual obligations for bond indebtedness. The tax may no longer be imposed after debt service payments are completed.
 - Employer tax - up to \$2/month/employee
 - Other revenue:
 - ◆ Farebox
 - ◆ General obligation bonds
 - ◆ Revenue bonds
 - ◆ Federal grants
 - ◆ Special assessments on property (Local Improvement District)

(See the *Local Taxes* section, page 111 of this manual for information on *Local Option Taxes*.)

APPROVAL OF SOUND TRANSIT

- In November 1996, voters approved "Sound Move" including financing to construct and operate a regional transit system within the urban areas of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The vote passed by 56.5%.
- Sound Move originally included 25 miles of light rail stretching from Northgate to SeaTac, 26 light rail stations, 81 miles of commuter rail, 14 commuter rail stations, and high-occupancy-vehicle improvements for use by regional express buses. For more information, see [Sound Transit's Planning History](#).
- Funding plan approved by voters
 - 0.4% sales and use tax
 - 0.3% motor vehicle excise tax (revoked with the passage of I-776, but still being collected due to the pledge of tax revenues for bonds)
 - Both taxes took effect April 1, 1997

APPROVAL OF SOUND TRANSIT 2

- Vote in November 2008 approved plan and authorized funding within the urban areas of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The vote passed by 57%.
- The Sound Transit 2 plan includes the following:
 - A 36-mile extension of light rail north, east and south of Seattle.
 - Four new Sounder round trips between Tacoma and Seattle.
 - 100,000 more hours of ST Express bus service.
- Funding plan approved by voters
 - An additional 0.5% sales and use tax (0.9% total)
 - Taxes took effect April 1, 2009

SOUND TRANSIT'S CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Link light rail

- Sound Transit currently operates a 15.6-mile line from downtown Seattle to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. The initial section opened in July 2009 and terminated at South 154th Street in Tukwila. In December 2009 the line was completed to Sea-Tac.
- In 2003 Sound Transit launched the 1.6-mile Tacoma Link light rail line connecting the Tacoma Dome district and its regional transit hub with downtown Tacoma. Options are currently being reviewed for expanding Tacoma Link under a partnership partially funded by the Sound Transit 2 ballot measure.
- Sound Transit is currently building a 3.1-mile underground extension of the Central Link system to Seattle's Capitol Hill and University of Washington areas. The project is on schedule to open in 2016.
- The 2008 Sound Transit 2 ballot measure approved 36 miles of additional light rail extensions. Sound Transit is currently working to extend service northward to Northgate, Shoreline, Mountlake Terrace and Lynnwood; eastward to Mercer Island, Bellevue and Redmond's Overlake area; and southward to South 200th Street and Kent/Des Moines. Major design work is moving forward in all three corridors toward completing projects by 2023. Sound Transit broke ground on the Northgate extension in 2012 and in 2013 will break ground on extending service to South 200th Street.

Souder commuter rail

- Souder commuter trains operate on more than 82 miles of primarily BNSF-owned track between Lakewood and Everett.
- Souder South service between Tacoma and Seattle began in the fall of 2000, serving intermediate stations at Puyallup, Sumner, Auburn, Kent and Tukwila. In October 2012 service expanded to South Tacoma and Lakewood. In the coming years, service will expand from 18 to 26 daily trips under funding approved by voters in 2008.
- Souder North service began in 2003 between Everett, Edmonds and Seattle and expanded to Mukilteo in 2008.

ST Express regional buses

- Sound Transit offers 25 ST Express regional bus routes serving King, Pierce and Snohomish counties.
- Sound Transit has completed numerous transit center and park-and-ride facilities around the region and worked with WSDOT to complete HOV lane direct access ramps that facilitate transit service.

JURISDICTION:

Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID)

RCW:

Chapter 36.120 RCW

BACKGROUND

- The King, Pierce and Snohomish county area, or each county individually, may form a special district to plan and finance certain highway improvements.
- The RTID would be a separate legal entity.
- The district is formed by vote of county councils of multiple contiguous counties, or by a single county, which then must be approved by voters living within the affected area.
- Authorized in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties only, and may include multiple contiguous counties, or a single county. The district is encouraged to include at least the portion of each member county located within a regional transit authority serving that county.

FORMATION

- Planning Committee formation required by the county councils proposing a RTID. The committee membership is comprised of county council members of each county proposing a RTID. Decisions are made by 60% majority vote based on proportional representation. Secretary of Transportation serves as non-voting member. Seven-member executive board. Planning Committee may dissolve with two-thirds weighted vote of the total Planning Committee membership.
- Planning Committee develops plan for improvements and submits plan to county councils. If a county opts not to participate in the district, but two contiguous counties do proceed, plan is redefined and submitted back to participating counties. If counties adopt plan, plan is submitted to voters.
- If RTID approved by voters, the governing board is comprised of county council members of member counties.
- In 2007, the plan developed by the then-existing Planning Committee was required to go on the November 2007 General Election ballot, along with a Sound Transit Phase II proposal, as a single ballot question. The voters rejected this joint proposal, therefore the proposed RTID was not formed.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Capital improvements to highway of statewide significance (HSS) that adds a lane or new lanes, or repairs or replaces a lane or lanes damaged by the 2001 earthquake;
- Capital improvements to all or portions of a HSS including an extension, and may include certain multi-modal capital improvements including approaches, HOV lanes, flyover ramps, park and ride lots, bus pullouts, vanpool vans, buses, and transportation system management improvements;
- Up to 10% of funds may be for capital improvements to all or portions of a city street, county road or existing highway or new highway that intersects with an HSS if: (1) the project is included in a plan that adds capacity to a HSS; (2) the DOT Secretary finds that the project would better relieve congestion than the same expenditure on the HSS; (3) 15% of the cost is paid by the local jurisdiction; (4) the RTID contribution does not exceed \$1 Billion; and (5) the improvements are included in the plan submitted to voters.
- No funds may be used for operation, preservation or maintenance of the facility except for toll facilities where tolls have been pledged to finance facilities and for traffic mitigation during construction for projects in the investment plan.

JURISDICTION: **Regional Transportation Planning Organizations**

REQUIRED BY: Chapter [47.80 RCW](#) and chapter [468-86 WAC](#)

BACKGROUND

- In order to ensure local and regional land use and transportation coordination, cities and counties are authorized to create Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs).
- The RTPO transportation planning mechanism is available to all counties and cities statewide. In contrast, Metropolitan Planning Organizations are only formed in urbanized areas. In urbanized areas, RTPOs and MPOs are integrated in the same organization.
- RTPOs are formed through the voluntary association of local governments within a county or within geographically contiguous counties. Each organization must meet the following criteria:
 - Encompass at least one complete county.
 - Have a population of at least 100,000 or contain a minimum of three counties.
 - Have as members all counties within the region, and at least 60% of the cities and towns within the region, representing a minimum of 75% of the cities' and towns' populations.
- RTPOs invite tribal nations to participate in their transportation planning process.
- Once formed, a lead planning agency must be designated to coordinate preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan and carry out the other responsibilities of the RTPO. (One RTPO, QuadCo, rotates this responsibility among the four member counties.)
- In urbanized areas, the lead planning agency for the RTPO is the same as for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated for federal transportation planning purposes (RCW 47.80.020). The exception is Lewis-Calk Valley MPO because it is a bi-state organization.
- RTPOs must have a policy board with representatives from major employers, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), transit districts, ports, and member counties and cities. Under RCW 47.80.040, any members of the House of Representatives or the state Senate that have at least some of the RTPO area as part of their legislative district are *ex officio*, nonvoting policy board members.
- Fourteen RTPOs have been formed, including 38 of 39 counties (San Juan County has not yet chosen to become part of an RTPO).

PROGRAM

- Establish guidelines and principles pursuant RCW 47.80.026 that provide specific direction for the development and evaluation of the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans.
- Prepare and periodically update a transportation strategy for the region.
- Prepare a Regional Transportation Plan as set forth in RCW 47.80.030 that is consistent with applicable countywide planning policies for those counties fully planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) (RCW 36.70A).
- Certify that the transportation elements of comprehensive plans adopted by counties, cities, and towns within the region reflect the guidelines and principles developed by the RTPO and are consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan.
- Where appropriate, certify that countywide planning policies are consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan.

- Develop a six-year regional transportation improvement program in cooperation with WSDOT, operators of public transportation services, and local governments in the region.
- Certify that the six-year capital facility plans (RCW 36.70A.070) developed by cities and counties for street and road improvements and six-year capital and service improvement plans developed by transit agencies are consistent with the regional transportation plan.
- Review level of service methodologies used by cities and counties planning under the GMA to promote a consistent regional evaluation of transportation facilities and corridors. Work with cities, counties, transit agencies, WSDOT, and others to develop level of service standards or alternative measures (RCW 47.80.023).
- Review the regional transportation plan biennially for currency and send documentation of the review to WSDOT.
- WSDOT's Transportation Planning Office has the following responsibilities:
 - Establish minimum standards for regional transportation plans. (These standards are provided by WAC 468-86; further requirements of regional transportation plans are defined by the GMA, RCW 36.70A.)
 - Facilitate coordination among RTPOs.
 - Provide general administrative oversight.
 - Identify and jointly plan improvements and strategies within corridors providing regional or statewide movement of people and goods, through the regional planning process and state planning efforts (per RCW 47.01.071).
- WSDOT's Highways and Local Programs Office administers project funds and ensures expenditures meet applicable requirements.

FUNDING

RTPO funding for planning activities is allocated by WSDOT according to [RCW 47.80.050](#). RTPOs do not receive federal money. The 2011-13 biennial transportation budget appropriated \$4.4 million for the RTPO program. This appropriation was distributed, as agreed to among the WSDOT and RTPOs, in two parts:

- \$2.4 million was distributed among the RTPOs for regional transportation planning. Each RTPO received \$15,000 for each county within the RTPO. The remaining funds were distributed based on population.
- \$2 million was distributed among the RTPOs for participation in statewide long-range transportation planning. Each RTPO received an annual allotment portion dependent upon its federally classified type:
 - Transportation Management Areas (200,000 population) received \$50,000,
 - MPOs between 50,000 and 199,999 population received \$30,000, and
 - Non-metropolitan RTPOs received \$10,000
 - The remainder was distributed on a per-capita basis

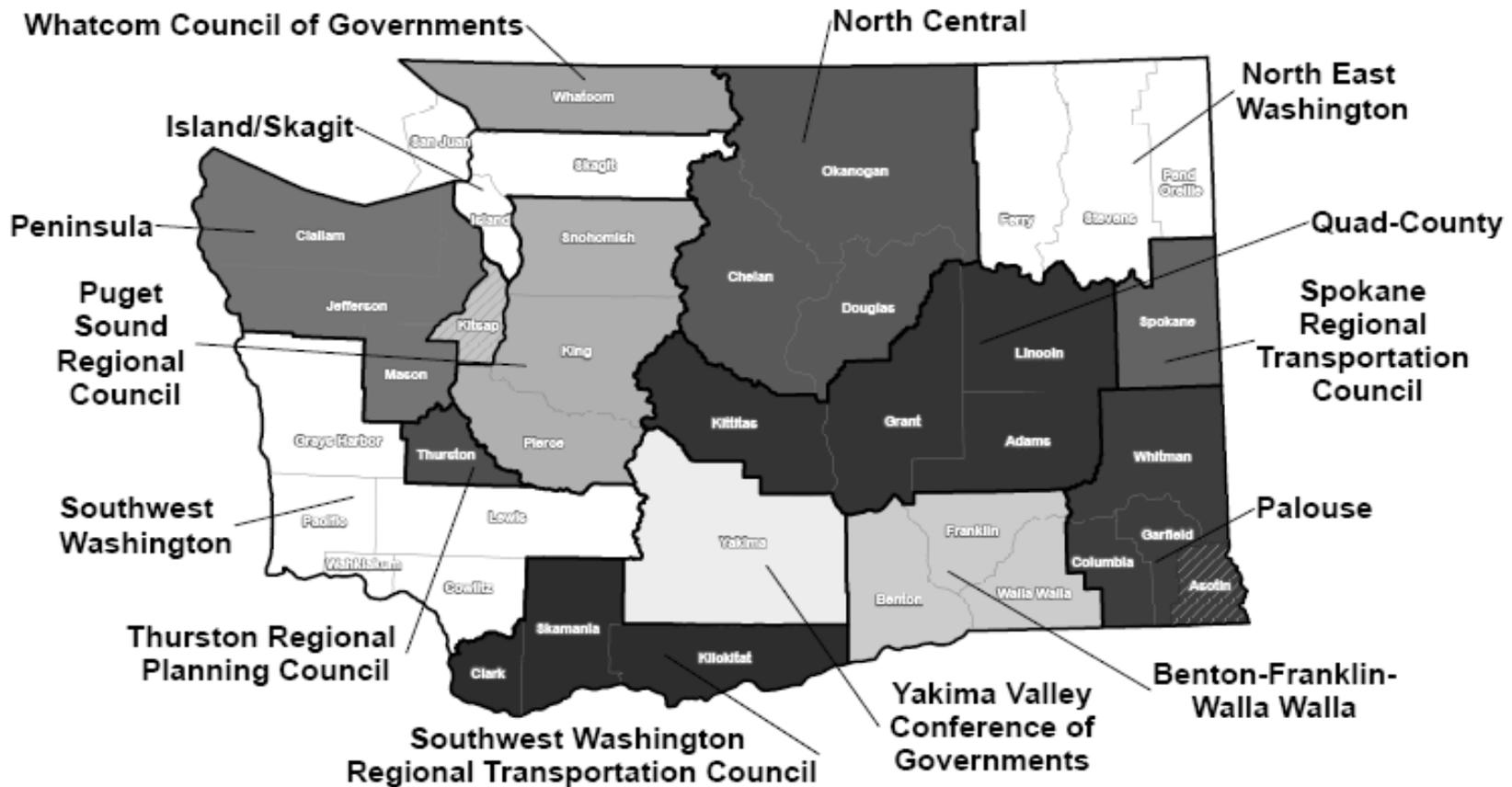
ON THE WEB

[WSDOT webpage: What is an RTPO?](#)

[MPO/RTPO Directory](#)

[Map of RTPOs and MPOs](#)

Regional Transportation Planning Organizations



Asotin County is an adjunct member of the Palouse RTPO
 Kitsap County is in both Peninsula and Puget Sound Regional Council
 San Juan County is not a member of any RTPO

 Washington State Counties
 RTPO Boundaries

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JURISDICTION: **Transportation Benefit Districts (TBD)**

RCW: 36.73

BACKGROUND

- Cities and counties may establish TBDs to fund capital improvements and operation of city streets, county roads and state highways, high capacity transportation systems, public transportation, and other transportation programs of regional or statewide significance including transportation demand management.
- In addition to individual city/county TBDs, counties or cities may create a multi-jurisdiction TBD through interlocal agreement. The areas may include multiple jurisdictions, including all or portions of cities, counties, transit districts, or port districts, with the approval of those agencies.
- Creation of the district requires a public hearing and a finding of public interest for formation.
- The governing body of a TBD is the legislative authority of the city or county creating the district, acting in an ex-officio and independent capacity. A multi-jurisdiction district must have at least a five member governing body, with at least one member from each participating jurisdiction. Alternatively, under certain circumstances, a multi-jurisdiction district may be governed by the metropolitan planning organization serving the district.
- Ownership of the facilities revert to appropriate jurisdictions after improvements are made.

FUNDING

- Single-year, voter-approved excess property tax levies
- Multi-year, voter-approved excess property tax levies for bond redemption
- General obligation bonds and revenue bonds
- A voter-approved sales tax of up to 0.2%, which may not exceed a ten-year period without voter reauthorization (unless the revenues are dedicated to the repayment of debt, such as general obligation bonds, in which case the sales tax may exceed a ten-year period)
- A *voter-approved annual motor vehicle fee of up to \$100 (*except for passenger- only ferry transportation improvements, up to \$20 may be imposed without voter approval if imposed in a jurisdiction-wide TBD)
- With voter approval, vehicle tolling; however, tolls on state routes must be administered by WSDOT. All tolls potentially impacting state facilities must be approved by the state Transportation Commission.
- Local Improvement District formation
- Border area motor fuel/special fuel excise tax (only for a district that has an international border crossing within its boundaries)
- Commercial and industrial development fees related to transportation projects
- Acceptance of gifts, grants, and donations

(See the *Local Taxes* section, page 111 of this manual for information on *Local Option Taxes*.)

JURISDICTION: **City Transportation Authority (Monorail Transportation)**

RCW: Chapter 35.95A RCW

BACKGROUND

- Separate municipal corporation created to provide a public monorail function
- Formed in a city with a population greater than 300,000 in one of two ways:
 - By an ordinance proposed by the city council, which is then approved by a majority vote of city voters; or
 - By a petition submitted by 1% of the qualified city voters of the city , which is then approved by a majority vote of city voters
- Boundaries are designated by the ordinance creating the authority and do not have to be citywide

FUNDING

- Taxes (must be voter-approved)
 - Motor vehicle excise tax - up to 2.5% (excludes new vehicles)
 - Sales and use tax on retail car rentals – up to 1.944%
 - Vehicle fee upon vehicle re-licensing – up to \$100
- Other revenue sources: fares, excess levies on property, general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, regular property taxes (up to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value)

APPROVAL OF SEATTLE POPULAR MONORAIL AUTHORITY (formally City Transportation Authority - CTA)

- Vote in November 2002 within the City of Seattle approved the creation of the CTA, the plan to build the green line, and funding. The vote passed by 50.23%.
- The Seattle Popular Monorail Authority plan approved by voters included the following:
 - An initial 14-mile monorail line from Ballard and West Seattle to downtown Seattle. Service was expected to begin in December 2007
 - Four additional lines were planned to be proposed totaling 44 miles
 - Initiative 83, the monorail recall, was defeated by voters in November 2004
- Funding plan approved by Seattle voters
 - 1.4% motor vehicle excise tax on vehicle re-licensing
 - Collection of the motor vehicle excise tax began in June 2003 and was set at 0.85% for the initial planning year. The full 1.4% began being assessed on vehicles with renewal dates of June 1, 2004, and later (now repealed).

TERMINATION OF SEATTLE POPULAR MONORAIL AUTHORITY (formally City Transportation Authority - CTA)

- Vote in November 2005 within the City of Seattle rejected a shortened monorail project and funding for it. The vote passed by more than 60.0%.
- Provisions of the ballot measure required termination of the Seattle Popular Monorail project and dissolution of the Authority after payment of outstanding debt.
- Collection of the motor vehicle excise tax was terminated as of August 1, 2006.

