
Passenger Modes

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Passenger Vehicles

BACKGROUND

- In FY 2012, there were approximately 5.2 million licensed drivers in Washington state.
- In FY 2012, there were approximately 4.4 million passenger vehicles registered.
- For FY 2012, gasoline consumption was 2,663 million gallons, a decline of 0.9% from FY 2011. Gasoline consumption rates are forecasted to continue a slightly downward trend reflecting the increasing fuel efficiency of vehicles.
- For FY 2012, diesel consumption was 647 million gallons, a 2.5% decline from FY 2011. Recent declines in diesel consumption reflect general business conditions.

GOVERNANCE

- The Department of Licensing administers laws related to the licensing and regulating of vehicles (Title 46 RCW)
- The Washington State Patrol provides traffic law enforcement; investigates auto theft, license fraud, and traffic collisions (RCW 43.43)
- The Traffic Safety Commission coordinates and promotes traffic safety and education programs at the state and local level (RCW 43.59)

FUNDING

- Passenger vehicle owners contribute to maintaining state roads and highways through user fees.
 - Motor vehicle fuel tax (RCW 82.36)
 - Special fuel tax (RCW 82.38)
 - Vehicle licensing/registration fees (RCW 46.17.350)
 - Vehicle weight fees (RCW 46.17.355 and 46.17.365)

OTHER RELEVANT STATUTES

- Transportation demand management (RCW 70.94.521 - 70.94.551)
- HOV lanes (RCW 46.61.165)
- Rules of the road (RCW 46.61)

Roadways (State Highways, County Roads, City Streets)

BACKGROUND

- Washington State roadways consist of 83,380 centerline miles of highways, roads, and streets
 - 7,056 miles of state highways
 - 39,544 miles of county roads
 - 18,243 miles of city streets
 - 18,900 miles of other roadways, including State Park, National Park, Indian Reservation, and U.S. Forest
- Annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on the state's system of roadways totaled approximately 57 billion miles during 2011. Since 2000, the annual VMT averages have been essentially flat with only small increases or decreases of < 1% annually.
- State highways carry 55% of VMT, while county roads carry 16%, city streets 27%, and other roadways 2%.
- Washington's 764 miles of Interstate highways account for only 1% of roadway miles, but carry 27% of annual VMT.
- The National Highway System (NHS), designated by federal law, provides an interconnected system of principal arterials and other highways that serve major population centers, international border crossings, ports, airports, public and intermodal transportation facilities, and other major travel destinations; meet national defense needs; and serve interstate and interregional travel. Under MAP-21, the NHS was expanded to include more local roadways. In Washington consists of 4,576 miles of roadway, of which 78% is state and 22% local roadway.
- The Freight and Goods Transportation System of state highways and local roadways is classified according to the level of freight traffic using the route.
- The Scenic and Recreational Highway System comprises state highways that have exceptional scenic qualities and recreational opportunities along them; they are designated by the Washington State Transportation Commission and identified as State Scenic Byways.

GOVERNANCE

- State Highways
 - Owned and operated by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).
 - WSDOT is a cabinet agency and is managed directly by the Secretary of Transportation, subject to the oversight of the Governor.
- County Roads
 - Each of the 39 counties is responsible for construction, maintenance, and management of the roads and bridges under its jurisdiction.
 - Six-year construction plans must be adopted before January 1 of each year and submitted to WSDOT and the County Road Administration Board (CRAB).
 - Six-year plans pertaining to arterial road construction in urban areas of the county must be submitted to the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) every two years.
 - CRAB sets engineering standards and provides oversight for the county road departments in each county.

- City Streets
 - Each of the 281 incorporated cities is responsible for construction, maintenance, and management of the streets and bridges under its jurisdiction.
 - Six-year construction plans must be adopted before July 1 of each year and submitted to WSDOT.
 - Six-year plans pertaining to arterial street construction in urban areas of the city must be submitted to the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) every two years.

FUNDING

- State Highways
 - 24.46 cents per gallon Motor Fuel Tax (plus Ferries receives 1.08 cents)
 - Motor vehicle licenses, permits, and fees
 - Federal highway grants
 - Bond issue proceeds
- County Roads
 - 4.92 cents per gallon Motor Fuel Tax
 - State grants from CRAB, TIB, and FMSIB
 - Dedicated county road property tax levy
 - Local funds appropriated for use on county roads
 - Bond issues for county road purposes
 - Transportation local option taxes (see *Local Taxes*)
 - Federal aid grants
- City Streets
 - 2.96 cents per gallon Motor Fuel Tax
 - State grants from TIB and FMSIB
 - Local funds appropriated for use on city streets
 - Bond issues for city street purposes
 - Transportation local option taxes (see *Local Taxes*)
 - Federal-aid grants

OTHER RELEVANT STATUTES

- [RCW Title 47](#) encompasses the majority of laws pertaining to public highways and transportation.
- Chapter 46.61 RCW governs the Rules of the Road.
- Gasoline Tax Funds (RCW [46.68.080–110](#), [82.36.025](#))
- Local Option Transportation Taxes (RCW [81.100.030](#), [81.104.160](#), [82.47.020](#), [82.80.010–050](#))
- Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, and Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) provided authorizations for federal-aid to highway programs for Federal Fiscal Year 2004 through September 30, 2009. There were several continuing resolutions to continue SAFETEA-LU funding at various levels through September 30, 2012.
- Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) is the current transportation and highways funding authorization program that took effect on October 1, 2012 and is effective until September 30, 2014.

Ferries

BACKGROUND

- The Department of Transportation, Washington State Ferries (WSF) is the nation's largest ferry system.
 - Washington State's largest tourist attraction
 - Links urban areas on the east side of Puget Sound and communities on the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas
 - Links San Juan Islands and Vashon Island with mainland
 - Links Washington State with Canada through Sidney route
- Ferries are also operated by private businesses and counties.

GOVERNANCE

State Ferries

- Operated by the WSDOT – Washington State Ferries.
- System includes 23 vessels providing service on 9 routes to 20 terminals; in 2011 ferries carried 22.2 million riders and 9.9 million vehicles.
- Current WSF vessel fleet consists of 9 vessel types: Jumbo Mark II Class (3), Jumbo Class (2), Super Class (4), Issaquah Class (1), Issaquah 130 Class (5), Evergreen State Class (3), Kwa-di-Tabil (3), Rhododendron and Hiyu (1 each). A new class, the Olympic class, is under construction and two vessels will be delivered by 2014.
- WSF currently serves 20 terminals in 8 counties and British Columbia. WSF owns 14 of the terminals and 6 others are leased.
- Chapter 47.60 RCW provides general ferry operating authority
- Some powers and duties of WSDOT relative to the ferry system may also be found in Chapter 47.56 RCW (Toll bridges, Tunnels and Ferries)
- Chapter 47.64 RCW governs marine labor relations

County Ferries

- Five counties currently operate public ferries:
 - Pierce, Whatcom, Skagit, King, and Wahkiakum counties
 - Largely funded with county road funds (property taxes).
 - Wahkiakum receives state support (RCW 47.56.720)

Private Ferry Operations

- There are 8 private ferry operations regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Chapter 81.84 RCW)

Other Ferry Operations

- The Colville Indian Tribe provides a toll-free crossing of Lake Roosevelt (Columbia River)
- The Alaska Marine Highway (between Bellingham, Washington and Skagway, Alaska)
- WSDOT Eastern Region maintains and operates the Keller Ferry on SR 21 in Eastern Washington.

FUNDING

- State Ferries
 - Dedicated Motor fuel tax distribution for ferry operations (0.54 cents of 23-cent dedicated gas tax) (RCW 46.68.090 (c))
 - Dedicated Motor fuel tax distribution for ferry capital construction (0.55 cents of 23-cent dedicated gas tax) (RCW 46.68.090 (d))
 - Motor fuel tax transfers from the Motor Vehicle Account
 - Combined licensing fee (1.661% of collections)
 - Ferry fares, concessions, and rent
 - Federal Ferry Boat and Terminals Construction Program
 - Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant programs—Section 5309 and Section 5307
 - Federal Surface Transportation Program
 - Federal Homeland Security grant funds from the Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP) and the Transit Security Administration (TSA)
 - Bond proceeds

- County Ferry Districts and PTBA Ferry Operations (*See Local Taxes, page 111*)

OTHER RESOURCES

WSF website: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/>

History of WSF: [Historylink article for the Seattle Times, June 1, 2001.](#)

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

BACKGROUND

Transportation demand management (TDM) strategies are ways of addressing transportation system congestion and efficiency problems from the demand side. Demand-side strategies for travel focus on the movement of people and goods and contrast with supply-side strategies, which focus on the provision of additional infrastructure, such as additional lane miles. Demand-side strategies are ones that utilize an array of modal options, such as carpooling, bicycling, transit and others, in addition to single occupant vehicle use. In addition, strategies offer options for changing the time of travel departure and routes to be taken and for providing additional information (real-time, in many cases) about traveling options. It should be noted that both supply-side and demand-side strategies are useful and necessary to optimize travel for people and businesses.

In its "Moving Washington" initiative, WSDOT has adopted an approach to addressing congesting which incorporates the principles of TDM. Under this initiative, transportation solutions result from an evaluation of the most cost-beneficial approach: adding capacity, managing demand, or enhancing operational efficiency.

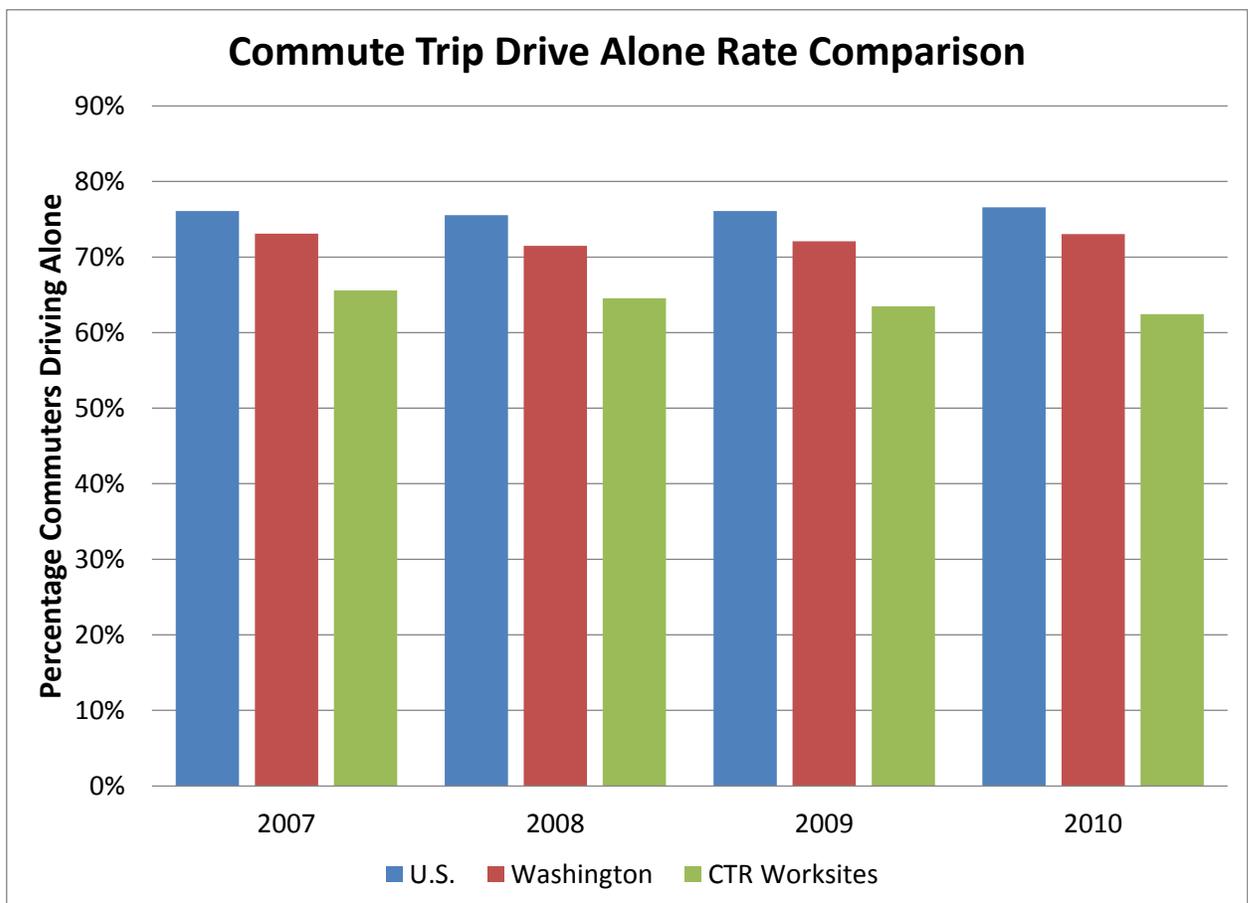


The use of TDM by governments, businesses, and individuals became more prolific and mainstream beginning in the 1970s and has continued to gain acceptance as an effective congestion reduction strategy. In the latter part of the twentieth century, much of the focus was on programs to induce behavior that would increase the number of persons riding in vehicles during rush hour, thus reducing the number of single-occupant commuters. Examples of such a program are the state's commute trip reduction (CTR) program and the provision of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) facilities. More recently, however, the use of TDM strategies has broadened to include ways to more efficiently use the transportation system in general, such as through the provision of round-the-clock information about alternate routes of travel and the encouragement of use of the system outside peak periods.

The following describes several TDM programs and strategies used in Washington.

- *Commute Trip Reduction.* In 1991 the Washington State Legislature passed the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Law for the purpose of reducing air pollution, traffic congestion, and energy consumption through employer-based programs that decrease the number of commute trips made in single occupant vehicles (SOVs). The state policy targets large agencies and businesses (with at least 100 employees) and each participating employer is required to establish a program for reducing SOV trips as well as the vehicle miles of travel, generally, during peak commuting periods. For more information on the Commute Trip Reduction program, see the [2011 CTR Board Report](#).
- The hallmarks of many CTR programs include carpools and vanpools, in addition to transit, to help reduce SOV trips. In addition, the state provided private employers and some public utilities a tax credit for certain amounts provided to employees for the purposes of carpooling, vanpooling, or transit. And while not a direct aspect of the responses to the CTR law, state and local governments have added various facilities over the years, such as park and ride lots, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and enhanced transit centers in order to facilitate commuters and others pursuing alternate modes of travel.

- The CTR program was modified by the Legislature in 2006 to focus the reduction of commute trips as one solution to highway congestion mitigation and integrate CTR as a strategy in local and regional economic development and transportation plans. One of the goals established in the 2006 legislative changes is to reduce the drive-alone rate by 10 percent and vehicle miles of travel (VMT) per employee by 13 percent between 2007 and 2012. An interim survey shows two years after the baseline survey in 2007-08, CTR worksites achieved reductions of about 4.8 percent in the drive-alone rate and of about 5.6 percent in VMT per employee. Also created in the 2006 CTR legislation was a program to focus on TDM strategies for smaller employers and individual citizens, known as the Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC) program. The GTEC program is currently unfunded.

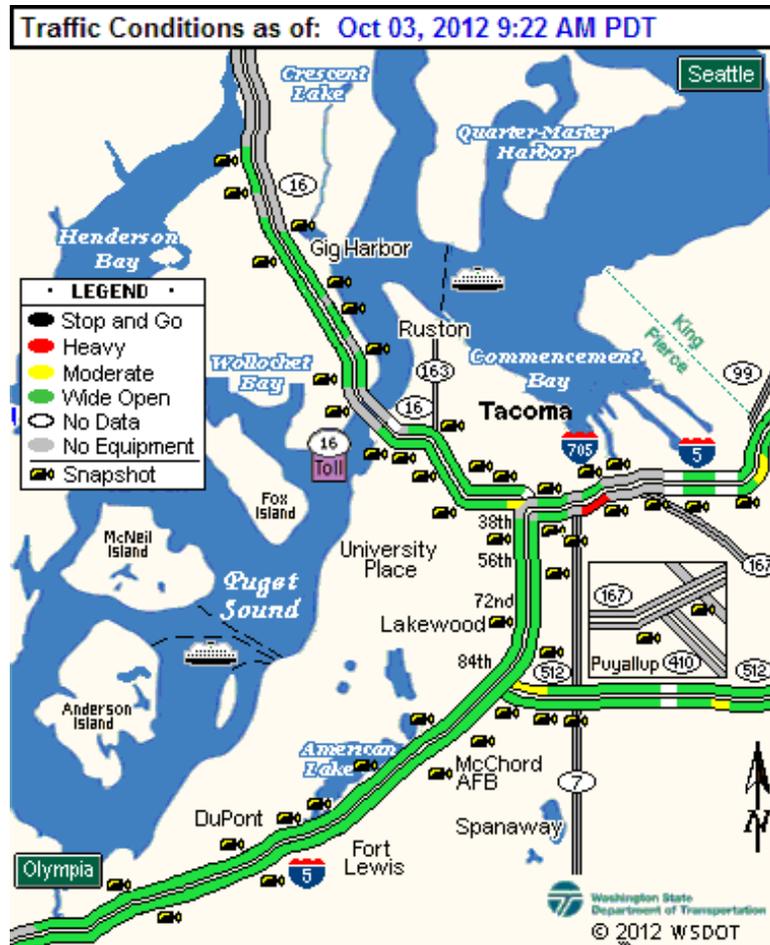


Source: WSDOT, data compiled for the 2011 CTR Board report.

- *Transit Pass Programs.* These programs offer discounted transit fares to certain users for certain time periods. In particular, some transit agencies have teamed with universities and large employers to provide transit passes. One example is Spokane Transit Authority's Employer-Sponsored Bus Pass Program. In this program, the Transit Authority will sell monthly passes to the company or organization at a discount of \$3.00 per pass provided that the company or organization agrees to pass that savings on to the employees and offer an additional discount of not less than \$3.00 per pass. Another example is the U-PASS program through the University of Washington, available to students, faculty and staff. The U-PASS program provides unlimited rides on King County Metro, Community Transit, Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, Kitsap Transit or Everett Transit bus services, Sound Transit's Link light rail and Sounder commuter trains and paratransit bus services; vanpool subsidies; and discounted annual fees for Zipcar, a shared vehicle service.
- *Shared vehicle services.* Shared vehicle services provide a flexible option to travelers who rely primarily on non-motorized and public transit travel, yet at times require a vehicle for special trips, such as grocery shopping or trips to rural areas. An example of such a service is Zipcar, which offers a network of vehicles to users who pay a membership fee and an hourly or daily rate, depending on the user's plan preference. Such services, while similar to car rental services, are marketed to be more accessible both in proximity and around the clock and flexible.
- *Guaranteed Ride Home.* Guaranteed ride home programs provide rides home for participants who, for unplanned reasons, are unable to make connections to normal transit services after leaving work. C-TRAN in Clark County participates in a program called "Emergency Ride Home," in which participants in vanpools are eligible for a free taxi ride home if an emergency occurs while at work, with the cost covered by the employer or C-TRAN.
- *Worksite Flextime and Telecommuting.* Many employers, public and private, offer flexible schedules to accommodate employees' personal preferences for managing their commuting needs. In some cases, the employer may allow different starting and ending times for the work days. Some employers allow employees to work from home for part of the work week. In part, these accommodations allow commuting flexibility to get around peak time congestion. It also allows employees to make fewer trips each week to work, if compressed schedules or telecommuting is offered.
- *Congestion/Variable Pricing.* For tolled facilities, this strategy involves variable charges based on levels of congestion and/or time of day and can be charged over a wide area or a single corridor. In addition, technology has automated the collection of such charges, eliminating delays related to queuing up at a toll booth. In Washington, such a system has been deployed on State Route 520 on the Evergreen Point Floating bridge. At peak times, motorists pay as much as \$3.59 to cross the bridge, while between 11pm and 5am there is no charge. Payment is conducted electronically using transponders or by license plate recognition and prepaid accounts or pay-by-mail.



- *Real-time Traffic Information.* WSDOT, the City of Seattle, and various third-party providers offer tools that allow the traveler real-time access to traffic information. Traffic information includes travel times, maps that show relative congestion levels along major routes, and camera still-shots and video of actual road conditions. The City of Seattle traffic information also includes information about major events, such as football, baseball, and soccer games, that may create traffic issues. More complete information is available via the web, television news and smart phone applications, while more limited information is available via call (511 system) and highway signage.



- *Transit-Oriented Development.* King County has maintained a transit-oriented development (TOD) program since 1998. According to the program's web site, "A TOD is a private or public/private real estate development project that creates, expands, maintains or preserves a mixed-use community or neighborhood within walking distance of a transit center." Transit-oriented development policies are largely a function of local comprehensive planning policies and rules.

GOVERNANCE

The state policies governing transportation demand management in the state and local government and private sector, and specifically commute trip reduction, are found in RCW 70.94.521 through 70.94.555. For more information, see the Tolling section on page 283 of this manual.

State. The state, through the Commute Trip Reduction Board appointed by the Governor and staffed by WSDOT, is responsible for developing the guidelines to implement the CTR law, under RCW 70.94.551. The Board also reviews and approves local and regional CTR programs and is also responsible for the development of a Joint comprehensive commute trip reduction plan for all state agencies. The state, through Legislative budgeting priorities and the WSDOT public transportation division, has established vanpool and regional mobility grant programs to support TDM options. In addition, the WSDOT Traffic Operations program provides support for several TDM approaches, including active traffic management and the provision of real-time traffic data. The WSDOT tolling division is implementing variable pricing on the SR 520 corridor in support of the financing for the replacement of the floating bridge.

Local Governments. Transit agencies have led the development and implementation of a number of TDM strategies, including pass programs, guaranteed ride home programs, web-based route planning, and TOD. Regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs), and the cities and counties that they represent, have been required under federal transportation authorization bills to develop short-term and long-range transportation plans that, in part, rely on various TDM strategies to help address urban congestion issues.

FUNDING

For the CTR program, \$6.3 million in funding was provided through the WSDOT/Public Transportation program budget in 2011-13. Of this amount, \$3.9 million was allotted for grants to local governments for technical assistance to employers. The remaining \$1.8 million was allotted for overall program technical assistance, measurement, and evaluation by WSDOT.

In addition, \$452,000 from the State Parking Account was provided for limited technical assistance and services to state agencies. Such services include the State Agency Rider (STAR) transit pass and the Emergency Ride Home program. Other state agency CTR efforts are funded directly by those agencies.

For private employers and for utilities, \$5.5 million in tax credits were authorized for payments made by employers to employees for the purposes of reducing SOV trips. On the private sector side, it is estimated that for their part employers invested \$45 million directly in CTR programs in 2006.

For the support of vanpools, \$7 million was authorized to purchase additional vans to support local programs.

Buses

BACKGROUND

- Bus service is the principle public transportation service provided by most transit systems in the state. Transit systems may provide an array of services that include routed bus services, route deviated services (fixed routes with some custom services), light and commuter rail services, ferry services, paratransit specialized services (often referred to as demand response or "Dial-a-Ride"), and vanpooling/ carpooling coordination. The figures presented below address only the bus service provided by those systems.
- In 2010 the public transit systems in Washington provided the following services:

(in millions)

<u>Service Type</u>	<u>Revenue Vehicle Hours</u>	<u>Revenue Vehicle Miles</u>	<u>Passenger Trips</u>
Fixed Route	6.5	90.1	187.9
Route Deviated	0.15	3.1	1.3
Demand Response	1.9	28.8	4.7
Vanpool	0.9	35.5	7.8

- The majority of the public transit buses that are operated in Washington state use diesel fuel. In 2010, public transit agencies used 24.5 million gallons of diesel, 4.0 million gallons of gasoline, 3.2million therms of compressed natural gas, and consumed 18.3 million kilo watt hours of electricity to operate the fixed route, route deviated, and demand response services, and vanpools.
- Bus-rapid transit (BRT) is a type of high-capacity bus service, which adopts many features of rail rapid transit, seeking to achieve faster, more frequent service than traditional bus service. BRT may operate in its own right-of-way, have shorter headways, and longer stop spacing than traditional bus service. In practice, BRT systems around the world may adopt all or only some of these features.
- In the Central Puget Sound region, Community Transit operates the Swift service, on a 16.7 mile line on SR 99 connecting the Aurora Village Transit Center and downtown Everett. King County Metro operates the Rapid Ride express bus network, which adopts some BRT features. Four lines are currently in operation. The Rapid Ride service includes BRT features such as frequent headways during peak commuting hours, low-floor articulated buses, real-time bus arrival information signs, and longer stop spacing.

GOVERNANCE

- Currently there are 31 operating public transit agencies in Washington State that provide bus service.
- Public transit is provided by counties, public transportation benefit authorities (PTBA), county transportation authorities (CTA), unincorporated public transportation benefit authorities, regional transit authorities, or cities. For a complete description of the governance models authorized for transit agencies, *see the Local/Regional Jurisdictions chapter, page 395.*
- Intercity public transportation is also provided by private operators. Washington State sponsors intercity bus services in areas where there has been a deficiency identified. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides 50 percent of the funds for the program. Greyhound Bus Lines provides local matching funds that pay the other 50 percent.

- For more information regarding WSDOT's Intercity Bus program check the web site at: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/intercity>
- Four new lines of intercity bus services currently operate within Washington State.
 - Travel Washington: Grape Line between Walla Walla and Pasco
 - Travel Washington: Apple Line between Omak and Wenatchee and Ellensburg
 - Travel Washington: Dungeness Line between Port Angeles and Seattle and SeaTac
 - Travel Washington: Gold Line between Kettle Falls and Spokane

FUNDING

- Public transit agencies are primarily funded through voter-approved local sales tax (RCW [35.95.040](#), and [82.14.045](#)). Due to the economic recession, public transit agencies began to see a slowdown in the sales tax collection in 2008. In 2009 and 2010, six transit agencies were able to get voter approval to raise their local sales tax rate. Sales tax contributed \$1,288 million to public transit representing 70% of their operating revenue.
- In 2010 public transit agencies collected \$244.3 million in fare revenues. The majority of this revenue, \$202 million, was collected from users of fixed-route bus service.
- The 2010 average farebox recovery rate (the percent of annual operating costs recovered by passenger fares) for fixed-route service offered by public transit agencies was 22.8%.
- In 2010 Washington public transit agencies received \$139.7 million in federal operating and preventative maintenance grants and \$225.2 million in federal capital grants.
- As described above, the Travel Washington Intercity Bus program is funded in part by the FTA. The FTA 5311 Non-Urban Program requires states to set-aside 15% of their federal transit apportionment to support intercity bus service. The federal grant funds require a 50% local match for operating assistance. WSDOT has been granted FTA authority to use the private investment in the intercity system (primarily from Greyhound) as the required match, and therefore is supporting the four Travel Washington routes with only federal funds. The private contractors are allowed to keep fares and fees.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

- As a condition of receiving state funding, public transit agencies are required to submit an asset management plan to the Washington State Department of Transportation. The plan must include an inventory of all transportation system assets, and a preservation plan based on lowest life cycle cost methodologies. This requirement applies to Washington State transit systems established under the following sections of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW):
 - RCW [35.84.060](#) – City Transit Systems (defined in RCW [47.04.082](#))
 - RCW [36.56](#) – County that has assumed the functions of a metropolitan transportation system (King County)
 - RCW [36.57A](#) – Public Transportation Benefit Areas (PTBAs)
 - RCW [81.112](#) – Regional Transportation Authorities

OTHER RELEVANT STATUTES

- Maximum weight (RCW [46.44](#))
- Bus use of HOV lanes (RCW [46.61.165](#))
- Yield the right-of-way (RCW [46.61.220](#))

Minimum Service-Life Categories for Buses and Vans

Category	Typical Characteristics		Minimum Life Whichever Comes First		Example
	Length	Approx. GVW	Years	Miles	
Heavy-Duty Large Bus	35 to 48 ft and 60 ft articulated	33,000 to 40,000	12	500,000	
Heavy-Duty Small Bus	28 to 35 ft	26,000 to 33,000	10	350,000	
Medium-Duty Bus and Truck Chassis-Built Cutaway	< 35 ft	16,000 to 26,000	7	200,000	
Light-Duty Mid-Sized Bus or Van Chassis-Built Cutaway	20 to 35 ft	10,000 to 16,000	5	150,000	
Light-Duty Small Van Chassis-Built Cutaways, and Van**	< 20 ft	6,000 to 14,000	4	100,000	
Specialty Vehicle not fitting in the above categories	Variable	Variable	Negotiable	Negotiable	

****Vans purchased through the Vanpool Investment Program – Useful life for those vehicles is determined to be four years provided that the required match has been satisfied during that period. However, WSDOT may retain legal ownership for up to five years or until the match is met (whichever is longer).**

Special Needs Transportation

BACKGROUND

- RCW 81.66.010 defines persons with special transportation needs as "people, including their attendants, who are unable, because of a physical or mental disability, income status, or age, to transport themselves or purchase appropriate transportation."
- "Demand-Response" service is a type of transit service where individual passengers can request transportation from a specific location to another specific location at a certain time. Service is not on a fixed route and usually requires advance reservations.
- "Deviated Fixed Route" service is a hybrid of fixed-route and demand-response transit services. A service vehicle will travel along a fixed route, with fixed stops, on a fixed schedule, but may deviate from its course for a pre-scheduled request.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires transit agencies to provide paratransit services (demand response) to individuals that cannot take the fixed-route bus because of a functional disability. The FTA requirements include "complementary" paratransit service to destinations with 3/4 mile of all fixed routes. This requirement for duplicative service is not required when the transit system provides route-deviated services.
- In 2011, public transit agencies provided \$165.5 million in operating costs for demand-response service or just less than 14% of total operating costs. Route-deviated service cost public transportation agencies about \$16.3 million dollars or 1.4% of total operating costs.
- In 2011, demand-response service provided by public transit agencies accounted for about 5.1 million passenger trips, or about 2.3% of all passenger trips. Passenger trips on route-deviated service accounted for about 1.75 million trips, or about 0.8% of all passenger trips.
- In 2011, about 13.6% of the state's population resided outside of the service boundaries of a transit system. For these mostly-rural residents and other populations unable to use transit systems because of age or abilities, Community and Brokered Transportation providers help fill these transportation service gaps.
- Since 1989, Washington State has used a competitively selected brokerage system to provide non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) for eligible Medicaid clients. Transportation brokers link riders to least-cost, most-appropriate transportation providers. Brokers are primarily non-profit organizations that are governed by a Board of Directors. The state is divided into 13 service regions and currently contracts with eight brokers. In 2011, the brokers coordinated nearly 3.0 million trips for Medicaid clients. This was a decrease of almost 12.5 percent from 2010.
- Community Transportation Providers are private, non-profit, or governmental agencies that provide core transportation services for individuals with special needs and the general public in rural and urban areas. With a focus on the transportation needs of low-income, elderly, youth, veterans and their families and people with disabilities, Community Transportation Providers coordinate transportation services for access to health care, nutrition, employment, training, education, social services, and other vital community resources. Community Transportation Providers partner with a network of transportation service providers, employers, and human service agencies that may include health care providers, senior services, veteran services, community colleges, workforce partners, services for people with disabilities, and other social service agencies.

- The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) is a council of state agencies, transportation providers, consumer advocates and legislators. The Council's mission is to increase the efficiency of special needs transportation services by promoting the coordination of services offered by a myriad of state, local, and private entities. ACCT's enabling legislation expired in 2012, but the federal requirements for coordination of special needs transportation remain. The Council continues to meet.

GOVERNANCE

- According to the 2008 JTC Study of Special Needs Transportation, as many as 623 organizations and agencies provide some level of special needs transportation in Washington State. There is no typical provider or service offering, but private, non-profits represent slightly more than one half of the identified providers, and vast majority of services are door-to-door demand-response services.
- Transit agency authorizing statutes are described in the Local/Regional Jurisdictions chapter of this manual, which can be found on page 395.

FUNDING

- In 2011, the farebox recovery (the percent of annual operating costs recovered by passenger fares) rate for route-deviated service was 3.2%. For demand-response service, the farebox recovery rate was 2.7%. The lower farebox recovery rates associated with these services are due to reduced fares or fare-free policies for the elderly or persons with disabilities.
- For the 2011-13 biennium, the state transportation budget appropriated \$25 million in multimodal funds for special needs transportation services offered by nonprofit providers and public transportation agencies.
- Transit agency operating expenses for route-deviated and demand-response service amounted to just under \$182 million for Calendar Year 2011.

OTHER RESOURCES

WSDOT Public Transportation Division program information: [WSDOT Accessibility and Special Needs](#)

For a more in-depth descriptions of Community Transportation Providers and Medicaid Transportation Brokers, see WSDOT's "[2010 Summary of Public Transportation](#)" and "2011 Summary of Public Transportation."

For a list of public and private agencies providing any kind of public transportation service, see the [Washington State Public Transportation Directory, 2012](#)

Joint Transportation Committee, "Special Needs Transportation Study," [Final Report](#), January 2009.

Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation website: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/acct/default.htm>

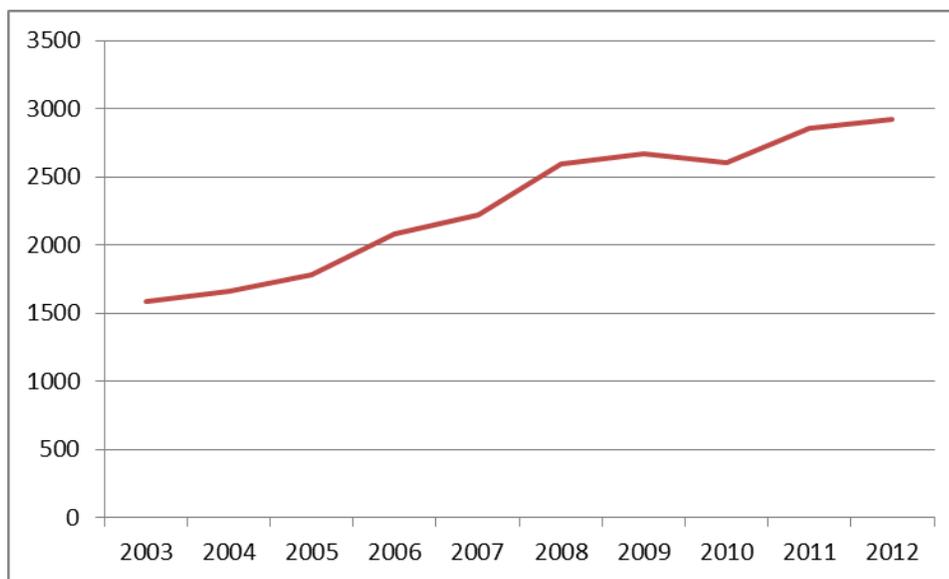
Carpooling/Vanpooling

BACKGROUND

- Empty seats on buses, vanpools and personal vehicles are in many cases the most cost effective transportation asset available for creating a comprehensive transportation system.
- Investments in vanpool vehicles, ridematching technology, marketing and traveler information, park and ride lots, and incentives are tools to capitalize on this asset.
- The state Legislature decided in 2003 to stimulate growth in the state's vanpool market by investing state funds to purchase of vehicles for vanpool program expansion. Not only are vanpools cost effective, with most of the costs are paid by the riders, they are a nimble transportation service that can be implemented with precision to address specific deficiencies in the transportation system. The legislature's decision to provide funding for vanpool vehicle purchases capitalized on the state's existing partnerships with the public vanpool operators and the state's employers.
- In July 2003, 1,508 vanpool groups were operating in Washington State. By June 2012, this number had nearly doubled to 2,916 vehicles. These vehicles carry nearly 24,000 employees to work every day.
- Vanpool use is closely tied to economic activity. As the following graph demonstrates, the number of operating vanpool groups began to decrease slightly in 2008 and remained flat until rebounding in mid-2011.

Number of Vanpools Operating in Washington State, 2003-2012

End of fiscal year



- Carpooling in personal vehicles and vanpooling are both supported by investments in RideshareOnline.com. Washington supports RideshareOnline.com as part of a tri-state technology partnership with Oregon and Idaho. This system allows commuters to seek carpool/vanpool partners through its ridematching capabilities. In addition, numerous employers, local governments and other organizations use RideshareOnline.com as a tool to track employee commuting and to provide incentives for employees who make more efficient transportation choices.

- Recently, the Legislature funded a real-time ridematching pilot project on SR 520. This pilot sought to develop a system to enable vanpool and carpool groups to seek additional riders without pre-arrangement prior to departing or even during the trip.
- High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes move about 35% of all the people on area highways in only 19% of the vehicles in the peak commuting periods and directions. The average HOV lane carries 1½ times as many people as the average adjacent lane in the peak commute.
- The percentage of people who drove alone to work to Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) worksites declined from 70.9% in 1993 to 62.3% in 2011. In contrast, there has been an uptick in the national and state drive-alone rates over the last few years.
- Park and ride lots provide a safe, convenient transfer area for transit, carpool and vanpool passengers, cyclists and pedestrians. There are more than 340 park and ride lots around the state. In most cases, park and ride lots are operated and maintained by local transit agencies. Through the state’s regional mobility grant program and other funding sources, WSDOT, transit agencies and local governments have developed partnerships to construct new park and rides and increase capacity at existing lots. WSDOT and its partners have also developed agreements with property owners, such as churches and community centers, for “park and pool” lots for flexible carpools and vanpools to free up space for transit riders at high demand park and ride lots. Some areas are combining park and ride functions with new residential and commercial development.

GOVERNANCE

- The direct formation and management of carpooling and vanpooling is conducted by numerous entities, including private individuals and businesses; public transit systems; and city and county governments.
- In Washington State, vanpool vehicles are most commonly available through public transit agencies. A few private employers continue to operate vanpools. In addition, private individuals and employers work to form vanpool groups.

FUNDING

- The 2011-2013 transportation budget allocated \$7 million to purchase vehicles to expand vanpooling in the state. The Legislature earmarked some of this amount to meet the transportation system needs in the Joint Base Lewis-McCord (JBLM) corridor. As of August 2012, 13 new vanpool groups were in operation carrying an average of 85 passengers a day. The Legislature also directed WSDOT to implement a vanpool pilot project to provide field and non-field agricultural workers with enhanced transit opportunities. The primary goal of the program is to provide safe, reliable and affordable transportation to agricultural workers with unique commute patterns.
- A substantial majority of public vanpool program costs are recovered directly from fares paid by riders. Many employers partially or fully subsidize the cost of vanpools for their employees. Fare policies vary by operator, as determined by the operator’s board or county council.
- Public and private vanpools are exempt from retail sales tax on purchase of the vehicle ([RCW 82.08.0287](#), [82.12.0282](#), [82.44.015](#)).

RELEVANT STATUTES

Carpools and vanpools may use HOV lanes ([RCW 46.61.165](#))
 The Commute Trip Reduction program ([RCW 70.94.521-555](#))

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes

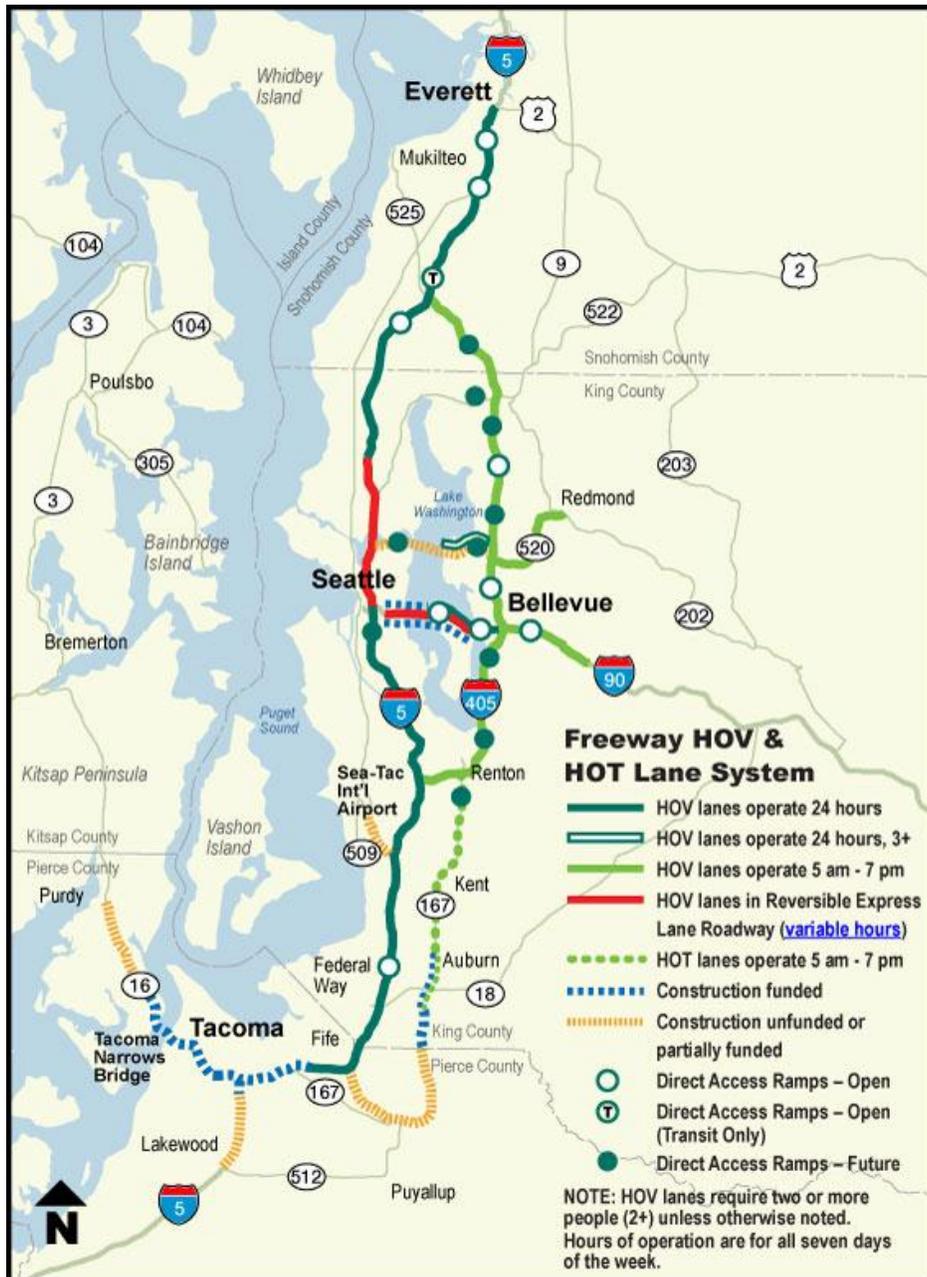
BACKGROUND

- The HOV system is intended to increase highway efficiency by giving priority to vehicles carrying more people. The HOV system provides increased speed and reliability for buses, vanpools, and carpools compared to the general purpose lanes.
- Elements of the HOV system includes HOV lanes on highways, HOV priority treatments on local streets, park-and-ride lots, enforcement facilities, HOV by-pass lanes at ramp meters, HOV direct access ramps, and the "Guaranteed Loading Program" on Washington State Ferries.
- HOV lanes move about 35% of all the people on area highways in only 19% of the vehicles in the peak commuting periods and directions. The average HOV lane carries 1½ times as many people as the average adjacent lane in the peak commute. Transit routes using the HOV lanes carry over 100,000 transit riders per weekday. Approximately 250 lane-miles of HOV lanes are currently open on Puget Sound highways. Construction is underway on HOV lanes on I-5 and SR 16 in Pierce County. Design is underway on parts of the remainder, but funding for completion of the system has not been secured. (see HOV system map on the following page.)
- Puget Sound highway HOV lanes are currently open to buses, vehicles with two or more occupants, and motorcycles. An exception is on the short westbound segment of SR 520 approaching the floating bridge, which has a requirement of three or more occupants per vehicle for safety and operational reasons.
- The two person occupancy requirement applies 24 hours per day, seven days a week on most of the core highway HOV system including the HOV lanes on I-5. Highways east of Lake Washington are an exception to this policy. In the summer of 2003, a demonstration was begun that opened these HOV lanes to general purpose traffic at night between 7:00 pm and 5:00 am.
- Policy changes to increase HOV lane performance may involve increasing occupancy requirements to 3 or more or implementing managed lane pricing via conversion to HOT lanes. (For more on HOT lanes see the Tolling section on page 283.)

GOVERNANCE

- Federal law currently requires HOV operators to consider policy changes if average speeds in the HOV lanes drop below 45 mph for 90 percent of the time over a consecutive 180-day period during the weekday peak periods ([23 USC 166 \(d\)\(2\)\(B\)](#)).
- State law ([RCW 47.52.025](#)) allows WSDOT, cities and counties to limit access to certain highway facilities, including designating lanes or ramps for preferential use by transit agencies and private transportation companies which operate vehicles with a carrying capacity of eight or more passengers.
- WSDOT has the sole responsibility for planning, constructing, and operating HOV and queue by-pass lanes on limited access facilities, but consults and coordinates with the regional metropolitan planning organization. In the Puget Sound region, WSDOT has also committed to consulting with Sound Transit regarding proposed changes to HOV operating policies.
- Chapter [81.100 RCW](#) provides local taxing authority to counties and regional transportation investment districts (RTIDs) to accelerate development of the high occupancy vehicle lane system.
- On state-owned arterials, WSDOT shares the planning, constructing, and operating responsibilities with local jurisdictions.

- WSDOT has shared responsibility for planning and developing HOV direct access ramps with Sound Transit.
- The Core HOV Lane program is included in and supported by the Puget Sound Regional Council's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and by Sound Transit's Master Plan.



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FUNDING

- The 2003 nickel package funded substantial portions of the core HOV system, including projects on SR 16 in Tacoma, on I-5 in Federal Way and Everett, on SR 167 in Auburn, and on SR 520 in Redmond. The total cost of core HOV system improvements funded through the nickel package is in excess of \$700 million.
- The 2005 transportation funding package (Transportation Partnership Act) also provided funding for core HOV improvements. Specifically, adding HOV lanes to I-5 in Pierce County between SR 16 and the Pierce/King County line, improving the I-5/SR 16 interchange including direct HOV to HOV connections, and extending the southbound HOV lane on SR 167 into Pierce County. These projects are finished or currently underway.
- The 1996 Sound Transit plan includes direct access ramps to allow buses to enter and exit HOV lanes without crossing general purpose traffic. These direct access facilities cost approximately \$500 million. The Sound Transit Phase II plan does not include funding for additional direct access ramps.
- King, Pierce and Snohomish counties are authorized to levy, with voter approval, local taxes to accelerate completion of HOV lanes and related facilities on state highways and local arterials and to fund other HOV programs (RCW 81.100.030, 81.100.060). No county has authorized these tax options. For more information on local option HOV taxes, see *Local Taxes section on page 111*.

Intercity Passenger Rail (Amtrak Cascades)

BACKGROUND

- The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) along with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Amtrak, a national railroad operator, sponsor intercity passenger rail called Amtrak Cascades. The Amtrak Cascades service operates on a 467-mile rail corridor connecting 18 cities spanning from Eugene, OR through Portland and Seattle to Vancouver, B.C. The tracks are owned by the Union Pacific Railroad (Oregon) and the BNSF Railway (Washington and British Columbia).
- The major rail network, on which Amtrak operates, is privately owned by the BNSF railroad company. Several systems operate on these lines, including freight, national and regional passenger rail, and local commuter rail services.
- 300 miles of the corridor are in Washington, 134 miles in Oregon and 33 miles in British Columbia. Each day 11 trains are in service: 3 between Seattle, WA and Eugene, OR; 3 between Seattle, WA and Portland, OR; 2 between Seattle, WA, and Vancouver, B.C.; 2 between Portland, OR and Vancouver, B.C.; and 1 between Portland, OR and Eugene, OR.
- Ridership on WSDOT/ODOT/Amtrak sponsored service in the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor (Amtrak Cascades) has risen from 94,000 in 1994 to over 847,700 in 2011.
- In October 2013, Section 209 of the Federal Railroad Administration's Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) will be implemented which eliminates federal operating funding for state-supported trains, requiring states to absorb more costs.
- Two additional Amtrak long-distance lines have operations in Washington: the Empire Builder, which travels from the Pacific Northwest to Chicago, IL with service from Seattle/Portland to Spokane, WA; the Coast Starlight which travels between Seattle, WA, and Los Angeles, CA, with a total of six station stops in Washington State.

GOVERNANCE

- WSDOT is responsible for developing and implementing Washington State's passenger rail program as specified in RCW 47.79 and 47.82. <http://wsdot.wa.gov/rail>
- In 2012, WSDOT began work on a new state rail plan which will incorporate both passenger and freight rail into one strategic plan. <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/staterailplan.htm>
- The 18th amendment to the Washington State constitution prohibits the expenditure of state or federal gas tax dollars on rail construction projects or operations. *For a more in-depth description of the 18th Amendment, go to page 25.*
- The Washington State constitution generally prohibits the gifting of public funds and the lending of state credit (Article 8, section 5 and 7). Public investments in rail infrastructure are improvements to the private rail network. The constitutional test is multi-pronged and may be met if the public expenditure serves a fundamental purpose of government or if the public entity received adequate consideration (value) for its investment. In the case of investments in BNSF's rail network, the test may be met because the expenditure serves the fundamental governmental purpose of providing transportation infrastructure, for the movement of people and goods.

FUNDING

High-Speed Rail Funding -- Multimodal Account Federal

Washington has been awarded a total of \$781.5 million in federal funding to increase the frequency and reliability of the Amtrak Cascades service.

- In January 2010, Washington was awarded \$590 million in federal ARRA grants for High-Speed Rail improvements in the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor.
- October 2010 - an additional \$30.5 million in federal appropriations
- December 2010 - the state was awarded \$161.5 million in redistributed ARRA funds which were redirected from Ohio and Wisconsin

As a result of this funding, by the end of the ARRA program in 2017 Amtrak Cascades passengers will see:

- two additional daily round trips between Seattle and Portland, for a total of six round trips,
- a reduction in travel times, and
- improved on-time performance.

From these amounts, \$222.9 million in federal and local funds from the Multimodal Account in 2011-13 was appropriated for:

- Creation of an Integrated State Rail Plan which combines and updates Washington's separate freight rail and passenger rail plans as one plan.
- Construction of track improvements near Blaine to facilitate train movements around the Customs inspection facility.
- Purchase and install new tracks, concrete ties and ballast rock in Vancouver, WA.
- Improve safety at grade crossings under the Federal Highway Administration's Surface Transportation Program Sections 1103(f) and 130(f) corridor hazard elimination program.

A complete list of the High-Speed Rail projects that will be funded through the federal grants appears on pages 258 and 259. Projects are also available on the WSDOT High-Speed Rail Projects webpage: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail/projects.htm>

Multimodal Account – State

The 2011-13 transportation budget as supplemented in the 2012 legislative session included an appropriation of \$86.7 million from the Multimodal Transportation Account – State, to carry out the following activities:

- Operate two daily round trips between Seattle and Portland; one daily round trip between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C.; and one daily roundtrip between Portland and Vancouver B.C. (A third daily trip between Portland and Seattle is funded by Amtrak.)
- Extend the rail siding at Mount Vernon and construct bypass tracks to allow passenger trains to go around freight congestion in Vancouver.
- Improve track and signal system in conjunction with Sound Transit to improve access to King Street Station.
- Overhaul Amtrak Cascades trainsets.

Regional Rail Commuter Service

BACKGROUND

- "Commuter rail" is typically a passenger rail service connecting city centers with their suburbs. Stations tend to be further apart than for light rail. In Washington State, Sound Transit's "**Sounder**" service runs primarily on the same mainline as the Amtrak Cascades service. A small portion of the Sounder line in south Puget Sound runs on line owned solely by Sound Transit. Currently, Sounder service is available roundtrip between Everett and Seattle (12 trains per day) and Seattle and Lakewood, via Tacoma (18 trains per day). Service to Lakewood began October 2012, prior to that service terminated in Tacoma.
- "**Light rail**" or "light rail transit" (LRT) is a form of high-capacity rail public transportation that may have a lower capacity and lower speed than heavy rail or subway systems, but higher capacity and higher speed than streetcar systems. Light rail operates primarily in separate rights-of-way.
- In Washington State, LRT is operated by Sound Transit in the Puget Sound region. "Central Link" service runs between SeaTac airport and Westlake in Seattle approximately every ten minutes between 5AM and midnight. A separate light rail line operates within Tacoma between the Tacoma Dome and the Theater district.
- In November 2008, the voters of the Central Puget Sound approved Sound Transit 2. Sound Transit estimates that they will be running light rail to the University District in Seattle by 2016, north to Northgate by 2021, further north to Lynnwood by 2023 and across Lake Washington to Bellevue and Redmond by 2023. An extension south from SeaTac to Federal Way is expected to be operating by 2016.
- LRT is also planned for the Vancouver area extending light rail from Portland, Oregon as part of a multi-modal proposal for replacing the Interstate 5 bridge over the Columbia River. C-TRAN, the Clark County transit agency, will operate the light rail service in and around Vancouver, Washington, terminating at Clark College.

GOVERNANCE

Sound Transit operates as a Regional Transit Authority under RCW 81.112. *For more information refer to the Sound Transit section on page 413.*

Under the RTA statutes, light rail may be expanded upon approval from Puget Sound voters for the system additions and new taxing authority.

C-TRAN will operate light rail under its authority as a Public Transportation Benefit Area (RCW 36.57A) and is seeking funding as a High Capacity Transportation Corridor area (RCW 81.104).

FUNDING

Sound Transit's capital program and services are not funded by the state transportation budget. *For more information about ST's tax sources refer to the Local Option Taxes for High Capacity Transportation section on page 115.*

In 2010, farebox revenue paid for 23% of light rail operating expenses (2010 Summary of Public Transportation, WSDOT.)

Current CRC project finance plans assume that funding for the capital portion of the Vancouver light rail project will be paid for solely from Federal Transit Administration grant funds. C-TRAN is seeking approval from its voters for a sales tax increase to fund the operations of the light rail service in Vancouver.

Bicycles and Pedestrians

BACKGROUND

- Washington State's current Bicycle Facilities and Pedestrian Walkways Plan (2008-2027) sets a 20-year goal of doubling the percentage of trips made primarily by biking and walking in Washington while simultaneously reducing bicycle and pedestrian collisions with motor vehicles. This plan fulfills the requirement that the state's Multimodal Transportation Plan include a bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways plan (RCW 47.06.100). [2008 Bicycle Facilities and Walkways Plan](#)
- According to the December 2011 issue of WSDOT's "Gray Notebook," if the annual amount of walking and bicycling continues to increase at the rate tracked by WSDOT, Washington will exceed the state goal specified in the Bicycle Facilities and Pedestrian Walkways Plan before the 20-year target in 2027. [WSDOT Gray Notebook, December 2011](#)
- Washington State has the 15th highest rate of bicycle and pedestrian commuting in the nation.
- Thirteen percent of all trips are made by pedestrians and bicyclists.
- In 2012, there were 468 fatal and serious-injury collisions involving bicyclists or pedestrians, accounting for 16% of fatal and serious injury traffic collisions.
- Washington State has the 9th lowest bicycle fatality rate.
- According to "Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2012 Benchmarking Report," in the last ten years in Washington State, walking to work has increased by 16% and bicycling to work has increased by 75%. [Alliance for Biking and Walking 2012 Report](#)

GOVERNANCE

- WSDOT's Bicycle Transportation Management Program was created in 1991. The program serves as a clearinghouse for bicycle program information and resources, coordinates bicycle safety and bicycle tourism programs in all state agencies, and assists cities and counties and WSDOT with developing bicycle-related projects (RCW 47.04.190). www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike & www.wsdot.wa.gov/walk
- In 1984 the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) created the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to advise the department on bike and pedestrian issues. This committee is comprised of citizens, statewide advocacy organizations, cities, and counties. Currently, the committee functions as a task force for WSDOT's Highway Safety Issues Group, consulting on issues relating to multi-user roadway design, uniform traffic control devices, and interstate access for bicycles.
- Federal transportation funding reauthorization acts have provided significant policy direction and dedicated funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects. As of July 2012, a new federal transportation reauthorization act is in effect, known as Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, or MAP-21.
- For bicycle and pedestrian programs, MAP-21 creates a new program known as Transportation Alternatives, consolidating the following former programs into a single program for non-motorized transportation projects: Transportation Enhancements, Recreational Trails, and Safe Routes to Schools. For the Transportation Alternatives program, Washington State is expected to receive \$12.3 million for Federal Fiscal Year 2013 for a wide variety of eligible activities, including bike and pedestrian projects. In comparison, the three consolidated programs had been expected to bring \$18.7 million to Washington State during Federal Fiscal Year 2012.

FUNDING

- The 2011-13 biennial transportation budget includes \$33.8 million in state and federal funds for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Safe Routes to Schools grant programs, which fund pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. Of this amount, \$20 million is for projects newly identified for the 2011-13 biennium. www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/SafeRoutes/
- The 2012 Supplemental Transportation Budget included \$2.25 million in additive state funding for Safe Routes to Schools projects, funded by increases in state drivers and vehicle fees enacted by ESHB 2660.
- ESHB 1071 (C 257 L 11) created the Complete Streets Grant Program in WSDOT's Highways and Local Programs Division. No funding was provided for the grant program in the 2011-13 biennial budget. The grant program's purpose is to encourage local governments to adopt urban arterial retrofit street ordinances to provide safe access to all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users.
- 0.3% of WSDOT's total construction program and 0.5% of city and county gas tax revenue is to be used for non-motorized transportation, particularly where highway and roadway projects sever existing paths (for WSDOT, this is approximately \$2 million/year; RCW 47.30.050, Paths and Trails Law).
- The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office administers the Non-Highway Road Grant Program, which receives approximately 0.1% of motor fuel tax revenue (primarily for off-road recreational bicycle trails; RCW 46.09.170).
- 75% of all money collected by cities and towns for bicycle licenses, fees, and penalties must be placed into the Bicycle Roads Fund (RCW 35.75.050). Currently, no cities collect bicycle license fees.
- WSDOT, county, and city funds may be used for the planning, constructing, and maintaining non-motorized facilities (RCW 47.30.030, 36.75.240, 35.75.060, 36.82.145, 36.75.240).
- The Traffic Safety Commission provides grants to local communities primarily for signage and lighting improvements in school zones (\$500,000 annually). A portion of state fines on speeders in school zones is used for this purpose.
- The Transportation Improvement Board administers the Urban and Small City Sidewalk Programs with an average of \$2 million dedicated annually.

OTHER RELEVANT STATUTES

- Lighting and reflectors (RCW 46.61.780)
- Parking (RCW 46.90.550)
- Rules of the road (RCW 46.61.750-.990)
- Highway designs to accommodate paths and trails (RCW 47.30.020)
- Local and regional comprehensive plans must include a pedestrian and bicycle component, with guidance from regional transportation planning organizations (RCW 36.70A.070 and 47.80.026)

Air Transportation

BACKGROUND

"General Aviation" refers to civil aviation operations other than scheduled air services and non-scheduled air transport operation for hire. General aviation includes a wide range of activities, such as flight training, air ambulance, police aviation, aerial firefighting, gliding, and skydiving. The majority of the world's air traffic falls into the category of general aviation.

Aviation facilities in the Washington State System Plan include a total of 135 public-use airports serving over 19,000 pilots across the state.

Each public-use airport in Washington has a specific classification:

- 16 Commercial
- 19 Regional
- 22 Community Service
- 33 Local Service
- 37 Rural Essential
- 8 Seaplane

Airport ownership varies across the state:

- 40 City/town
- 33 Port District
- 29 Private
- 16 state-managed
- 10 County
- 5 Joint
- 2 Airport Authority

About 64 public-use airports in the state are considered significant to national air transportation and are included in the Federal Aviation Administration's National Plan of Integrated Airports System (NPAIS) plan making them eligible for FAA improvement grants.

The 16 state-managed airports are strategically located to provide aircraft emergency access and fire suppression bases in remote areas of the state. These airports also serve remote communities and are used for recreation. [WSDOT-Managed Airports](#)

Over 17 million scheduled passengers land at Washington airports every year.

According to the FAA's data for 2011, Seattle-Tacoma International Airport had almost 16 million passenger boardings, ranking 15th in the nation. Spokane International Airport ranked 71st.

At Washington's public use airports, 3.7 million aircraft landings and takeoffs occur every year.

More than 600,000 tons of air cargo flow through the state's airports annually.

Twelve airports in Washington State provide air freight service. Of these, three airports qualify for federal funds through the FAA because their cargo volumes exceed 1 million pounds of landed weight. The three qualifying major air cargo centers are Seattle-Tacoma International (18th nationally in 2011 for total landed weight), Boeing Field International (24th), and Spokane International (47th).

Each year over 750 lifesaving ambulance missions and over 460 search and rescue missions are flown from public-use airports.

Approximately 12,000 aircraft are registered in the State of Washington.

Over 8,000 general aviation aircraft, including piston-powered airplanes, multi-engine turboprops, business jets, helicopters, and experimental and light sport aircraft, are based at public use airports across the state.

Washington's active non-pilot certificates (ground instruction, mechanic, repair, parachute rigger, flight attendant) exceed 18,000.

GOVERNANCE

- Public-use airports are operated by port districts, cities, counties, and private interests. Public-owned facilities use several different funding mechanisms, including user fees (such as landing fees and passenger facility charges), voter-approved property tax levies, interest income, federal and state grants, and bond proceeds.
- WSDOT Aviation programs include the airport grant aid program, aviation system and land use planning, search and rescue, aircraft registration, and state managed airport administration.
- Programs operated by WSDOT-Aviation Division:
 - Construction and maintenance of facilities for 17 state-operated airports
 - Technical assistance to airports, cities, and counties
 - Search and rescue operations
 - Development of Washington Aviation System Plan
 - Airport Land Use Compatibility Program and Technical Assistance in accordance with RCW 36.70.547 and 36.70A.510
 - Height Hazard Obstruction technical assistance
 - Special studies, including:
 - Pavement Conditions Assessment (Due 2013, 5-year cycle)
 - Economic Benefits Analysis of Airports in Washington State 2012
 - Rural Airport Study 2002
 - Airport Conditions Assessment, 2006, Phase I LATS
 - Grant Assistance Program

FUNDING

Funding for WSDOT-Aviation Division:

- State aviation fuel tax (Chapter 82.42 RCW)
 - 11 cents per gallon fuel tax, which applies primarily to general aviation aircraft
 - 95% of all aircraft fuel sold is exempt. Exceptions are contained in RCWs 82.42.030 82.42.070 and include aircraft fuel sold for export, purchased by the U.S. government or its agencies, used by commercial air carriers, used for aircraft testing activities, training of crews by certified air carriers, and local commuter air service providers. Agriculture receives a separate exemption under RCW 82.08.865.
 - Expected revenue for 2011-13 Biennium: \$6 million
- Motor fuel tax transfer (RCW 82.36.415)
 - 0.028% of the gross motor fuel tax (less sales tax) (estimated at approximately \$500,000)
 - Compensation for unclaimed motor vehicle fuel used in aircraft

- Aircraft registration fee (RCW 47.68.250)
 - \$15 paid annually by owners of aircraft operating in Washington State (estimated at approximately \$220,000 in 2011-13)
- Aircraft excise tax (RCW 82.48.)
 - Annual rate levied on a sliding scale of \$35–\$140 per aircraft depending on the type and size of the aircraft (estimated at approximately \$60,000 for 2011-13)
 - 10% of funds go to the Aviation Division to defray costs of registration and collection
 - 90% of the funds are deposited in the General Fund
- Grants
 - Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) - all grants require matching: 90% federal – 10% state/local. FAA grants fund the following:
 - State Aviation System Plan projects
 - State’s Pavement Management Program
 - Airport master planning
 - Airport Improvement Projects
- State funds are used for the following purposes:
 - Provide matching grants to municipalities for constructing projects to improve airport infrastructure
 - Provide funding to many airports that do not qualify for federal funds
 - Technical assistance
 - Airport master planning
 - Emergency Response Aviation Facilities

Funding sources for local airport funding:

- Dedicated aviation funds: from proceeds of leases, hangar rentals, commercial leases, concessions, etc.
- Major airports (e.g., Seattle-Tacoma and Spokane International) impose landing fees on airlines to cover operations and finance capital improvements made with revenue bonds. In addition, passenger facility charges are assessed at commercial service airports for improvement projects.
- Some ports, counties, and cities appropriate general tax revenues to support their facilities.

OTHER RESOURCES

- WSDOT Aviation can be found at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/>
- Washington's [20 Year Aviation System Plan](#)
- For more airport data, see FAA's [Airport Program Statistics](#).
- For more information on the Aviation Fuel Tax, see JLARC's [2011 Tax Preference Performance Reviews](#), beginning on page 23.

Miscellaneous Modes

BACKGROUND

- Snowmobiles
 - Approximately 29,000 registered in the state
 - Over 3,500 miles of snowmobile trails, mostly on public lands. (Source: <http://www.wssa.us>)
 - An operating license is not required. However, no one under the age of 12 may operate a snowmobile on or across a public roadway or highway. Persons between the ages of 12 and 16 must have first completed a snowmobile safety education course before doing so. (RCW 46.10.480)
 - Motor fuel tax refund to the Snowmobile Account in the General Fund (RCW 46.10.510)
 - Snowmobile registration (RCW 46.10.400)
- Recreational Boating
 - Motor fuel tax refund to Marine Fuel Tax Refund Account (RCW 79A.25.040)
 - Approximately 240,000 vessels licensed through the Department of Licensing
 - State Parks and Recreation Commission has rule-making authority (RCW 79A.60.595)
 - Registration fees and taxes (RCW 88.02.640 and 82.49.030) are deposited into the General Fund.
- Mopeds
 - Approximately 9,600 registered in the state
 - Definition of mopeds (RCW 46.04.304)
 - Any person holding a valid driver's license of any class may operate a moped without taking a special examination (RCW 46.20.500)
 - Mopeds must be registered, may not operate on nonmotorized trails or fully controlled limited access highways, and must comply with applicable federal motor safety regulations (RCW 46.61.710 and 46.61.720)
- Motorcycles
 - Approximately 228,000 registered in the state
 - Helmet, goggles, and face shield requirements (RCW 46.37.530 and 46.37.535)
 - Special endorsement for driver's license (RCW 46.20.500)
- Motorhomes
 - Approximately 65,500 registered in the state
 - Registration and weight and sanitary disposal fees (RCW 46.17.350, 46.17.365, and 46.17.375)
- Electric Vehicles
 - Approximately 1,900 electric powered vehicles are registered in the state
Of these electric powered vehicles, about 550 are either Neighborhood (low speed) Electric Vehicles (NEV) or Medium Speed Electric Vehicles (MEV) as defined under RCW 46.04.295 and 46.04.357.
 - * Neighborhood or low speed electric powered vehicles licensed as motor vehicles are designated as those with a maximum speed between 20-25 mph, drivers license required, operate on roads with speed limit of 25 mph or less (RCW 46.61.725)
 - * Medium speed electric powered vehicles are licensed as motor vehicles, drivers license required, operate on roads with speed limit not greater than 35 mph (RCW 46.61.723)
 - As of October 1, 2012, owners of electric vehicles must pay a registration renewal fee of \$100 on vehicles using propulsion units powered solely by electricity. The new fee applies only to vehicles designed to drive at a speed of more than 35 miles per hour. (RCW 46.17.323)

