

Joint Transportation Committee Public Transit Fiscal Health Study

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

Study Approach

- Principle information sources:
 - WSDOT Annual Public Transportation reports
 - National Transit System Database
- Consultation with others:
 - WSDOT, Washington Policy Center and Washington State Transit Association (WSTA)
 - Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
 - Imperial College, London—transit consultancy
- An extended period for analysis: 1991-2011

Study approach (con't)

- Transit systems are grouped for comparisons
 - 12 rural systems
 - 11 small urban systems
 - 6 urban systems (King County Metro separated out for some comparisons)
 - Sound Transit
- Dollars are adjusted for inflation in selected graphs
- Assessment is by looking at changes over time

What is transit fiscal health?

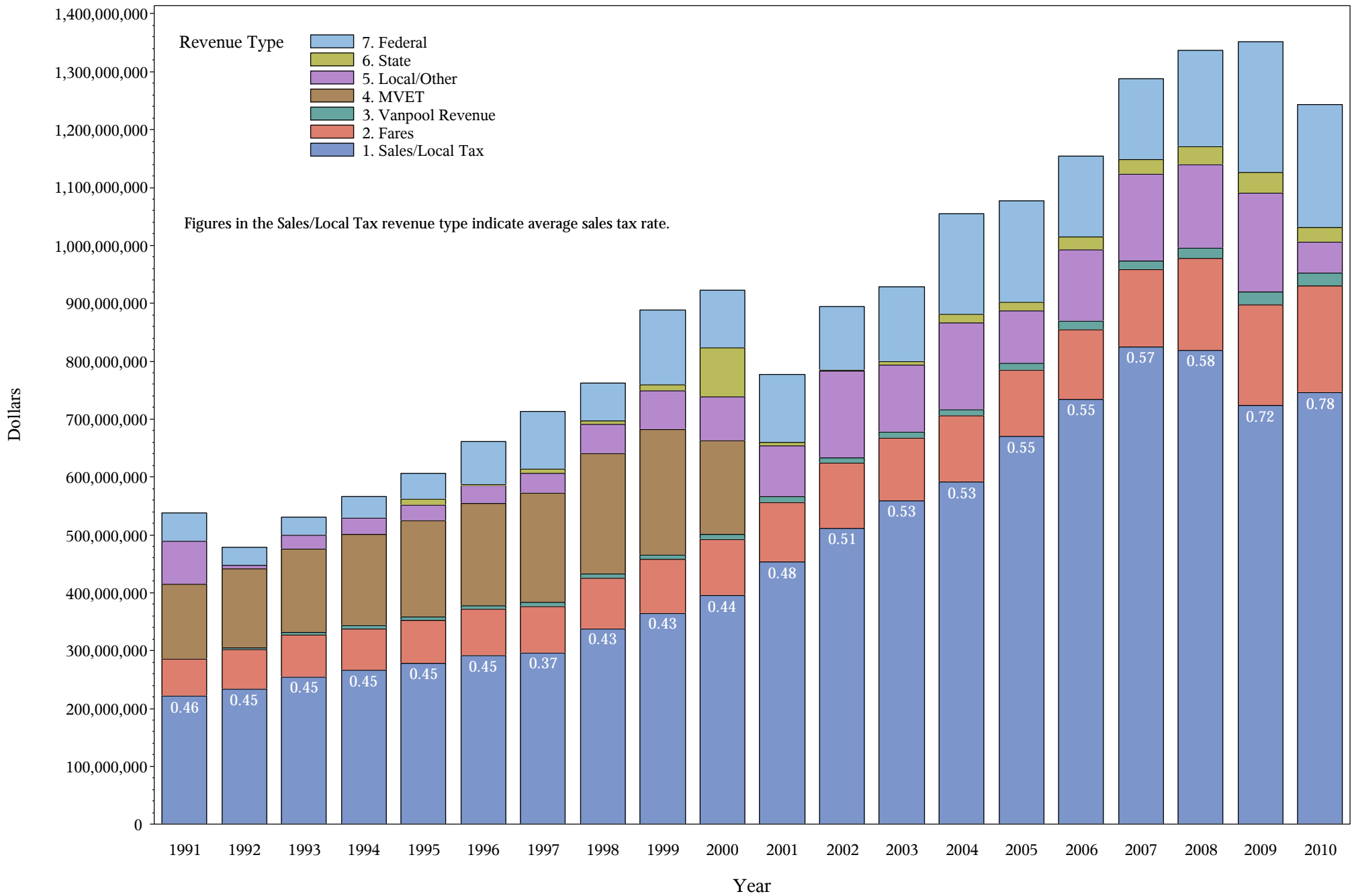
- In many ways, it is in the eyes of the beholder
 - Stable revenues and expenditures?
 - Cost effective service?
 - Customer satisfaction, service quality & frequency?
 - High fare-box recovery & less tax subsidy?
 - Cost containment—cost per hour or cost per rider?
 - Peak hour service or safety-net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

Measures of Transit Fiscal Health

- Measures of transit fiscal health analyzed:
 - Revenues
 - Expenditures (operating and capital)
 - Reserves
 - Output (service hours & revenue miles)
 - Ridership
 - Cost per service hour and cost per rider

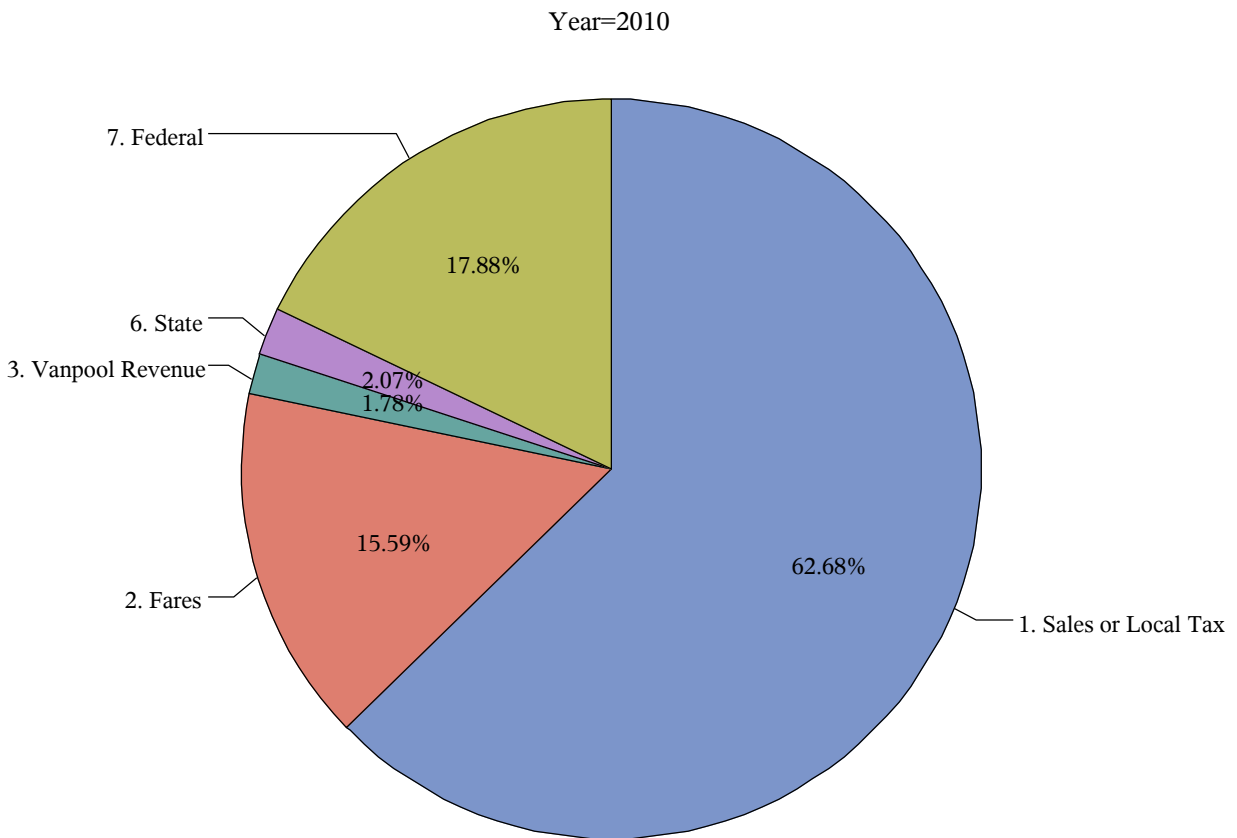
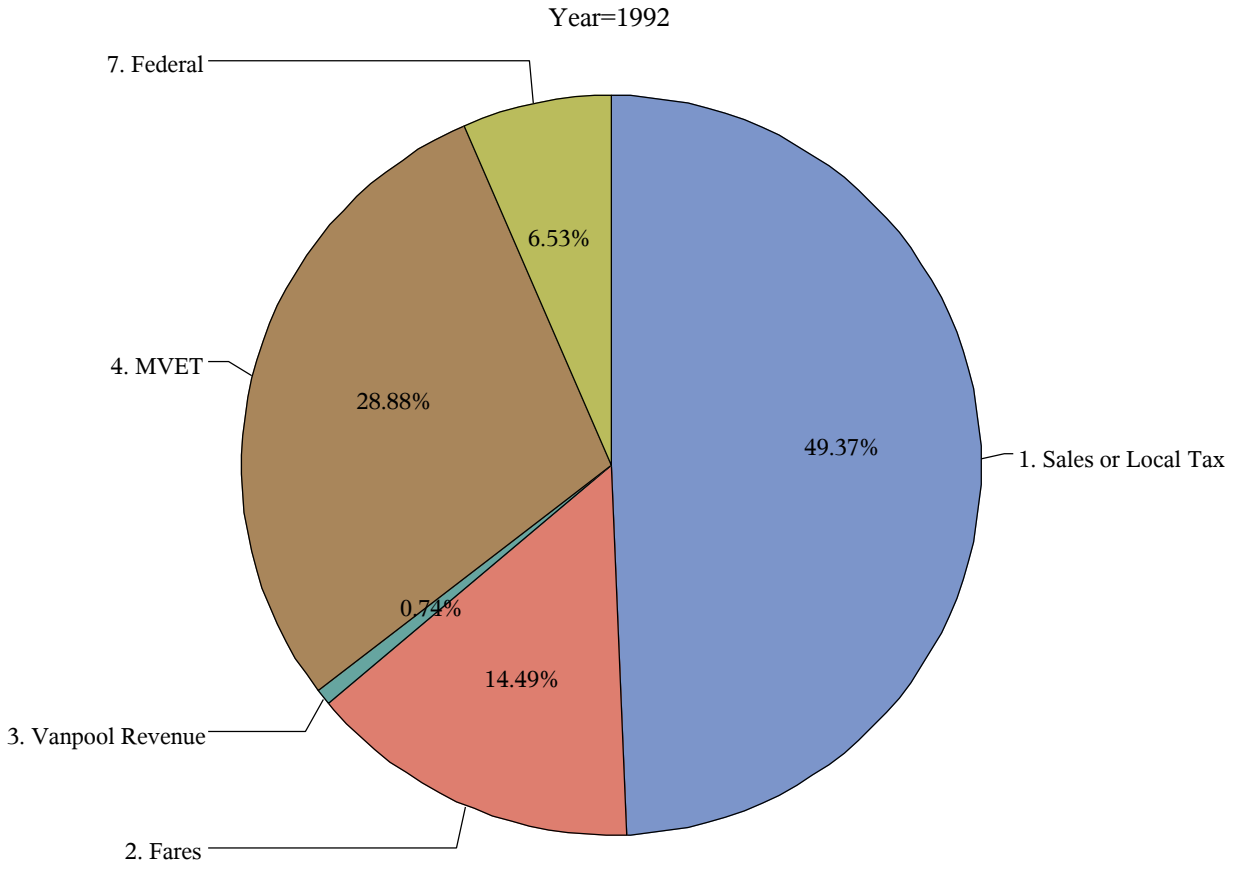
Annual Funding, for All Systems Statewide (Except Sound Transit)

Amounts Shown are Nominal (Not Adjusted for Inflation)



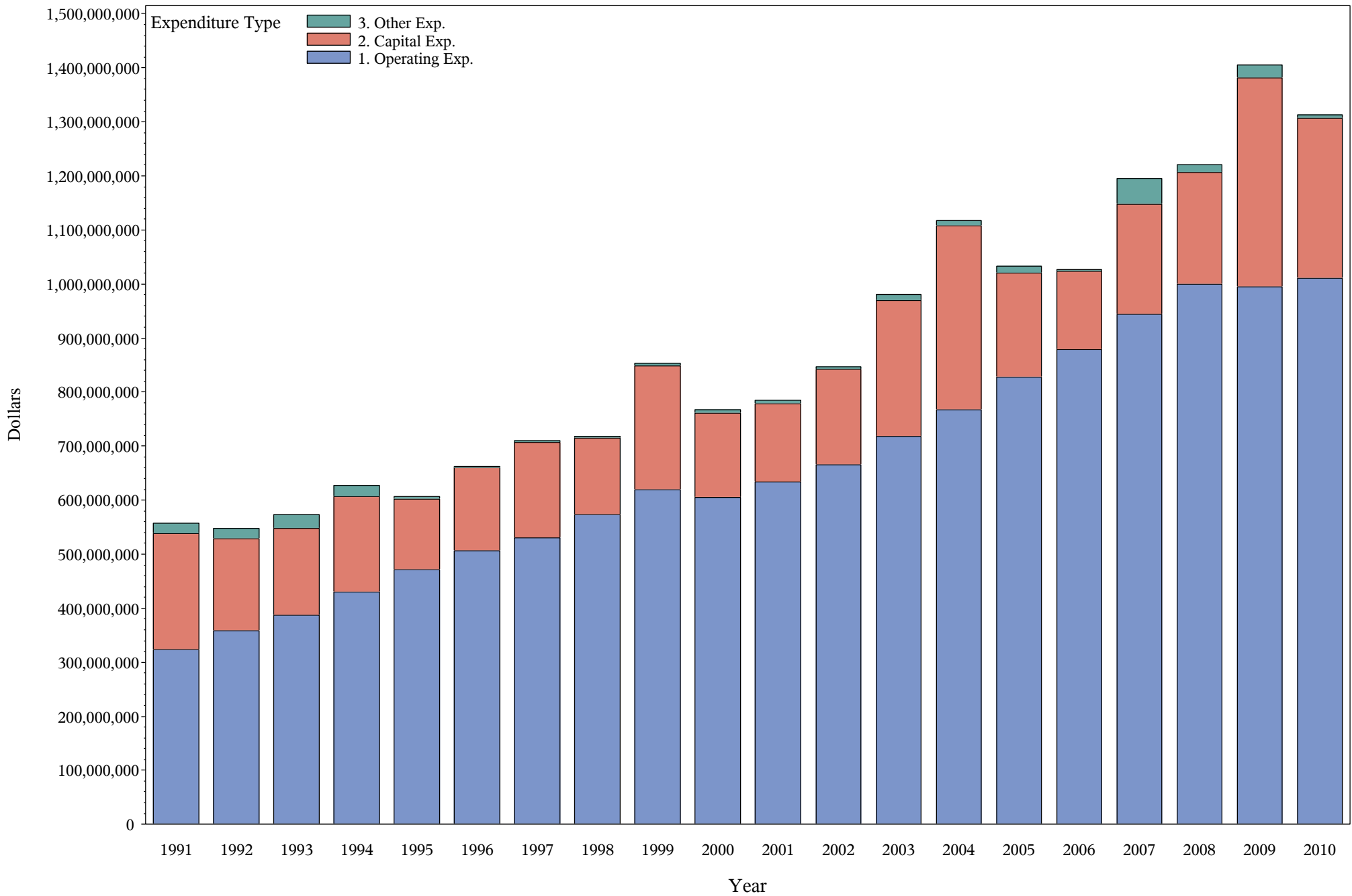
Distribution of Total Funding for Selected Years

For All Systems Statewide (Except Sound Transit)

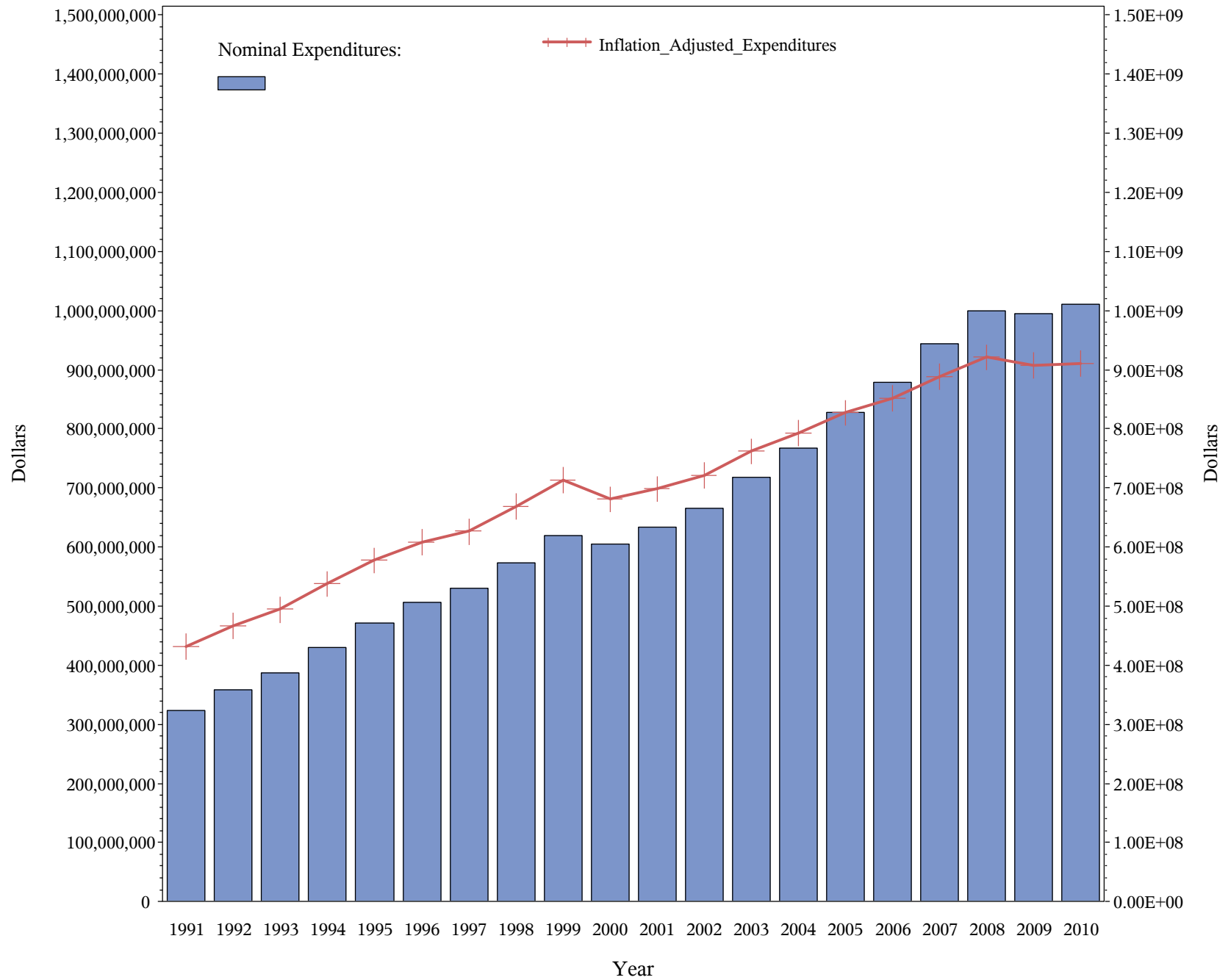


Annual Expenditures, for All Systems Statewide (Except Sound Transit)

Amounts Shown are Nominal (Not Adjusted for Inflation)

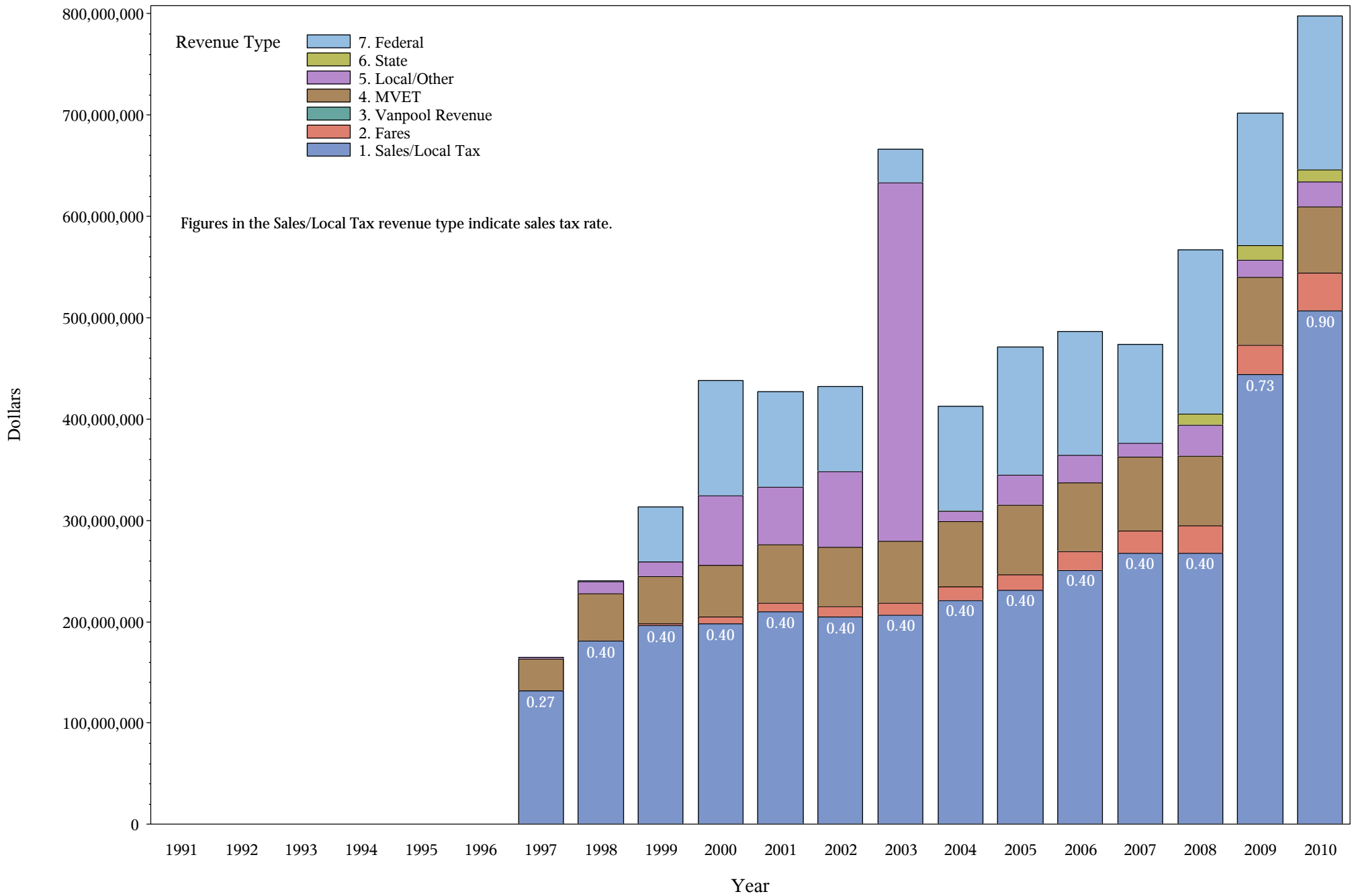


Annual Operating Expenditures, for All Systems Statewide (Except Sound Transit) Nominal vs. Real (Inflation-Adjusted) Expenditures

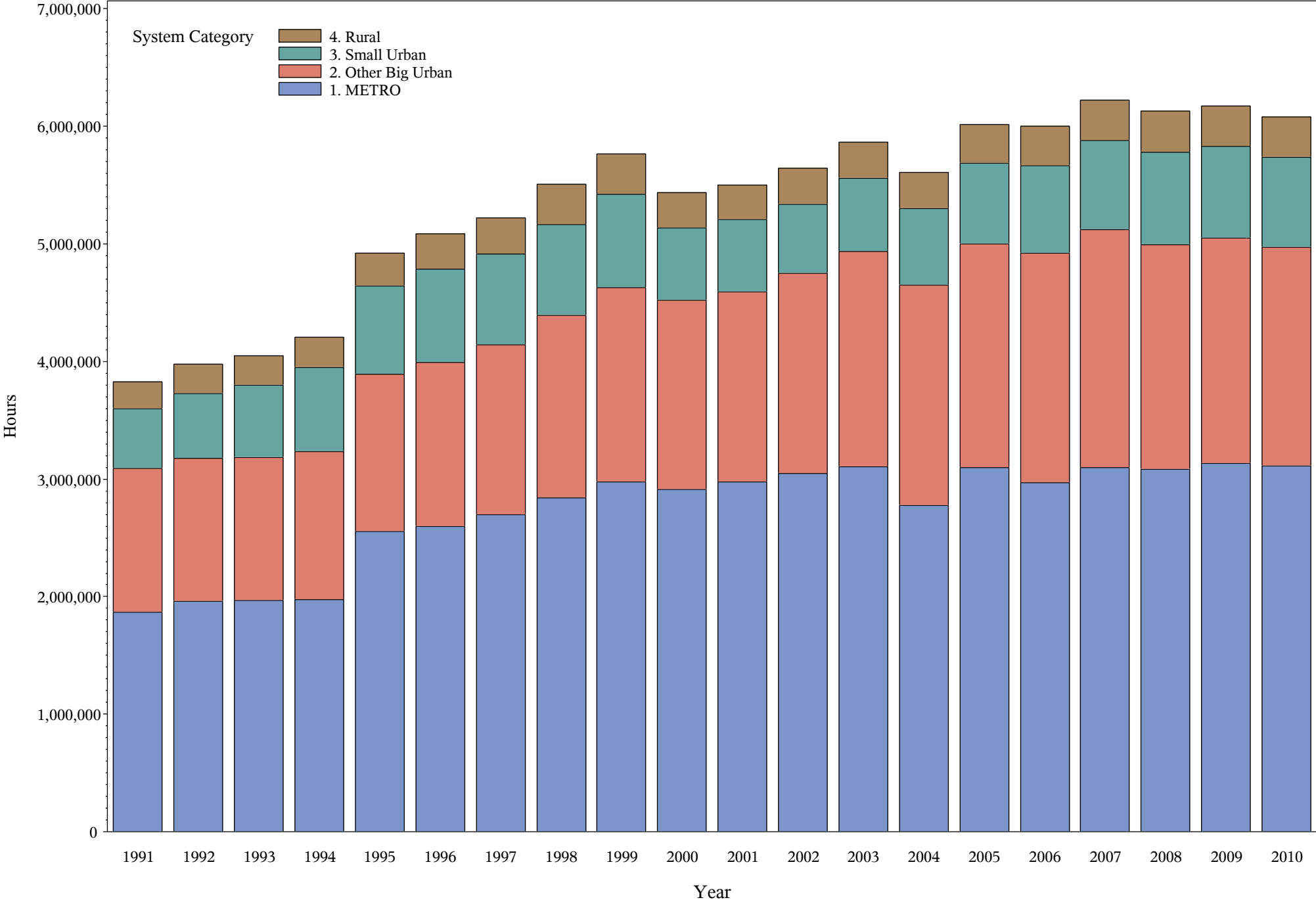


Total Funding by Year, For Sound Transit

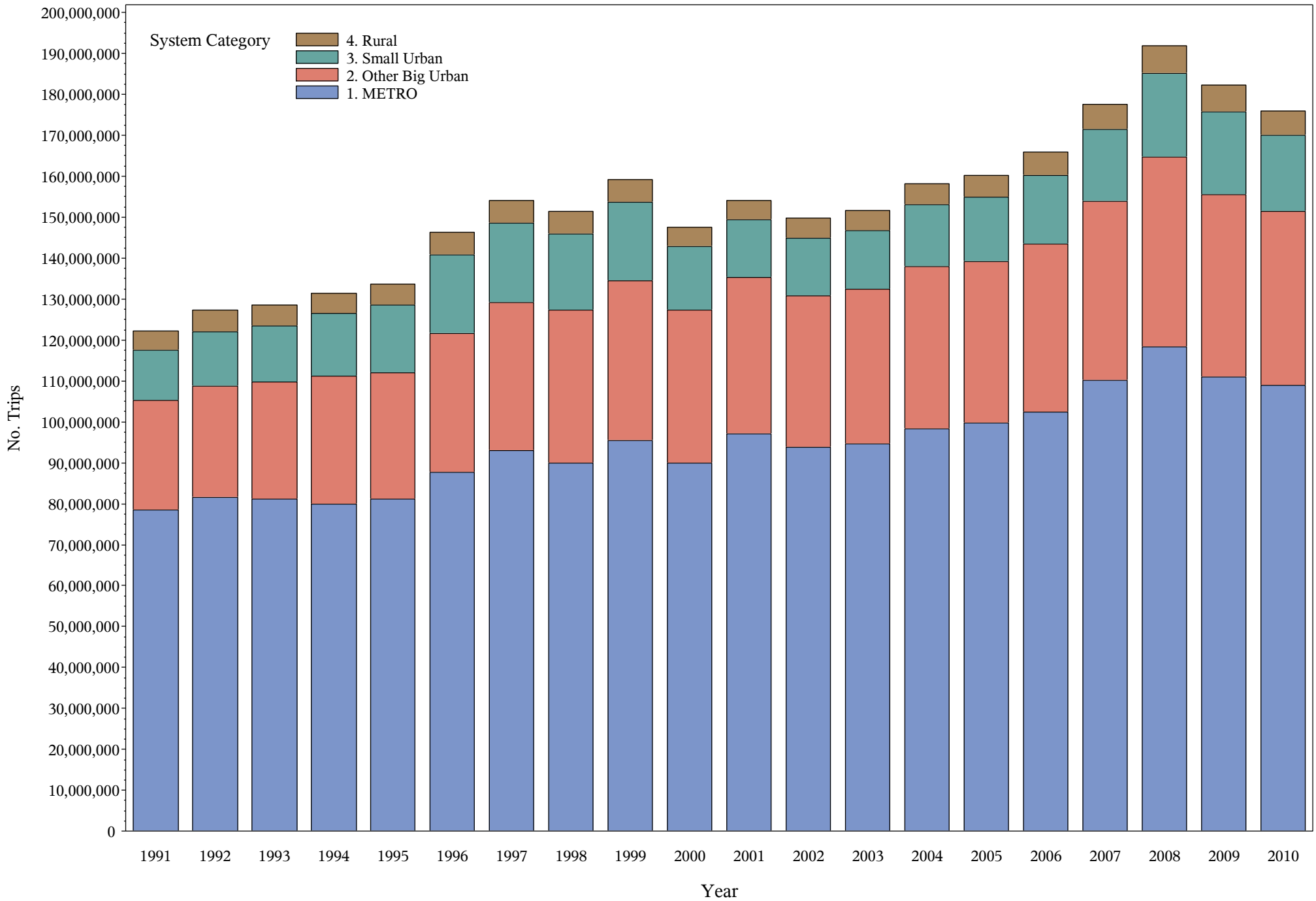
Amounts Shown are Nominal (Not Adjusted for Inflation)



Revenue Vehicle Hours by Year, For All Systems Statewide (Except Sound Transit), Fixed_Route Services

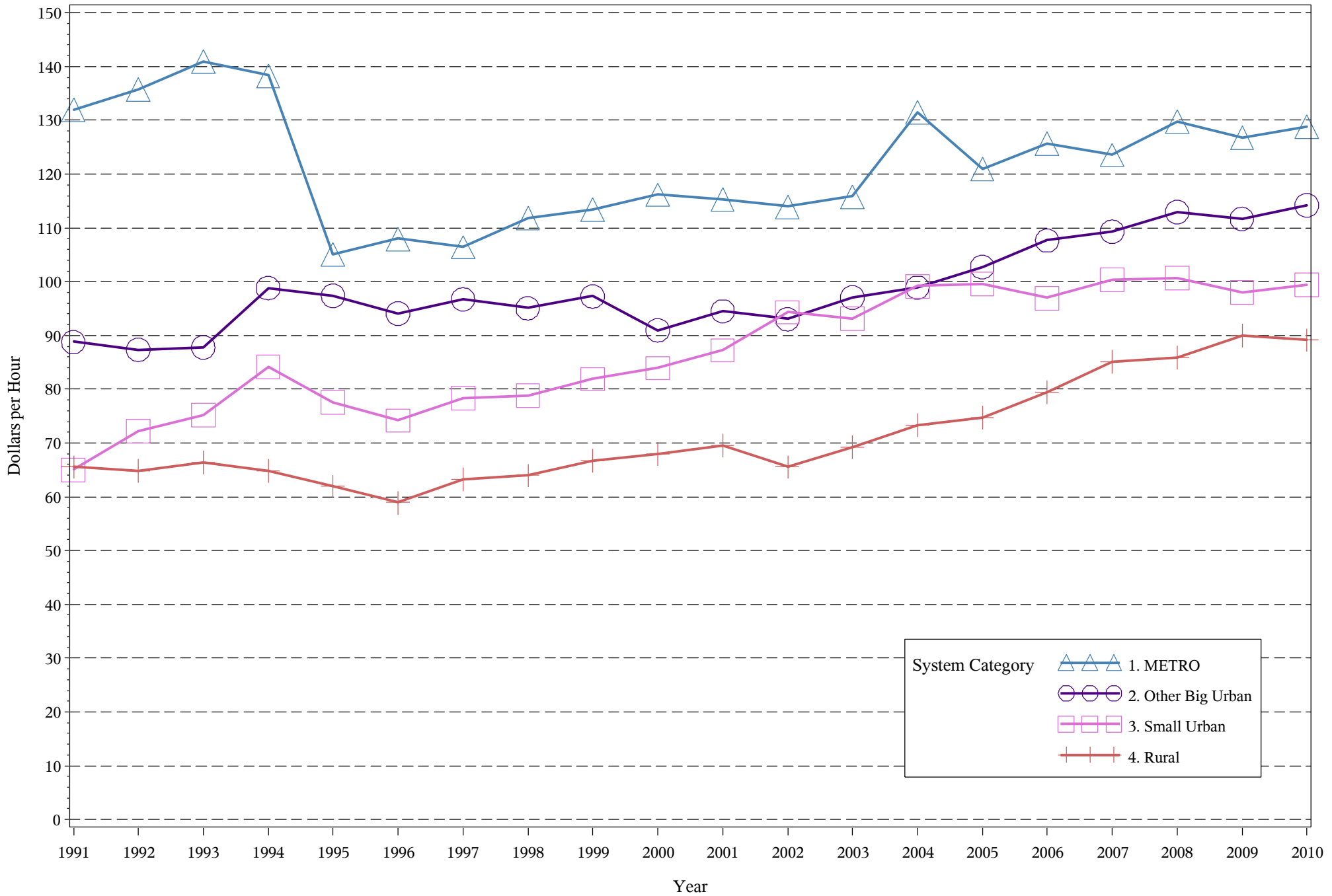


Passenger Trips by Year, For All Systems Statewide (Except Sound Transit), Fixed_Route Services



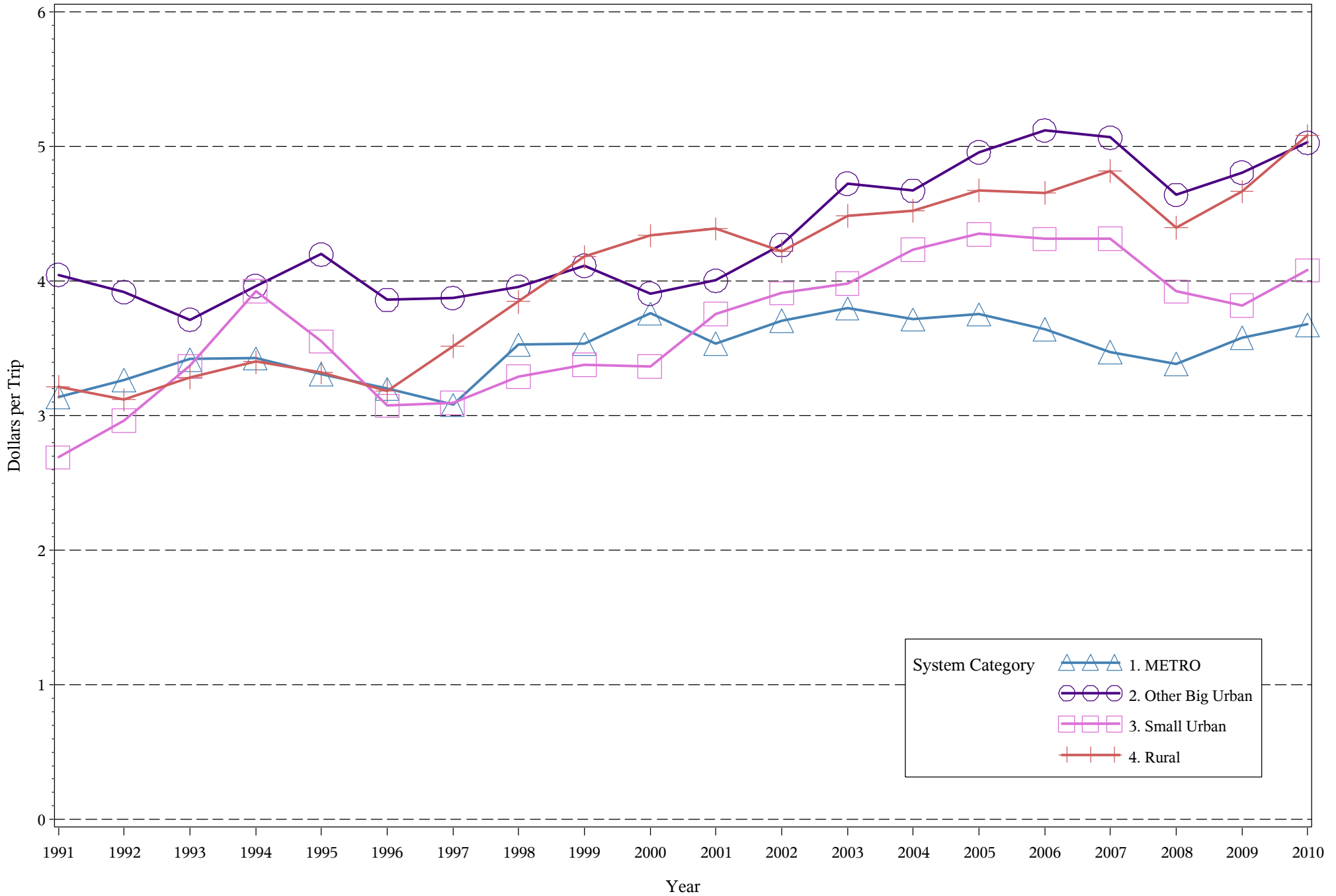
Operating Costs Per Revenue Hour by Year, For All Systems Statewide (Except Sound Transit), Fixed_Route Services

Amounts Shown are Real (Inflation-Adjusted), 2005=100%

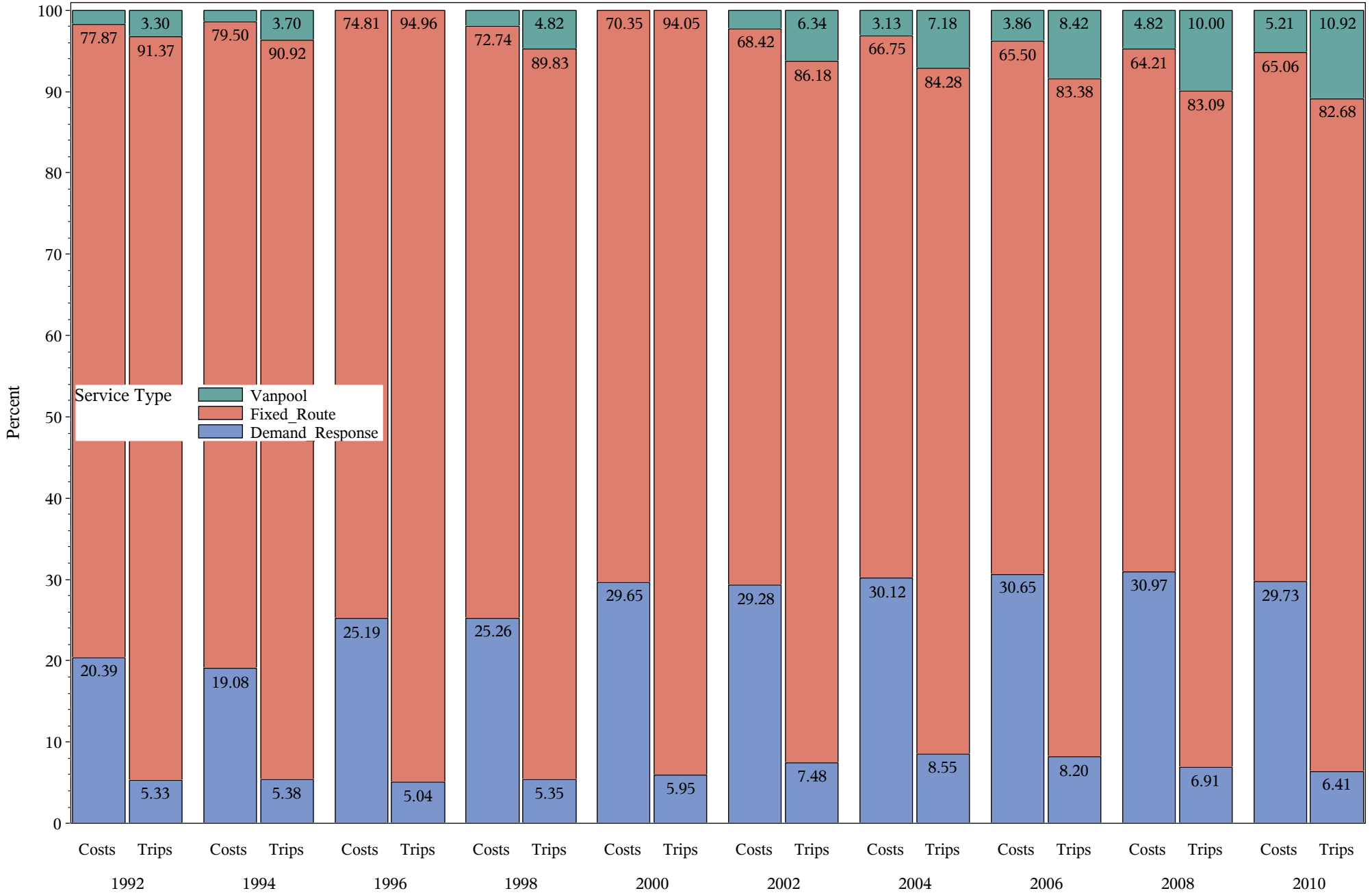


Operating Costs Per Passenger Trip by Year, For All Systems Statewide (Except Sound Transit), Fixed_Route Services

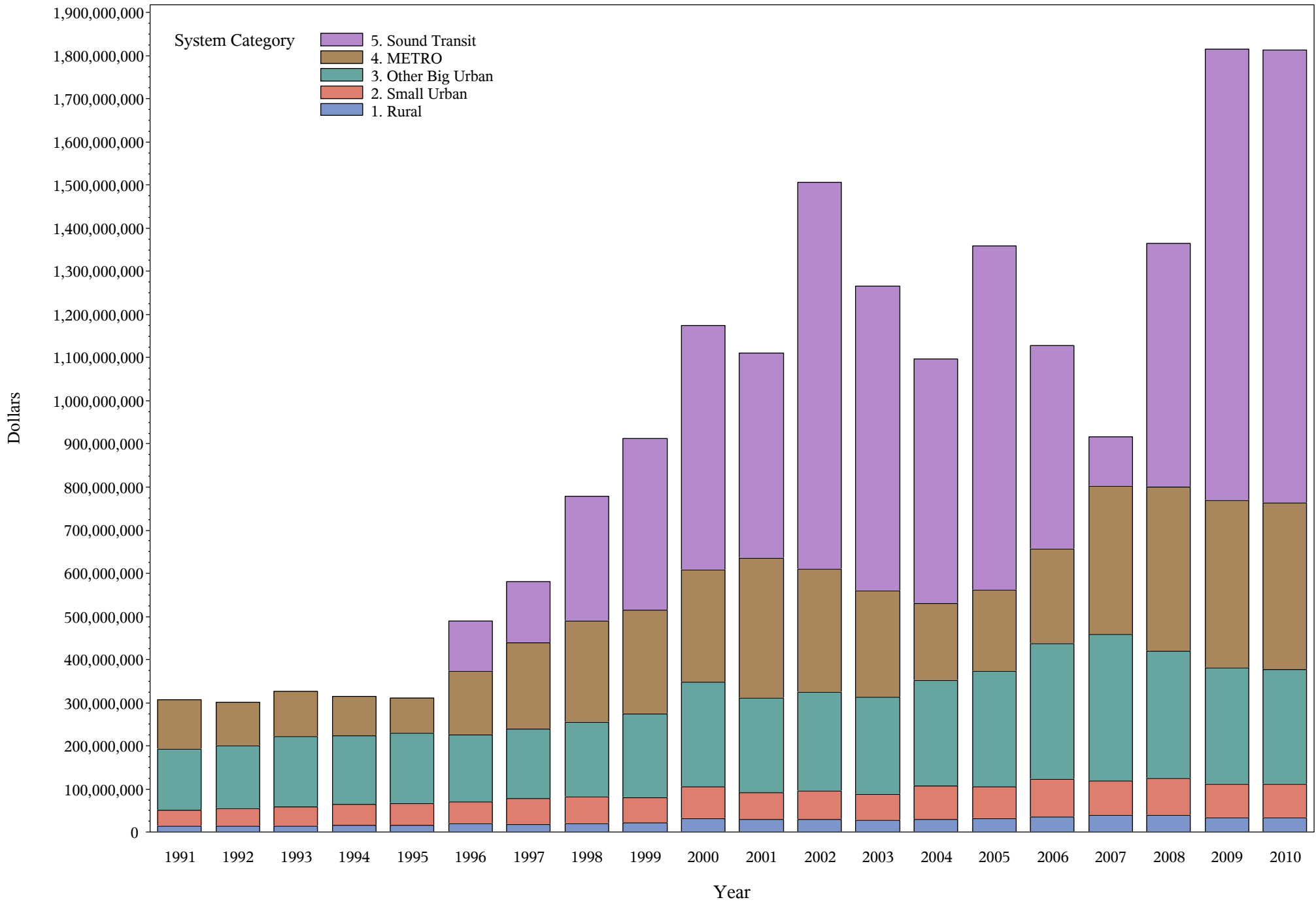
Amounts Shown are Real (Inflation-Adjusted), 2005=100%



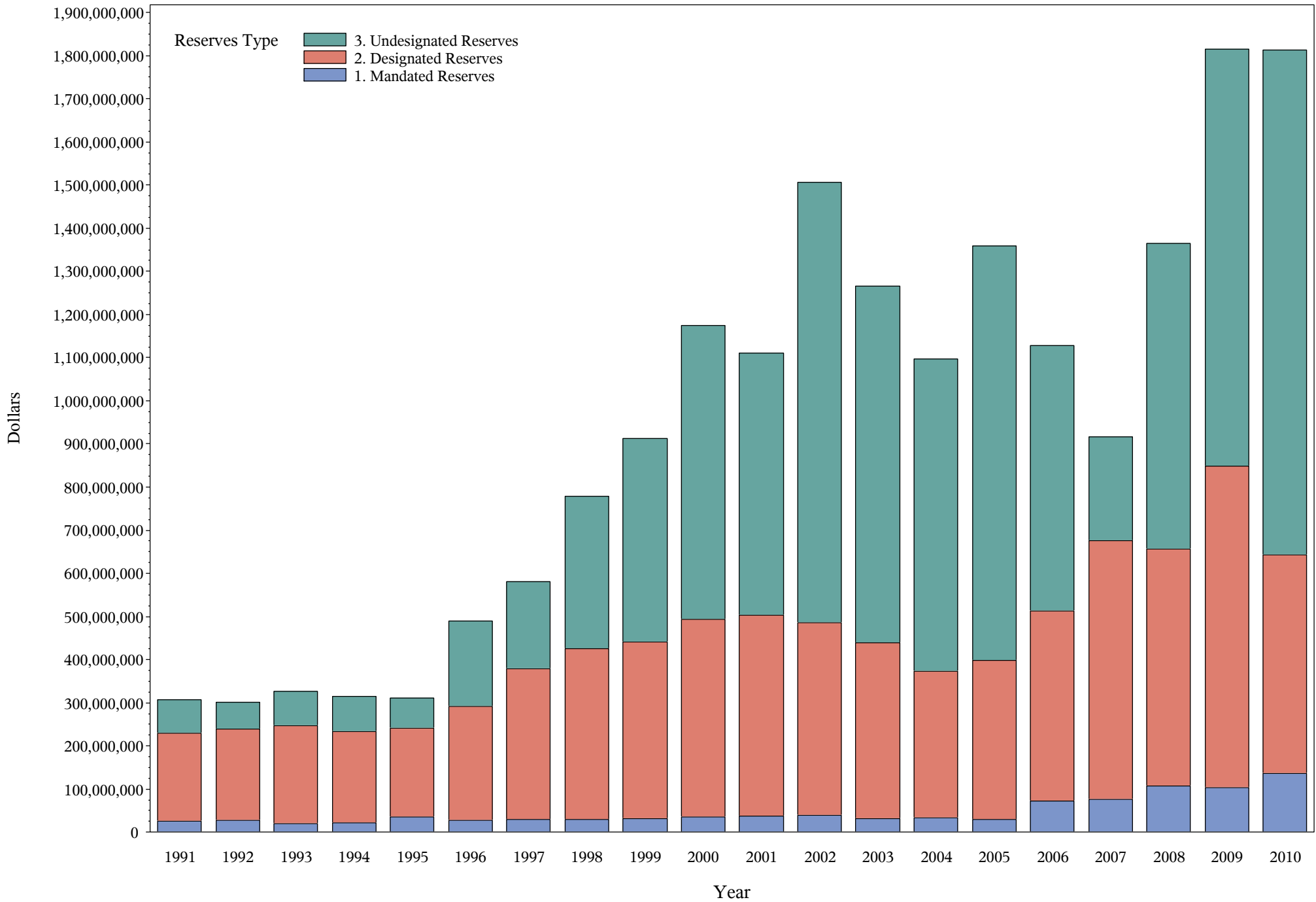
Comparison of Operating Cost Distribution to Passenger Trip Distribution By Service Type, For Small Urban Systems



Reserves by Year, For All Systems Statewide, by System Type

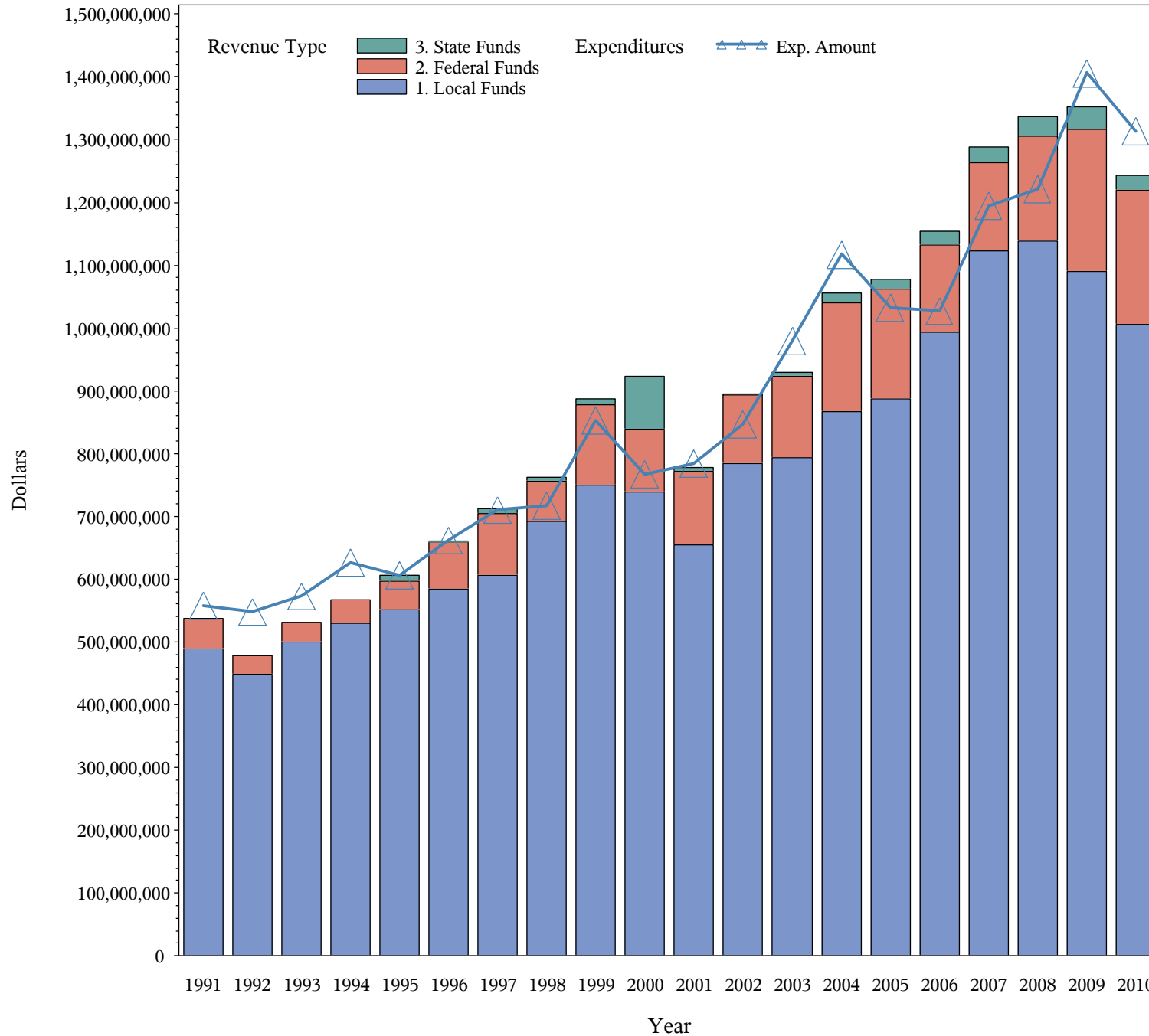


Reserves by Year, For All Systems Statewide, by Reserves Type



Overall Funding v Expenditures by Year, For All Systems Statewide (Except Sound Transit)

Amounts Shown are Nominal (Not Adjusted for Inflation)



Other factors or indicators of fiscal health:

- Age of fleet
- Maintenance policies
- Transit's role in the community
- Voter support

Fiscal Health is difficult to assess based on a single measure

- Revenue Growth—affected by sales tax rate and service requirements
- Costs of operation—affected by the nature of the service and the operating environment
- Reserves—How are they used? What is the capital plan? Other reserve policies?

Next steps in study:

- Add 2011 transit data
- Analyze state transportation revenues
- Compare transit data with state transportation data
- Other suggestions?