



County Roads & Infrastructure

Presentation to the Washington State Joint Transportation Committee

November 15, 2022



**COUNTY
LEADERS**



County Background



Counties are very different

- Okanogan County is 30 times bigger than San Juan County
- King County has 2.2 million residents and Garfield County has 2200
- Snohomish County has 41 times more transportation revenue than Wahkiakum County



County Roadway Responsibilities

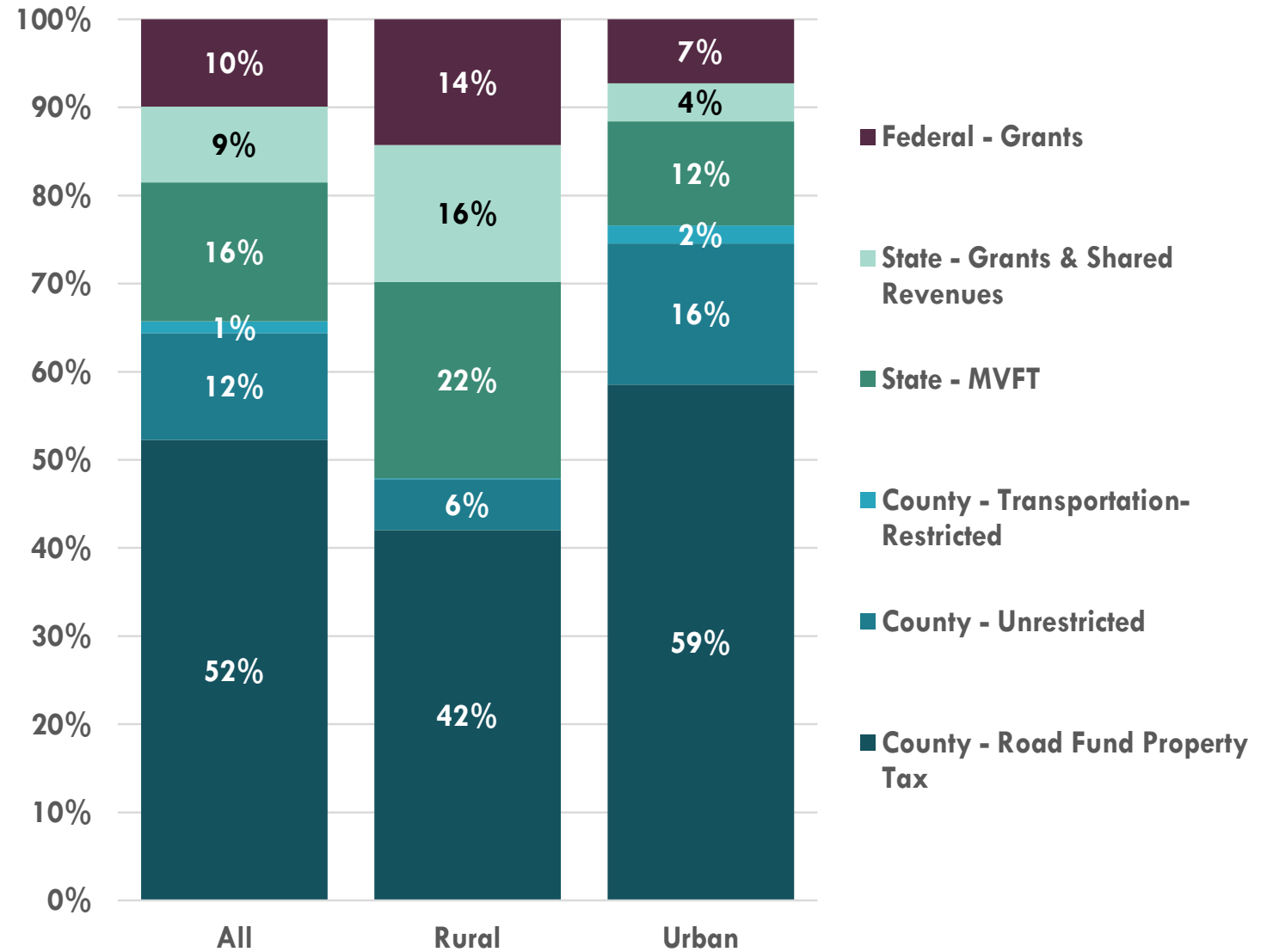
- **39,000** centerline miles/**78,700** lane miles (At least **\$4.7 billion** needed for fish barrier removal projects)
- **59%** of Washington roadways
- **3,350** bridges
- **45%** of Washington's bridges
- **4** ferry systems





2020 BERK County Transportation Revenue Study

County Transportation Funding Sources





Revenue challenges:

- Property tax one percent limit.
- Reduced tax base from annexations and incorporations.
- Declining share of gas tax allocations.

Rising costs:

- Increasing costs for materials and equipment.
- Increased environmental regulation.
- Costs to replace/remove bridges & fish barriers.
- Growing deferred maintenance.



Study Conclusions



The annual base funding gap for county transportation programmatic and capital needs is **\$719 million to \$1.23 billion**.

This gap is around half of county needs for programmatic and capital expenses.

Total road deferred maintenance costs for all counties are roughly between \$4.7 billion and \$6.3 billion— around five to six times total annual transportation expenditures.

“The combination of cost inflation and revenue constraints reduces the resources available for investment in transportation asset management. When counties cannot invest enough in preserving the existing system, lifecycle costs compound over time.”

“Without changes, counties will be unable to invest fully in roadway and bridge preservation, fish passage barrier removal, ADA access, safety, and active transportation. Deferred maintenance will grow, leading to deteriorating road conditions, potential safety hazards, and escalating catch-up costs.”

Source: BERK, 2020



Recommendations and Legislative Priorities

Revenue Study Recommendations

- Increase investment for preservation and maintenance.
- Implement a federal fund exchange program.
- Increase the county share of the gas tax
- Expand or enhance local county transportation funding options.





Legislative Priorities

State Shared Revenue

- Increase State shared revenue to Counties for transportation and infrastructure preservation and maintenance

CRAB/TIB

- Increase funding for CRAB's Rural Arterial Program (RAP) and County Arterial Preservation Program (CAPP)


Federal Fund Exchange

- Allow a federal fund exchange program

Fish Barrier Removal

- Coordinate and fund the removal of priority fish barriers regardless of jurisdictional ownership

Preservation and Maintenance

- Preservation of our transportation system should be the foremost priority of transportation investments statewide
- 



Current Economic Challenges



Workforce Challenges

- Ongoing turnover and hiring
- Increasing compensation costs
- Prolonged stress and fatigue
- Increased personnel issues
- Increased anger/speeding from drivers
- Heat/wildfire smoke



Construction Challenges

- Disrupted supply chains for equipment and supplies
- Increased costs for materials resulting in change orders
- Challenging discussions with contractors and oversight of contracts
- Complex procurement and contracting decisions
- Postponed or prolonged project timelines



Revenue Challenges

- Property tax
- Impacts of unanticipated revenue fluctuations
- Influx of state/federal funding and need for increased program capacity
- New and more complex audit/reporting requirements
- Understanding BIL benefits and programs





Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Workgroup

Recommendations

Federal Fund Exchange Pilot Program – WSDOT shall establish in the 2023-25 biennial budget a federal fund exchange pilot program.

Surface Transportation Block Grant program split **revised** to effectively provide the historic split of 21% state/79% local.

Bridge Replacement Program split **revised** to effectively provide an average split of 61% state/39% local.

PROTECT –
A total of \$75m directed to local fish passage projects.



Questions?

