

Transportation Budget



Building a modern, safe transportation system to grow our economy and connect our state

Washington has led on many transportation issues in the past. As the most trade-dependent state in the nation, we have long needed strong infrastructure to move goods to and from our ports. We are one of the most bicycle-friendly states in the country, and we were the first in the nation to pass laws against texting while driving.

In recent years, however, our transportation system has fallen behind. Across our state bridges are crumbling, commuters are stuck in traffic, and businesses are struggling to get their products to market.

House Democrats took action this year by passing legislation to fund the next generation of investments in our transportation infrastructure. We are committed to connecting our communities and building a better Washington.

2015 Legislative Success

Investing in Transportation

After three years of leading on the issue, this year House Democrats were finally able to pass a comprehensive transportation revenue package. These investments will build a robust transportation system that will grow our economy and help combat traffic congestion. The \$16.1 billion package funds important projects and programs across our state, creating 100,000 family-wage jobs over the next sixteen years.

Our economy depends on businesses being able to efficiently transport goods and products to markets both local and international. Commuters need to be able to get to their jobs without wasting time and money stuck in traffic. Modernizing our transportation network is how we build an economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthy few.

This package will also cut down on gridlock by investing in transportation choices like rail, transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Communities will also have the option to invest in themselves through expanded local transportation revenue options, including the full \$15 billion in authority for Sound Transit to expand reliable, congestion-free light rail transit.

Here are some of the other significant investments in this package:

- **\$1.4 billion** for critically needed **maintenance and preservation** work that will keep our roads and bridges safe to travel.
- **\$1 billion for transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects** – a record high investment by the state in multimodal transportation.
- **\$638 million to help cities and counties** with local transportation projects.
- **\$602 million** to improve reliability and efficiency on the **Washington State Ferries**.
- **\$220 million** for the **Washington State Patrol** to keep our highways safe.

New Policies

Fighting congestion – For 25 years Washington has partnered with private sector employers to encourage commuters to use congestion-reducing forms of travel: carpooling, public transit, bicycling, walking, or telecommuting. This year we extended and expanded that program to continue fighting gridlock in our state. (HB 1822, included in package)

Promoting green transportation – Cars that run on electricity and alternative fuels are better for the environment. To encourage the use of these modes of green transportation, we extended several tax credits for both commercial and personal vehicles. We also created a new Electrical Vehicle Infrastructure Bank, which will help develop a more extensive network of charging stations to make travel by electric vehicles simpler and more practical. (HB 1396; HB 2087, included in package)

Reducing pedestrian fatalities – Last year about 70 pedestrians were killed, and about 300 people were seriously injured, on Washington roadways. That number is unacceptably high, which is why we created the Pedestrian Safety Advisory Council to serve as a central, expert body dedicated making our communities safer for all users. (SB 5957)

Real Reforms

Better transit agency coordination – We passed legislation that will save money and create a more integrated public transportation system by encouraging transit agencies in different communities to work together. It also revamps the process for awarding Regional Mobility Grants to help support and encourage this coordination. (HB 1842)

Improving project design and delivery – This session we passed legislation encouraging two new practices to improve the way we deliver transportation projects. Design-build contracting will reduce the state's liability risk on projects. Practical design will make sure projects focus on what the community actually needs, preventing overbuilding and saving taxpayer dollars. (HB 2012; SB 5997)

Reducing redundant permitting – Legislation passed this session will streamline the permitting process for transportation projects, allowing them to be built more quickly and efficiently. These changes will mean better project delivery, without sacrificing our commitment to protecting our environment or our green spaces. (SB 5994/SB 5996)