



WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

COWLITZ COUNTY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Tuesday, April 21, 2015

- **ROADS**

- Cowlitz County maintains 528 miles of roads.
- We continually review and improve our maintenance program to provide greater efficiencies and value.
- Keeping a road in good condition with proven methods is easier, more convenient to travelers and less expensive than repairing a road that has declined to poor condition.
- Spending \$1 to keep a road in good condition precludes spending \$7 to \$10 to reconstruct the road once it has deteriorated into poor condition.
- We have increased our investment in road maintenance activities and believe 80% of our roads are in good condition, well above the national average of 50%.

- **BRIDGES**

- There are 65 bridges on Cowlitz County roads.
- Our average bridge age is 44 years old. The national average is 43 years.
- Most bridges need significant repairs or replacement by the time they reach 50 years of age. Twenty-five of the county's bridge structures are over 50 years old. Our oldest bridge was constructed in 1919.
- Given an average replacement or repair cost of \$2 million, we would need to spend \$2.5 million per year for the next 20 years AND, at that point, we would have 20 more bridges over 50 years old.
- We currently budget approximately \$750,000 dollars per year for bridge repairs.

- **CULVERTS**

- Our county road system currently includes 3,422 standard culverts.
- With a 50-year lifespan, we should replace 70 culverts each year at an annual cost of \$350,000 (\$5,000 average replacement cost per culvert).
- In addition, we have 300 culverts located on designated fish streams with 100 of those culverts identified as blockages to fish passage.
- With a 50-year life span, we should replace 6 fish-bearing culverts each year at an annual cost of \$2.4 million (\$400,000 each).
- Total annual costs for culvert replacement are estimated to be nearly \$3 million, while our current budget allows for approximately \$500,000 per year.
- While certainly a challenge, a dedicated funding source to support culvert replacement projects on fish bearing streams needs to be developed.