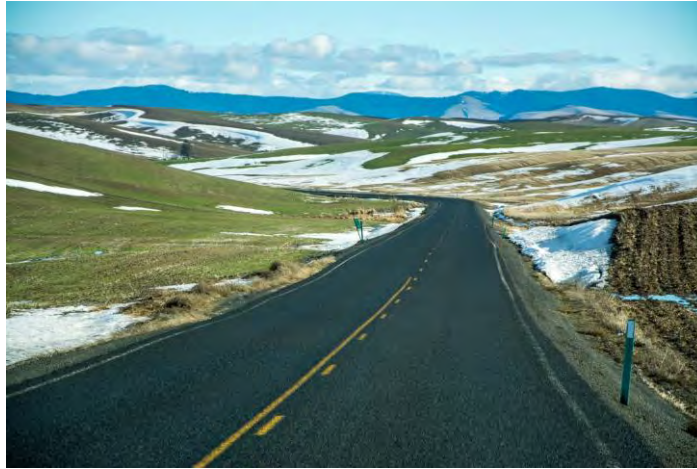


# County Transportation Update

PRESENTATION TO THE WASHINGTON  
STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DECEMBER 12, 2024

AXEL SWANSON, MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF  
COUNTY ENGINEERS



**WSACE**  
WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF  
**COUNTY ENGINEERS**

**WSAC** WASHINGTON  
STATE ASSOCIATION  
*of* **COUNTIES**





# County Roadway Responsibilities



**39,000** centerline miles/**78,700** lane miles

**59%** of roadways owned by the state, cities, and counties

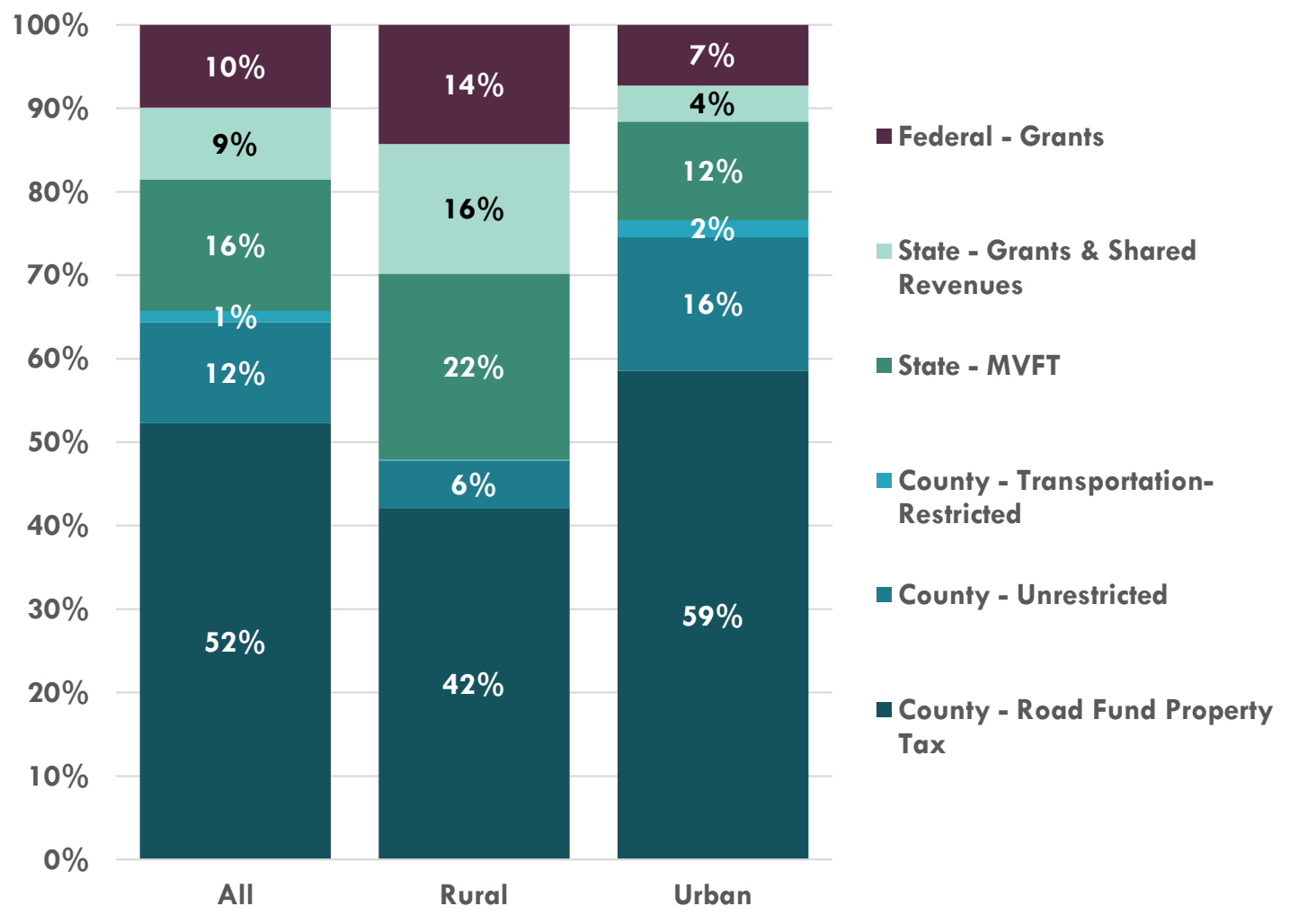
**3,350** bridges

**45%** of Washington's bridges

**4** ferry systems



# Funding Sources



Road Fund  
Property Tax  
**52%**

Motor Vehicle Fuel  
Tax  
**16%**

## Rising Costs

- Increasing costs for wages, materials and equipment.
- Increased environmental regulation raising the cost of bridge replacements & removal of fish barriers.
- Deferred maintenance leading to more expensive solutions.

## Declining Revenue

- Property tax is capped.
- Reduced tax base from annexations and incorporations.
- Declining share of gas tax allocations.

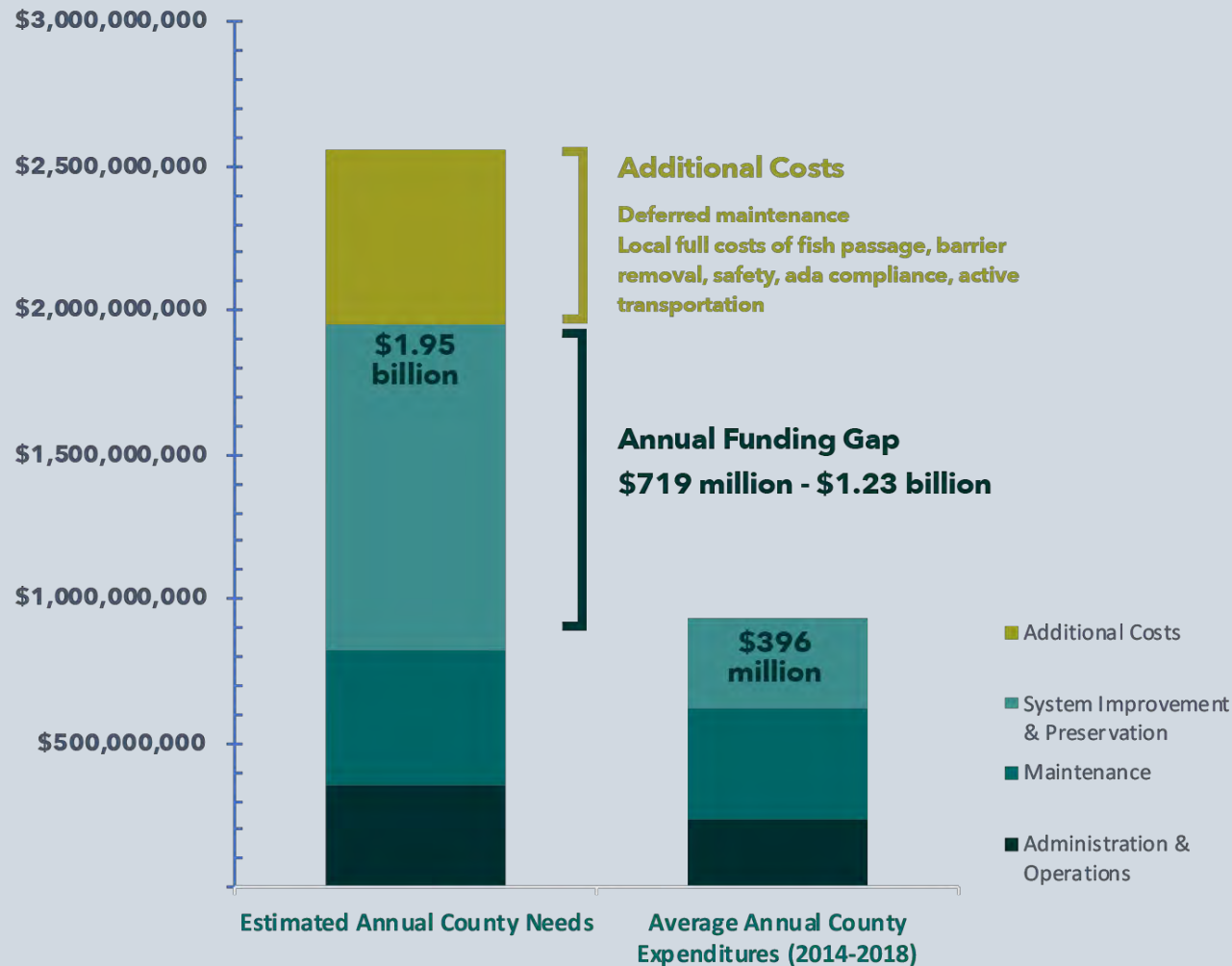


# Revenue Challenges

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

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

## Estimated Annual Funding Gap





# County Needs

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A solution to the property tax problem.

A fair distribution of MVFT, RUC, Retail Delivery Fee, or any other new revenue based on system ownership and need.

A prioritization of funding for preservation of the system and traffic safety through full funding for our local government agency partners.

A focused and collaborative effort on workforce development.

A streamlined procurement and permitting process.



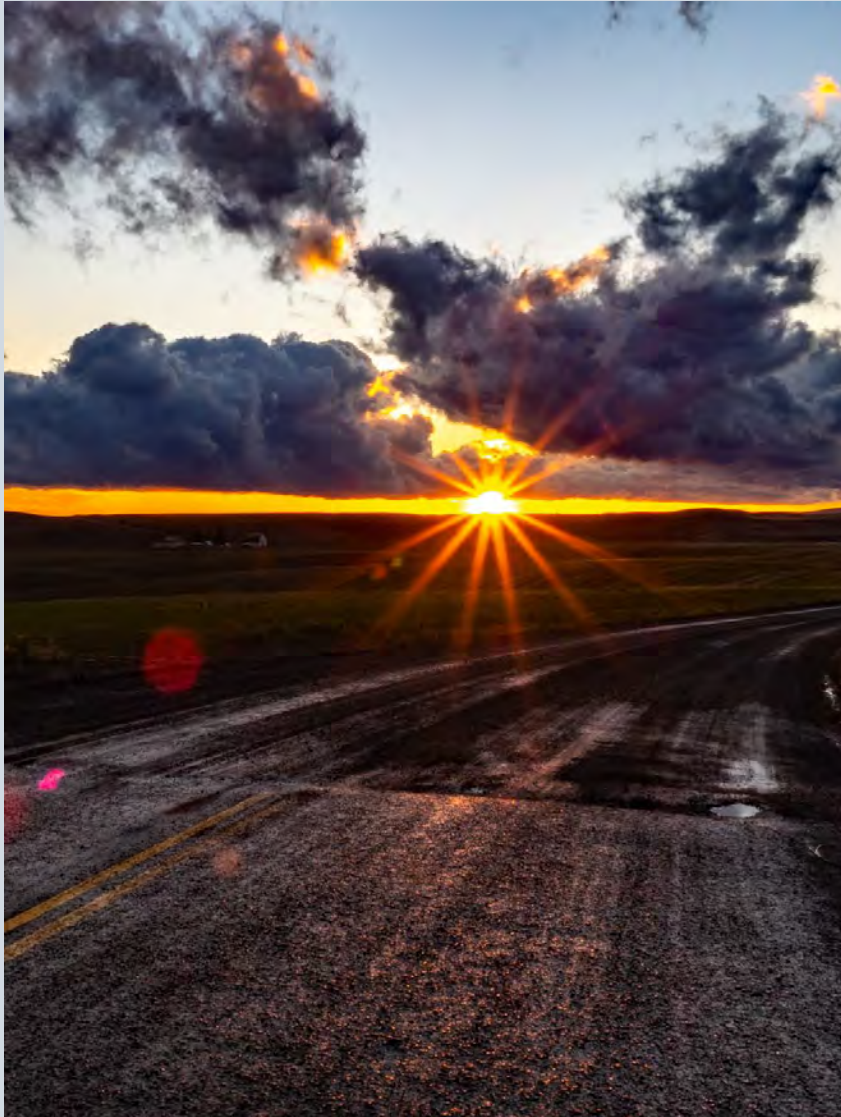
# Possible Solutions

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Possible revenue options include:

- A Road Usage Charge;
- A Retail Delivery Fee;
- Replacing the 1% cap on Property Tax;
- Dedicating motor vehicle sales tax to transportation;
- Expanding Transportation Benefit District authority;
- Simplifying Road Improvement District authority;
- Public-Private Partnerships (also known as PPP);
- Dedicating the sales tax from transportation projects to the transportation budget;
- A Tire Tax; and
- Additional Tolls





# County Priorities

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Lift the property tax cap from 1% up to a maximum of 3%, depending on population growth and inflation.

If a RUC is implemented, provide distributions based on system ownership and need while allowing for local control of how the revenue can be spent.

Expand local authority for Transportation Benefit Districts and simplify the Road Improvement District statute.

Provide new grant authority and funding for the County Road Administration Board, increase funding for the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board, and increase funding for the Reducing Rural Roadway Departures Program.



*Questions?*

**WSACE**

WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF  
**COUNTY ENGINEERS**

