
Aviation and Marine

Overview and Table of Contents

This section provides information about air and water modes of transportation used in the state.

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Air Transportation

BACKGROUND

- Aviation facilities in the Washington State System Plan include a total of 139 public-use airports serving over 25,000 pilots across the state.
 - 14 Commercial/Primary Service Airports: Seattle-Tacoma International, Spokane International, Tri-Cities, Bellingham International, Yakima Air Terminal, Pangborn Memorial, Walla Walla Regional, Pullman/Moscow Regional, Port Angeles International, Friday Harbor, Boeing Field International, Grant County International, Orcas Island, and Anacortes.
 - 5 Reliever Airports:
 - Puget Sound: Auburn Municipal, Snohomish County, Renton Municipal, and Harvey Field
 - Spokane: Felts Field
- Airport ownership varies across the state:
 - 44 are city owned
 - 10 are county owned
 - 33 are owned by ports
 - 5 are jointly owned by city-county or city-city
 - 31 are privately owned
- There are 17 state-operated or state-owned airports that are strategically located to provide aircraft emergency access and fire suppression bases in remote areas of the state.
- Each year over 750 lifesaving ambulance missions and over 460 search and rescue missions are flown from public-use airports.
- About 2% or 65 public-use airports in the state are also within the National Plan of Integrated Airports System (NPAIS) plan. These airports support the Federal Aviation Administration’s strategic goals.
- In 2001 Seattle-Tacoma International ranked 15th in the nation for total number of passenger boardings. Spokane International followed (among Washington State airports) at 76th in the nation.
- Air Freight
 - The three qualifying major air cargo centers in Washington are:
 - Seattle-Tacoma International (19th nationally in 2001 for total landed weight)
 - Boeing Field International (37th)
 - Spokane International (61st)
 - In addition, 12 other state airports provide air freight services

GOVERNANCE

- Public-use airports are operated by port districts, cities, counties, and private interests. Public-owned facilities use several different funding mechanisms, including user fees (such as landing fees and passenger facility charges), voter-approved property tax levies, interest income, federal and state grants, and bond proceeds.
- WSDOT Aviation programs include the airport grant aid program, aviation system and land use planning, search and rescue, aircraft registration, and state managed airport administration.

- Programs operated by WSDOT-Aviation Division:
 - Construction and maintenance of facilities for 16 state-operated airports
 - Technical assistance to airports, cities, and counties
 - Search and rescue operations
 - Development of Washington Aviation System Plan
 - Height Hazard Obstruction review
 - Special studies, including:
 - Pavement Conditions Assessment 2005 (3-year cycle)
 - Economic Benefits Analysis of Airports in Washington State 2001
 - Rural Airport Study 2002
 - Airport Conditions Assessment, 2006, Phase I LATS
 - Grant Assistance Program
 - Airport Land Use Compatibility Program and Technical Assistance in accordance with RCW 36.70.547 and 36.70A.510

FUNDING

Funding for WSDOT-Aviation Division:

- State aviation fuel tax (RCW 82.42)
 - 11 cents per gallon fuel tax, which applies to general aviation aircraft, with exceptions as provided by law (aircraft exemptions include aircraft for government, military, commercial manufacturing, air carriers, testing, and agriculture)
 - Expected revenue for 2007–09 Biennium: \$10.64 million
 - Motor fuel tax transfer (RCW 82.36.415)
 - 0.028% of the gross motor fuel tax (less sales tax) (estimate \$500,000)
 - Compensation for unclaimed motor vehicle fuel used in aircraft
- Aircraft registration fee (RCW 47.68.250)
 - \$15 paid annually by owners of aircraft operating in Washington State
- Aircraft excise tax (RCW 82.48.)
 - Annual rate levied on a sliding scale of \$35–\$140 per aircraft depending on the type and size of the aircraft
 - 10% of funds go to the Aviation Division to defray costs of registration and collection
 - 90% of the funds are deposited in the General Fund
- Grants
 - Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
 - All grants require matching: 95% federal – 5% state/local
 - FAA grants fund the following:
 - Numerous State Aviation System Plan projects
 - State’s Pavement Management Program
 - Airport master planning
 - Airport Improvement Projects
- State funds are used for the following purposes:
 - Provide matching grants to municipalities for constructing projects to improve airport infrastructure
 - Provide funding to many airports that do not qualify for federal funds
 - Technical Assistance
 - Airport master planning
 - Emergency Response Aviation Facilities

Funding sources for local airport funding:

- Dedicated aviation funds: from proceeds of leases, hangar rentals, commercial leases, concessions, etc.
- Major airports (e.g., Seattle-Tacoma and Spokane International) impose landing fees on airlines to cover operations and finance capital improvements made with revenue bonds. In addition, passenger facility charges are assessed at most major airports for improvement projects.
- Some ports, counties, and cities appropriate general tax revenues to support their facilities.

Commercial Shipping (Waterborne)

BACKGROUND

- In 2006, over 121 million tons of freight entered or left Washington State through Washington's seaports, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and 25 million tons moved within the state.
- Crude petroleum, sand and gravel, and manufactured goods were the top three inbound commodities, by tonnage, in 2005. Food and food products, petroleum products, and lumber or wood were the top three outbound commodities, by tonnage, in 2005.
- In 2005, Washington State's seaports handled almost \$81 billion in international trade, 63% of the value of international trade entering or leaving the state.
- Puget Sound seaports move large volumes of containerized imports from Asia, and the Columbia River seaports move large volumes of U.S. agricultural exports.
- Seventy percent of total inbound international container traffic is pass-through cargo destined for the Midwest or Eastern United States.
- In 2006, the Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma handled more than 2.3 million TEUs (20-foot equivalent units), remaining the second largest container port complex on the West Coast.
- There are 11 deep-draft public ports in Washington with commercial marine terminals, and six shallow-draft public marine terminals. There are shallow-draft ports frequently used for fish landings at the Ports of Willapa Harbor, Peninsula, Ilwaco, and Chinook. In addition, there are many privately-owned marine terminal facilities throughout the state.
- Washington has seven deep-draft ports in Puget Sound, one on the Pacific Coast and three deep-draft ports on the Columbia River. In addition, there are seven inland ports on the Columbia-Snake Rivers that are served by barge. The ports described above are:

Puget Sound:

- Port of Anacortes
- Port of Bellingham
- Port of Everett
- Port of Olympia
- Port of Port Angeles
- Port of Seattle
- Port of Tacoma

Pacific Coast:

- Port of Grays Harbor

Columbia Deep-Draft:

- Port of Kalama
- Port of Longview
- Port of Vancouver

Inland Columbia/Snake:

- Port of Benton
- Port of Clarkston
- Port of Kennewick

- Port of Klickitat
- Port of Pasco
- Port of Walla Walla
- Port of Whitman County

GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

- Washington's ports are public agencies authorized in state statute.
- Port districts are special-purpose districts dedicated to building and operating facilities to foster trade and economic development.
- In Washington, ports primarily provide four types of facilities: industrial areas (42 ports); recreational marinas/docks (41 ports); airports (31 ports); and marine terminals (16 ports).
- Ports are funded by user fees, property lease and rental fees, property tax levies, interest income, grants, operations revenues, and bond proceeds (RCW 53.36).
- The United States Coast Guard regulates navigation and surface water transportation.
- The Washington Board of Pilotage Commissioners is responsible for maintaining pilotage services on the Puget Sound and the coastal estuaries.
- The Oregon Board of Pilotage governs pilotage services on the Columbia River.

Ferries

BACKGROUND

- The Department of Transportation, Washington State Ferries (WSF) is the nation's largest ferry system.
 - Washington State's largest tourist attraction
 - Links urban areas on the east side of Puget Sound and communities on the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas
 - Links San Juan Islands and Vashon Island with mainland
 - Links Washington State with Canada through Sidney route
- Ferries are also operated by private businesses and counties.

GOVERNANCE

State Ferries

- Operated by the WSDOT – Washington State Ferries.
- System includes 22 vessels providing service on 10 routes to 20 terminals; in FY 2008 ferries carried 23.2 million riders and 10.4 million vehicles.
- Current WSF vessel fleet consists of 11 vessel types: Jumbo Mark II Class (3), Jumbo Class (2), Super Class (4), Issaquah Class (1), Issaquah 130 Class (5), Evergreen State Class (3), Passenger-only (2), Rhododendron and Hiyu (1 each).
- WSF currently serves 20 terminals in 8 counties and British Columbia. WSF owns 14 of the terminals and 6 others are leased.

County Ferries

- Four counties currently operate public ferries:
 - Pierce, Whatcom, Skagit, and Wahkiakum counties
 - Largely funded with county road funds, Wahkiakum receives state support.

Private Ferry Operations

- There are 19 private ferry operations registered with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.
 - 14 serve between land-based destinations
 - 5 exclusively provide anchorage services
- In August 2004, a private ferry operator, Kitsap Ferry Co., began passenger-only ferry service between Bremerton and Seattle. In January 2005, Aqua Express began passenger-only ferry service between Kingston and Seattle, then discontinued later that year. Additional passenger-only routes are being reviewed by private operators for possible future service.
- In addition, there are operations traveling between Port Angeles and Victoria, British Columbia; Seattle and Victoria; and Bellingham and Alaska.

Other Ferry Operations

- There are five operations in the state that fall into the category "other":
 - The Colville Indian Tribe provides a toll-free crossing of Lake Roosevelt (Columbia River)

- The Alaska Marine Highway (between Bellingham, Washington and Skagway, Alaska)
- British Columbia Steamship (between Seattle and Victoria)
- WSDOT Eastern Region maintains and operates the Keller Ferry on SR 21 in Eastern Washington.

FUNDING

- State Ferries
 - Dedicated Motor fuel tax distribution for ferry operations (0.54 cents of 23-cent dedicated gas tax)
 - Dedicated Motor fuel tax distribution for ferry capital construction (0.55 cents of 23-cent dedicated gas tax)
 - Motor fuel tax support from MVA
 - Combined licensing fee (1.661% of collections)
 - Ferry fares, concessions, and rent
 - Federal Ferry Boat and Terminals Construction Program
 - Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant programs—Section 5309 and Section 5307
 - Federal Surface Transportation Program
 - Federal Homeland Security grant funds from the Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP) and the Transit Security Administration (TSA)
 - Bond proceeds
- County Ferry Districts (*See Local Taxes*)
- PTBA Ferry Operations (*See Local Taxes*)

Ferry Route Map



