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# Transportation Budget

## Table of Contents

Transportation Budget .....	1
State Budgeting Overview .....	2
Transportation Budget Overview .....	3
Transportation Operating Budget .....	4
Transportation Capital Budget .....	5
Revenue Sources for the Transportation Budget .....	6
Distribution of the 37.5¢ Gas Tax (\$2.3 billion).....	9
Transportation Budget Process .....	15
Miscellaneous Budget Information .....	16

# State Budgeting Overview

The Legislature makes its biennial appropriations in three budget bills.

## **OPERATING BUDGET**

### Purpose:

- Pays for the day-to-day operating expenses of state government, including the expenses of state agencies, colleges and universities, public schools, and other state programs.
- The General Fund portion of the operating budget pays the principle and interest on bonds sold to finance the capital budget.

### Source:

- About half of the operating budget is financed through the State General Fund. The General Fund receives its revenues from retail sales tax (46.5%), business and occupation tax (21.3%), and property taxes (12.4%).
- The remainder of the operating budget comes from use taxes, real estate excise taxes, public utility taxes, and from federal and other funding sources.

## **CAPITAL BUDGET**

### Purpose:

- Pays for the acquisition and maintenance of state buildings, public schools, higher education facilities, prisons, public lands, parks, and other capital facilities.
- The capital budget often includes reappropriations for projects funded in a prior biennium but not fully completed within that timeframe.

### Source:

- About half of the capital budget is financed by state-issued bonds. The debt service on the bonds is paid primarily by the operating budget. Debt service is limited by the State Constitution to no more than 9% of general state revenues.
- The remainder of the capital budget is financed from dedicated accounts, trust revenue, and other state funding sources.

## **TRANSPORTATION BUDGET**

### Purpose:

- Pays for transportation operating and capital costs, such as maintaining, preserving, and improving the highway system; operating ferries; motor vehicle registration; and enforcing traffic laws on the state highway system. For the 2011-13 biennium, capital program appropriations represent \$6.7 billion of the transportation budget, and operating programs total \$3.1 billion.

### Source:

- The primary sources of funding for the 2011-13 transportation budget are motor vehicle fuel taxes (32.5%); bonds (23.9%); federal funds (20.1%); license, permits and fees (12.9%); ferry fares (4.2%); and other sources.

## Transportation Budget Overview

The transportation budget appropriates operating *and* capital funding to agencies that provide a wide variety of transportation functions and services. Operating programs are the day-to-day expenses of running an agency or program including salaries, benefits, and goods and services such as supplies and fuel. Capital programs are projects that are longer lived including construction of roads, buildings, ferry terminals, and building or refurbishing vessels.

The major agencies include the Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the Department of Licensing (DOL), and the Washington State Patrol (WSP). Many smaller transportation agencies and committees are also funded through the transportation budget including the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), County Road Administration Board (CRAB), Traffic Safety Commission, and the Joint Transportation Committee.

Total appropriations in the 2011-13 transportation budget, including the changes made in the 2012 Supplemental, are \$9.86 billion. Of that amount, 68% is for capital purposes and 32% is for operating purposes.

Information on the most recent legislatively enacted budget can be found at the LEAP Committee website: <http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/default.asp>

In the larger agencies, such as the Department of Transportation, funding is appropriated by program. Programs are a defined set of activities within an agency. In cases where programs have both operating and capital elements, separate appropriations are made for the operating and capital components.

## Transportation Operating Budget

Of the total 2011-13 transportation operating budget the major expenditure categories are shown below. Over three-quarters of the operating budget is accounted for by five programs and agencies: payment of bond debt; the ferry system; Washington State Patrol; highway maintenance; and the Department of Licensing.

### Transportation Operating Budget

Agency/Program, 2011-13	Dollars (1000s)	Share of budget
Bond Retirement and Interest	1,017,801	32.4%
WSDOT - WA State Ferries-Op	475,135	15.1%
WSDOT - Highway Maintenance	384,209	12.2%
Washington State Patrol	375,278	11.9%
Department of Licensing	245,061	7.8%
WSDOT - Public Transportation	113,102	3.6%
WSDOT - Charges from Other Agys	76,932	2.4%
WSDOT - Information Technology	70,681	2.2%
WSDOT - Toll Op & Maint-Op	56,096	1.8%
WSDOT - Traffic Operations	51,118	1.6%
WA Traffic Safety Commission	48,880	1.6%
WSDOT - Planning, Data & Resch	48,510	1.5%
WSDOT - Pgm Delivery Mgmt Suppt	46,546	1.5%
WSDOT - Rail	34,042	1.1%
WSDOT - Transportation Mgmt	28,392	0.9%
WSDOT - Hwy Mgmt & Facilities	25,466	0.8%
WSDOT - Local Programs	11,085	0.4%
WSDOT - Aviation	8,152	0.3%

## Transportation Capital Budget

Of the total 2011-13 transportation capital budget the major expenditure categories in the next table. The “mobility” category accounts for well over half of the transportation capital budget and includes congestion relief projects for vehicle mobility as well as projects for bike and pedestrian mobility. The “structures” category principally includes bridge preservation projects, while the “roadway” category principally includes paving and striping projects. "Economic initiatives" are highway projects with a freight or economic development purpose. For instance, the Snoqualmie Pass project is included in this category.

### Transportation Capital Budget

Agency/Program, 2011-13	Dollars (1000s)	Share of budget
WSDOT - Improvements - Mobility	4,405,962	65.5%
WSDOT - WA State Ferries	414,194	6.2%
WSDOT - Rail	303,085	4.5%
WSDOT - Preservation - Roadway	286,783	4.3%
WSDOT - Preservation - Structures	246,724	3.7%
Transportation Improvement Board	246,315	3.7%
WSDOT - Improvements - Safety	170,854	2.5%
WSDOT - - Economic Initiatives	170,709	2.5%
WSDOT - Local Programs	107,574	1.6%
County Road Administration Board	96,244	1.4%

## Revenue Sources for the Transportation Budget

The revenues available for transportation purposes may be classified into four categories: state funds (including taxes and fees); bonds; federal funds; and local funds. These funds are appropriated through the transportation budget. Amounts distributed by statute directly to cities and counties are not appropriated through the budget (and are not included in chart totals). The sources of transportation funds are displayed in the pie graph below and are estimated at \$7.9 billion for the 2011-13 biennium.

### 2011-13 Transportation Revenue

Source of revenue	\$ millions	Share of total revenue
23 cent gas tax	1,707	21.6%
5 cent gas tax	322	4.1%
2005 gas tax	547	6.9%
Licenses, permits and fees	1,023	12.9%
25 cent ferry capital surcharge	8	0.1%
Ferry fares	300	3.8%
Vehicle sales tax	68	0.9%
Rental car tax	51	0.6%
Toll revenue	264	3.3%
Miscellaneous, includes transfers	97	1.2%
Local Funds to WSDOT	39	0.5%
Federal Funds to WSDOT	1,590	20.1%
Bond Sales, including SR 520 Bridge Funds	1,885	23.9%
Balance from previous biennium	167	na
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,901</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Based on February 2012 Revenue Forecast and Supplement Budget

### Gas Tax

Washington State currently has a 37.5 cent per gallon gas tax on gasoline and diesel fuels.

Prior to 2003, the last gas tax increase was approved by the Legislature in 1991. In 1990, the tax was increased by four cents; in 1991 the tax was increased by an additional penny. In 2003 and again in 2005, the Legislature enacted gas tax increases as part of the Nickel package and the Transportation Partnership Act.

- **The Nickel Package:** The 2003 Legislature adopted a ten-year transportation revenue package of \$4.2 billion, of which \$3.6 billion were funds restricted to highway purposes and \$600 million were flexible funds.

Known as the “Nickel” package, the 2003 finance package included:

- 5 cent increase of the gas tax;
- 15 percent increase in weight fees;
- three tenths of one percent increase in the sales tax on cars; and
- increase of the license plate retention fee to \$20.

At the time of passage, the 2003 Nickel package funded \$3.7 billion in highway improvements and \$475 million in program increases for non-highway purposes.

Funding for activities eligible for 18<sup>th</sup> amendment funds included:

- \$3 billion for congestion relief projects, of which \$700 million were for high-occupancy vehicle lane improvements;
- \$211 for safety projects, most of which was for design, right-of-way acquisition, and environmental compliance for the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement project;
- \$145 million for preservation; and,
- approximately \$300 million for ferry system improvements.

Funding for non-highway purposes included:

- \$236 million in public transportation investments
  - \$30 million increase in the commute trip reduction tax credit;
  - \$30 million for new van pools;
  - \$75 million for rural transit agency grants; and,
  - \$98 million for special needs transportation grants to transit agencies and private non-profit transit service providers.

- **The Transportation Partnership Package:** In 2005, the Legislature enacted the Transportation Partnership Act (TPA) to continue to address the significant transportation needs of the state, including the replacement of major facilities such as the SR 520 Bridge and the Alaskan Way Viaduct (AWV). The TPA funding package was estimated to raise \$8.5 billion over a 16-year period, including a 9.5 cent gas tax increase phased in over four years and vehicle weight fees on cars, light trucks, and SUVs. Of the estimated total, \$7.1 billion must be spent on highway purposes and \$1.4 billion are flexible funds which may be used for non-highway purposes.

Funding for activities eligible for 18<sup>th</sup> amendment funds totaled an estimated \$7.7 billion and included:

- \$2 billion for replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and seawall;
- \$500 million for replacement of the SR 520 Bridge;
- Almost \$3 billion for congestion relief, including \$972 million for I-405 improvements;
- \$678 million for bridge replacement, seismic retrofit of bridges, and other safety projects;
- \$80 million for local grant programs (TIB, CRAB);
- \$185 million for ferry investments, including \$67 million for an additional vessel;

- \$523 million for local and state freight mobility projects; and,
- \$108 million for environmental mitigation projects.

Funding for non-highway purposes totaled \$680 million and included:

- \$340 million for regional transit grants and the Office of Transit Mobility;
- An additional \$55 million for special needs transit grants;
- \$58 million for pedestrian safety grants, including Safe Routes to Schools and Safe Routes to Transit;
- An additional \$12 million for the Commute Trip Reduction tax credit program;
- \$95 million in passenger rail investments; and,
- \$120 million in freight rail investments.



## Distribution of the 37.5¢ Gas Tax (\$2.3 billion)

- 11.95 cents is distributed to local governments, either directly or through grants distributed by the Transportation Improvement Board and the County Road Administration Board.
- The remaining 25.55 cents is retained by the state and appropriated in the transportation budget.

## Biennial Distribution of the 37.5 cent gas tax (\$2.3 billion)

Account	Cents	\$ millions	Share of total revenue
Motor Vehicle Account	10.21	639.2	27%
Special Category C Account	0.75	47	2%
Ferry Capital and Operating	1.08	67.7	3%
2003 Transportation "Nickel" Account	5	313.1	13%
Transportation Partnership Account	8.5	532.2	23%
Cities	2.96	185.3	8%
Transportation Improvement Board	3.04	190.6	8%
Counties	4.92	308.2	13%
Country Road Administration Board	1.03	64.7	3%
TOTAL	37.5	2,348	100%

Based on February 2012 Revenue Forecast and Supplemental Budget

- **Motor Vehicle Account/State Highway Program**– 10.21 cents deposited into the Motor Vehicle Account. Primarily used for state highway related expenditures.
- **Special Category C** - 0.75 cents deposited into the Motor Vehicle Account for high-cost highway projects.
- **Ferry Capital** - 0.55 cents deposited into the Puget Sound Capital Construction Account for the construction and maintenance of the state’s ferries and terminals.
- **Ferry Operations** - 0.54 cents deposited into the Puget Sound Ferry Operations Account for the operation of the state ferry system.
- **Transportation 2003 (Nickel) Account** – 5 cents deposited into the Transportation 2003 (Nickel) Account for designated projects. This amount will expire when the projects are completed and the bonds associated with this revenue stream are retired.
- **Transportation Partnership Account 2005 (TPA)** – 9.5 cents deposited into the Transportation Partnership Account for designated projects. 1 cent of the 9.5 cents is distributed directly to cities (1/2) and counties (1/2).
- **Cities** – 2.96 cents distributed directly to cities based on population, for construction, maintenance, and policing of city streets.

- **Counties** – 4.92 cents distributed directly to counties for construction, maintenance, and policing of county roads. Of this amount, 10% is evenly distributed, 30% by population, 30% based on annual road costs, and 30% based on needs for construction and maintenance.
  
- **Transportation Improvement Board**
  - **Transportation Improvement Program**– 3.04 cents distributed by the Transportation Improvement Board as grants for congestion projects primarily in cities. However, historically approximately 0.72 cents of this amount has gone to county projects.
  - **Small City Pavement and Sidewalk Program** - 0.03 cents distributed to cities with populations of 5,000 or less.
  
- **County Road Administration Board**
  - **Rural Arterial Program** - 0.58 cents deposited into the Rural Arterial Trust Account. The account is administered by the County Road Administration Board and the funds are distributed to counties as grants for construction and reconstruction of rural arterials.
  - **County Arterial Preservation Program** - 0.45 cents deposited in the County Arterial Preservation Account distributed by the County Road Administration Board for structural integrity and safety of county arterials.

## **Licenses, Permits and Fees**

Licenses, permits, and fee revenues are primarily generated from the \$30 vehicle license fee and the combined license fee paid by trucks (commonly called the gross weight fee). Other fees include title fees, vehicle inspection fees, and special permit fees.

Licenses, permits, and fees are the second largest source of state funds for transportation, and are distributed as follows:

### **2011-13 Distribution of License Permit and Fee Revenue**

<b>Account receiving fee revenue</b>	<b>\$ millions</b>	<b>Share of total revenue</b>
Highway Safety Fund	165.7	15.0%
Freight Mobility Multitmodal Account	6.0	0.5%
State Ferries Operating	14.9	1.3%
Transportation Partnership Account	40.3	3.6%
Transportation 2003 Nickel Account	32.9	3.0%
Multimodal Transportation Account	127.8	11.6%
Motor Vehicle Account	376.7	34.1%
WA State Patrol Copies of Driving Records	30.8	2.8%
WA State Patrol License Fees	294.3	26.6%
License Plate Technology Account	2.9	0.3%
DOL Services Account	5.9	0.5%
Ignition Interlock Device Revolving Account	2.4	0.2%
Motorcycle Safety Education Account	4.5	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,104.9</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Based on February 2012 Revenue Forecast and Supplemental Budget

➤ **Ferry Fares**

Ferry passengers pay a toll (fare). The fares vary significantly for different routes and seasons. Currently, the fares cover approximately 76% of state ferry operating costs. Ferry fares for the 2011-13 biennium are estimated at \$300 million.

➤ **Vehicle License Fees**

This fee is the annual registration fee for cars, motorcycles, travel trailers, trailers and motor homes. The \$30 license fee is distributed to the State Patrol Highway Account (\$20.35 for each renewal and original), to the Puget Sound Ferry Operating Account (\$2.02 for originals and \$0.93 for renewals), with the remainder being distributed to the Motor Vehicle Account.

The combined licensing fee collected from trucks is based on gross weight. This fee is distributed to the State Patrol Highway Account (22.36%), Puget Sound Ferry Operations Account (1.375%), Nickel Account (5.237%), Transportation Partnership Account (11.533%) and the Motor Vehicle Account (59.495%).

In 2005, a new passenger vehicle weight fee was established. These fees are distributed to the Multimodal Account; however, \$6 million per biennium is transferred to the Freight Mobility Multimodal Account and \$5 million per biennium is transferred to the Transportation Infrastructure Account for rail projects.

In 2005, the combined licensing fee for trucks under 8,000 pounds was increased. The first \$6 million each biennium is distributed to the Freight Mobility Investment Account, and the remainder is distributed to the Transportation Partnership Account.

In 2005, a \$75 annual motor home weight fee was also imposed and is distributed to the Multimodal Account.

➤ **Driver Licenses**

The Department of Licensing collects fees to cover costs associated with licensing drivers. In recent years, a portion of these funds have been transferred to other accounts. The fees that generate the greatest amount of revenue are driver license fees and the sale of drivers abstracts. Other license fees include motorcycle and commercial drivers' license endorsements.

➤ **Vehicle Sales Tax**

The 2003 new revenue legislation created a 0.3% sales tax on vehicle purchases. These revenues, along with the rental car sales tax, generate most of the funds used for non-highway purposes.

➤ **Rental Car Sales Tax**

Washington State has a 5.9% sales tax on rental cars. In terms of flexible revenue sources, the rental car tax is the second largest contributor to the Multimodal Transportation Account.

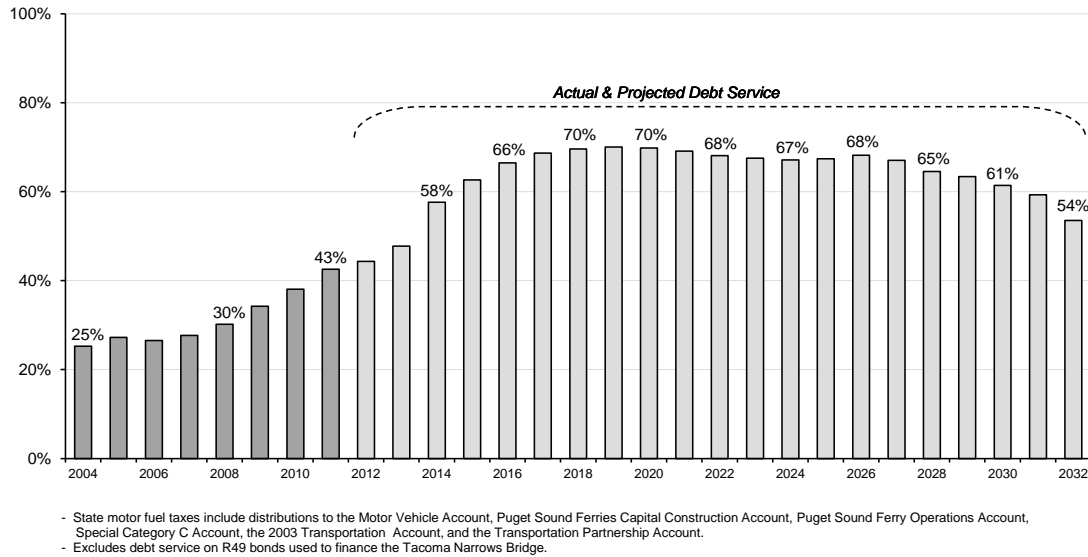
➤ **Other Revenue**

Other revenue sources include interest earnings on fund balances, aircraft fuel taxes, ferry concessions, speeding fines in school zones, sales of Department of Transportation right-of-ways, and transfers from existing fund balances.

## **Bonds**

- Initially, cash was used to pay for transportation improvements. During and after the 1930s, however, public debt was incurred for highway construction projects.
- Debt financing has increased or decreased, depending on the availability of tax revenues and the magnitude of needed improvements.
- Transportation bonds are ultimately backed by the full faith and credit of the state (general obligation) but have other sources of repayment that constitute the primary source for debt service. Highway bonds are first backed by gas tax revenues and are exempt from statutory or constitutional debt limits.
- In 2003, \$2.6 billion in bonds were authorized for transportation projects backed by a five cent increase in the gas tax. Also in 2003, \$349 million in bonds were authorized and backed by revenues from the Multimodal Transportation Account. These multimodal account bonds are subject to the state's debt limit.
- In 2005, \$5.1 billion in bonds were authorized for sale to provide funds for the location, design, right of way, and construction of selected projects and improvements identified as 2005 Transportation Partnership Projects. These bonds were backed by revenues from a phased-in 9.5 cent per gallon gas tax increase.
- In 2007, the bond authorization for Special Category C improvements was increased from \$330 million to \$600 million. The bond authorization for Transportation 2003 projects was increased from \$2.6 billion to \$3.2 billion, and the bond authorization for Transportation 2005 projects was increased from \$5.1 billion to \$5.3 billion. The bond authorization for urban arterials was also increased by \$50 million.
- In 2009, \$1.95 billion of SR 520 bonds were authorized to pay for State Route 520 corridor projects, including the replacement of the floating bridge and east side connections. The SR 520 bonds are first payable by tolls and then backed by gas tax revenues and the full faith and credit of the state. This is in contrast to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge bonds which are first payable by gas tax revenues and reimbursed from toll revenue.
- The chart on the next page illustrates the increasing amount of debt service as a percent of the state portion of the gas tax. The debt service peaks around 70% of total state gas tax revenues in 2018-20.

**Debt Service as a Percent of the State's Overall Share of the Fuel Tax**  
*(State Share 12.0¢ + 5¢ + 8.5¢ = 25.5¢)*



**Federal Funding**

- The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was enacted by Congress in June of 2012, authorizing federal funding through Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2014 for highways, bridges, highway safety, mass transportation (including transit, rail, air, ferry systems), transportation alternatives (e.g., bicycle/pedestrian facilities, recreational trails), and air quality issues. Other features of MAP-21 included:
  - Continued funding at FFY12 levels plus inflation, depending on appropriations;
  - Extension of the federal gas tax through FFY16.
  - Consolidation and elimination of federal programs: elimination of most competitive discretionary programs; remaining programs are mostly formula-driven; earmarks eliminated.
  - Moves to a performance based system: the Act identifies national goal areas (safety, system reliability, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction) and gives USDOT 18 months to establish performance measures. States and MPOs will set the performance targets. Failure to make progress will result in penalties against federal funding.
- Previous federal transportation authorization legislation:
  - The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU) provided four years of funding (FFYs 2005 through 2009) with continuing resolutions through FFY 2011.
  - The Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) was enacted for a six year period (FFYs 1998-2003).
  - The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) expired in 1997.
- See *Federal Funding* section on page 135 for additional details.

## Transportation Budget Process

- Each summer all state agencies, including those funded by the transportation budget, prepare budget submittals per instructions from the Office of Financial Management (OFM). In even numbered years the agencies are preparing for the upcoming biennial budgets and in odd numbered years they are preparing for the first supplemental budget.
- Typically in December, the Governor submits a biennial transportation budget to the Legislature, which contains proposed expenditures for each of the transportation agencies.
- Each year the Governor's budget is introduced in both the House and Senate but, by tradition, the House and Senate alternate each biennium in initiating the passage of the budget. In 2013, the Senate will initiate the budget. It is also customary for the first legislative budget to be released shortly after the spring revenue forecast. In odd numbered years, the forecast is released in mid-March, in even numbered (supplemental budget) years, the forecast occurs in February.
- After the Governor's budget is introduced and referred to the House and Senate transportation committees, the following typically occurs:
  - The Governor's budget office presents the Governor's budget recommendations;
  - Agencies present their budget requests to the committees;
  - Public hearings are held;
  - Work sessions are held to provide members an opportunity to debate issues, ask questions, explore issues, and develop potential amendments to the budget;
  - The committee chair of the initiating chamber presents a budget proposal for the committee's consideration; and
  - An executive session is held to vote on the chair's proposed budget bill and consider possible committee amendments.
- After the budget bill is passed out of the transportation committee, it is sent to the full House or Senate body for consideration.
- The Rules Committee has responsibility for scheduling floor action on the budget bill (and all others) on the floor of the House or Senate.
- Once the bill is on the Second Reading calendar, any member of the legislative body can offer amendments.
- A simple majority vote is required for Final Passage (called Third Reading). (A 60% vote of both houses is required for Final Passage of bond authorization bills.)
- If passed, the budget bill goes to the opposite legislative body where the entire process is repeated.
- Usually the budget bill passed by one legislative body is not identical to that passed by the other. If neither House nor Senate is willing to accept the other's version, differences are often resolved by appointing members from each legislative body to a Conference Committee.
- A simple majority vote by each legislative body is then necessary for adoption of the Conference version of the budget. Amendments to the Conference version are not permitted.
- The budget, as adopted, is then sent to the Governor's Office for signature and enactment. The Governor may veto all or portions of the budget bill.

## Miscellaneous Budget Information

- The state budget is developed on a biennial basis starting July 1 of each odd-numbered year. State fiscal years run from July 1 to June 30. State agency appropriations are made either by fiscal year or for the biennium, depending on the account and fund source. The federal government budgets for one year at a time, with a fiscal year that starts on October 1. Local governments generally have annual budgets based on the calendar year.
- Appropriation sections in budget bills are not codified (i.e., are not incorporated into the Revised Code of Washington (RCW)). Language in these sections lapses at the end of the biennium that it addresses. Codified law may be modified in an appropriations bill if the total section of law is set forth and the modification relates to fiscal matters.
- Expenditure authority of agencies is limited by appropriation levels and proviso language included in budget legislation.
- Bills other than budget bills may also contain appropriations.
- The Governor is required to propose a biennial budget to the Legislature by December 20 preceding odd year legislative sessions. Supplemental budgets are to be submitted not fewer than 20 days prior to legislative session.
- The Governor may veto whole sections of the budget bill or individual provisions in their entirety.
- A biennial budget may be amended during the biennium it addresses in a supplemental budget bill. Supplemental budgets are commonly adopted in each of the two regular sessions that occur during a biennium.
- During the legislative session, budgets and bills required to complete the budget are exempt from the normal cutoff dates, as outlined each year in the House and Senate session cutoff calendars.
- Bills authorizing the sale of bonds require a 60% vote for Final Passage. A simple majority is required on all prior votes and in committee.
- Beginning with the 1990 transportation revenue increase, the Legislature has provided project-specific direction. In 1990, the Legislature established the Special Category C program which initially earmarked the additional portion of the gas tax to improvements on Seattle's First Avenue South Bridge (State Route 509), State Route 18, and the Spokane North-South Freeway.
- In 2002, the Legislature submitted Referendum 51 to the voters which asked for approval of new revenues for a specific set of highway and multimodal improvements. After the failure of Referendum 51, the Legislature passed the 2003 transportation package, providing additional highway and multi-modal revenues for a list of projects referenced specifically by project, fund, and amount.
- In 2005, the Legislature enacted the Transportation Partnership Account. Similar to the 2003 transportation package, additional revenues were provided solely for a list of projects referenced specifically by project, fund, and amount. Expenditures from this account are limited to projects or improvements identified as 2005 transportation partnership projects or improvements, including any principal and interest on bonds authorized for the projects or improvements.