

Issue/Solution Paper Usage/Funding Imbalance

In general, a combination of revenue sources, primarily from unincorporated area residents, is used to fund/maintain King County road infrastructure. King County primarily relies on property taxes (over one-third of the revenues dedicated to County roads) and, to a lesser extent, on gas taxes (state motor vehicle fuel tax is shared among cities, counties and WSDOT; the County share is ~16%; 10% shared equally, 30% based on "equivalent" population, 30% based on "road costs" and 30% based on "money needs"--**RCW 46.68.124**).

To compound the problem, Rural Area taxpayers tend to *subsidize* (through property taxes) Urban drivers who use King County roads. Such Urban users comprise the majority of vehicle miles driven on major King County roads connecting urban areas (e.g., Issaquah-Hobart Rd. between the cities of Maple Valley and Issaquah). By not focussing on the actual "users," a funding/usage imbalance is created and perpetuated.

King County has many cities in which most workers commute to other cities via Rural Area roads accelerating road deterioration. Disproportionate use by those who pay little to support/maintain/build them, causes safety problems for Rural Area residents who depend on them for their primary access/connection.

The King County "**Transportation Concurrency Management Program 2013 Annual Update**" (att. E): "*some routes may never be able to be improved to comply with the Rural Area standard LOS B because of the heavy urban level of traffic using the road.*" Unless funding issues are resolved, King County may be forced to lower the LOS on, at least, some of the arterials in the rural area.

It is desired the imbalance between funding (payers) and usage (users) of County road services be reduced or eliminated through market-based solutions. A more sustainable funding model must be developed for County road services, especially for maintenance of existing roads. More equitable funding of Rural Area roads should be established so those roads, which regularly serve King County's City residents, and/or businesses support the efficient and timely movement of people and goods.

Potential solution paths for discussion: In the short term, State laws (listed below) could be reviewed for opportunities to enable a more *transportation-sustainable* allocation of gas tax monies and provide more flexibility in revenues used. Included should be some mechanism, along with incentives, for cities to share revenues with Counties, possibly tied to growth that occurs in the absence of job opportunities. Another strategy could be to establish County road "networks," which know no jurisdictional boundaries (similar to State roads), funded by all County taxpayers. In the long term, the Puget Sound region could move towards the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC's) *Transportation 2040* user-pays model by providing authority for usage charges, such as tolling key roads and methods to implement such strategies.

RCW 36--COUNTIES / 36.78 RCW--ROADS AND BRIDGES—COUNTY ROAD ADMINISTRATION BOARD (CRAB) [<http://www.crab.wa.gov>]

RCW 46--MOTOR VEHICLES / 46.68--DISPOSITION OF REVENUE

46.68.120--Distribution of amount allocated to counties -- Generally; 46.68.122--Distribution of amount to counties -- Factors of distribution formula; 46.68.124--Distribution of amount to counties—Population, road cost, money need, computed—Allocation percentage adjustment.

RCW 84--PROPERTY TAXES / 84.52--LEVY OF TAXES

84.52.043--Limitations upon regular property tax levies. (Effective until January 1, 2018.)

WAC 458--REVENUE, DEPARTMENT OF

WAC 365-196-430--TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT.

References:

Strategic Plan for Road Services, December 2010: Presents King County's needs for a better funding model, which led to a 5-Tier Service Levels System. [Contact: Jay Osborne, Manager, Strategic Planning, Programming & Reporting Office (SPPRO), KCDOT, jay.osborne@kingcounty.gov, 206-477-3628]

Road Services--Service Levels for Unincorporated-Area Roads, <http://www.kingcounty.gov/transportation/kcdot/Roads/NewServiceLevels.aspx> Presents the Road 5-Tier Service Levels System. [Contact: Jay Osborne, Manager, SPPRO, KCDOT, jay.osborne@kingcounty.gov, 206-477-3628]

Transportation Needs Report: A Component of the Transportation Element of the King County Comprehensive Plan, King County, 2012 [Contact: Josh Peters, Transportation Planning Supervisor, Strategic Business Operations Section, KCDOT, josh.peters@kingcounty.gov, 206-477-3630]

Road Usage Charge Assessment, <http://www.wstc.wa.gov/StudiesSurveys/RoadUsage/RUC2013/default.htm>, 2014, WA State Transportation Commission. Identifies a sustainable, long-term revenue source as the State transitions from the current gas tax system, but doesn't address revenue allocation.

Transportation 2040 Update, PSRC, 2014. Strategy for a user-pays model. [Contact: Transportation Staff: 206-464-7090; Charlie Howard, Director of Integrated Planning, PSRC, choward@psrc.org, 206-464-7122].