

Senate Transportation Committee 2007-09 Budget Proposal

Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, Chair

Safety: The promises of the 2003 Nickel and 2005 Partnership packages

Safety remains the prime driver of transportation spending. The 2007-09 transportation budget continues that commitment by staying on course with the high-priority projects approved in the 2003 Nickel and 2005 Partnership tax packages.

Major features of the budget include:

- Keeping projects on schedule despite \$2 billion in increased costs since 2006;
- Restoring many projects that were delayed to their original schedules; and
- Adding more funding for the State Route 520 Bridge.

To cover added project costs, the budget authorizes additional bonds to take advantage of remaining capacity in the capital construction accounts. The budget also increases certain fees to establish a stable and permanent source of funding for the Washington State Patrol; this ensures that other revenues, previously assumed to be available to deliver projects, can be used for the intended purposes.

Mega projects

Safety is the overriding concern with the Alaskan Way Viaduct, which is unlikely to withstand another earthquake, and the 520 Bridge, which is at risk of breaking up and sinking in a severe storm. The state will begin tearing down the Alaskan Way Viaduct and will begin building the pontoon components for the new 520 Bridge as soon as the appropriate construction site is confirmed.

The Transportation Commission is funded to convene a summit on regional transportation needs in the Spokane area which will include preliminary discussions of developing a regional funding mechanism for the North-South Corridor.

The Senate Transportation Committee has already begun meetings with the Oregon Legislature regarding the Columbia River Crossing between Vancouver and Portland. The Joint Transportation Committee will continue those discussions over the 2007-09 biennium.

Moving forward on the Viaduct

To immediately begin work on the safety risk and to avoid inflationary cost increases, work will begin this summer to tear down sections of the viaduct, including the most precarious south end of the viaduct. The elements funded in this budget are those agreed to by the Governor and Legislative leaders. The total cost of this phase is \$915 million.

Identifying funding for State Route 520

To reserve adequate funding for the ultimate design of the replacement bridge, the budget makes \$3.7 billion to \$4.1 billion available for the new 520 Bridge. The funding consists of:

- \$560 million in state funds
- \$110 million in federal bridge funds
- \$200 million in federal transit funds expected to be allocated by the Puget Sound Regional Council
- \$1.1 billion in RTID funds
- \$1.2 billion in expected toll revenues
- Access to a \$1 billion pool of funds earmarked exclusively for either the Alaska Way Viaduct or SR 520 Bridge. Since the viaduct's total state funding is limited, the range of additional funds available from this pool to SR 520 is from \$600 million to \$1 billion.

In the upcoming year work will proceed on the designation of the final configuration of the corridor and the mitigation needs of the impacted communities. Work will begin on pontoon construction concurrently with the final design and mitigation efforts.

Finding funding for increased costs

This budget accommodates significant inflationary cost increases on nearly every project across the state. All projects committed to in the 2003 and 2005 packages remain funded and with the same scope as planned in last year's budget, except for a handful of projects that experienced scope changes due to issues that made the original plan no longer viable. These projects are listed in the project changes summary at the beginning of the projects lists.

Below is a sample of \$1 billion in projects around the state with major cost increases that are accommodated in the Senate Transportation Committee 2007-09 budget. Project costs are listed in dollars in millions:

Project/Corridor	2006 Budgeted Total	2007 Senate Total	Difference
I-405 Corridor	1,464	1,484	19
I-5/Grand Mound to Maytown - Widening	76	130	54
I-90 Snoqualmie Pass	388	525	137
SR 522/Snohomish River Bridge to US 2	111	169	58
I-205 / Mill Plain Interchange to NE 28th Street	58	97	39
I-5 / Mellen Street to Grand Mound	160	193	37
SR 161 / 24th to Jovita	26	63	36
SR 502/Widening from I-5 to Battle Ground	58	88	30
SR 500/St Johns Blvd. - Interchange	30	48	18
SR 14 / Camas/Washougal Widening & Interchange	40	57	17
SR 539/Tenmile Road to SR 546 - Widening	86	102	16
US 12 McDonald Road to Walla Walla - Add lanes	50	66	16
SR 9 Corridor	133	144	11
SR16/I-5 HOV Corridor	930	1,405	475
SR395/North Spokane Corridor	374	473	99

Local government partnership

Some local government construction programs have also experienced recent cost increases. Additional bond authority is therefore provided to the Transportation Improvement Board to help cover construction cost inflation. The board can accommodate additional borrowing capacity as bonds they issued in the 1980s are paid off.

Putting projects back on schedule

Under the financial constraints with which the Governor had to operate, several major projects would have been delayed. Under the Senate budget:

- The interchange project at I-405 and 132nd Street is completed eight years sooner.
- Rail improvements from Kelso to Martin's Bluff are made eight years sooner.
- The interchange at I-5 at Grand Mound will be replaced 10 years sooner.
- SR 502/I-5 to Battle Ground in Vancouver is widened four years sooner.
- Safety improvements at SR 532 at 64th Avenue are completed two years sooner.
- The SR 162/Puyallup River Bridge is replaced two years sooner.
- US 101/Shore Road to Kitchen Road is widened two years sooner.
- Smaller bridge projects in Cowlitz, Pacific, Snohomish and Yakima counties are completed sooner.

Savings through flexibility

The budget achieves additional economies and scheduling efficiencies by appropriating the full cost of a number of projects that are ready to bid and proceed with construction. This eliminates delays in requesting and approving additional funds at multiple stages of the project. The projects were chosen on the basis of their size, typically more than \$40 million.

The projects, and their total cost (in millions), including prior funding:

- I-5/172nd St NE (SR 531) Interchange — rebuild interchange — \$42.3
- SR 9/SR 96 to Marsh Rd — add lanes and improve interchange — \$40.8
- SR 20/Fredonia to I-5 — add lanes stages 1, 2 & 3 — \$109.9
- I-90/Two Way Transit — Transit and HOV, stage 1 — \$17.8
- SR 520/W Lake Sammamish Parkway to SR 202, stage 3 — \$102.4
- SR 539/Horton Road to Tenmile Road — widen to five lanes — \$65.9
- SR 539/Tenmile Road to SR 546 — widening — \$101.6
- I-5/SR 16 Interchange — rebuild interchange — \$299.9
- I-5/Grand Mound to Maytown Stage One — add lanes — \$88
- SR 104/Hood Canal Bridge — replace east half — \$470
- I-5/SR 502 Interchange — build interchange — \$56
- US 395/NSC-US 2 to Wandermere and US 2 lowering — \$130.6
- SR 167/8th St E Vic to S 277th St Vic — HOV — \$80
- I-405/SR 181 to SR 167 — widening — \$130.9
- I-405/SR 515 — new interchange — \$113.4
- I-405/I-90 to SE 8th St — widening — \$180.5
- I-405/NE 10th St — bridge crossing — \$63.6

Relief of freight congestion

Since freight-related businesses benefit from statewide and regional gas tax projects, the budget funds a study to identify a combination of rail and road projects to be funded by the imposition of a port-related user fee or alternative funding solution (SSB 5207). This will provide a way for shippers to contribute their fair share in partnership with taxpayers and truckers, both of whom participated in financing the Nickel and TPA projects.

The anticipated funds resulting from that study builds on the ongoing goal of relieving freight congestion along roads to our ports and across our state by providing:

- \$25 million for modifications to the rail tunnel through Stampede Pass to accommodate double-stacked rail cars;
- \$94 million for SR 509, the north-south corridor linking port traffic to Interstate 5;
- \$188 million for SR 167 for the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) plan to extend 167 to the Port of Tacoma;
- \$19 million for SR 519, the east/west corridor linking port traffic to I-90; and

- \$5 million for other freight rail projects.

Existing funds provide nearly \$40 million is provided for freight rail projects in Bellingham, Chehalis, Creston, Dayton, Ephrata, Hoquiam, Longview, Moses Lake, Spokane, Tacoma, Toppenish, Vancouver, Wheeler and other cities. Funds are also provided to continue the purchase of a fleet of refrigerated rail cars for the Washington Produce Rail Car Program.

\$14.5 million is provided for a freight rail investment bank to make loans for rail capital improvements such as spurs and sidings to serve industrial parks. \$12 million of these funds is directed to fund operational improvements on the state owned Palouse River and Coulee City rail line (PCC).

The budget includes \$76 million for 40 freight mobility projects to build grade separations to reduce rail-road conflicts, move truck traffic off main streets, build grade-separated routes and other projects that improve freight movement and separate cars from trains.

Other rail funding

The Senate Committee budget provides \$229 million to help move people and goods, easing conflicts between rail and roadways and passenger and freight rail, and to support ports and shippers. None of this money is used for Sound Transit, which is funded through voter-approved taxes in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. The budget also funds a fifth daily round trip on Amtrak Cascades from Seattle and Portland.

Increasing capacity on roads through operational improvements

- **Intelligent transportation**
\$22 million is provided to improve commercial vehicle operations, traveler information and safety and congestion through the application of advanced technology.
- **Commercial vehicle information systems and networks (CVISN)**
\$3 million in federal and state funds is provided for the second phase of CVISN at 11 weigh stations along I-5, I-90 and I-82. This program allows expedited roadside motor carrier safety screening and enforcement by delivering real-time information on motor carrier safety, size, weight and credentials.
- **Low-cost enhancements**
\$6.8 million for low-cost traffic operations enhancements that provide immediate highway safety and efficiency improvements. The projects cost less than \$100,000 and include minor widening of ramps, spot guard rail improvements, better signal equipment and bicycle and pedestrian connections.

- **Clearing accidents more quickly**
WSDOT receives funding for incentive payments of \$2,500 to tow truck operators who meet quick clearance goals for crashes involving heavy trucks. There are more than 3,900 annual collisions involving heavy trucks in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties, creating congestion that affects thousands of motorists.

Public Transportation

- **Paratransit and Special needs grants**
In accord with the Nickel and Partnership packages, the budget includes \$25 million for competitive and formula grants for transportation for people with special needs. Funds go to transit agencies and non-profit transportation providers of services for the elderly and people with disabilities.
- **Regional mobility grants**
The Office of Transit Mobility, created by the Legislature as part of the Partnership package, connects transit services and multimodal transportation planning through projects that improve the efficiency of transportation corridors. The budget provides \$40 million for regional mobility projects, including park & ride lots, bus rapid transit and transit centers.
- **Commute Trip Reduction**
\$2.4 million is provided for Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers (GTECs) as described in the 2006 CTR Efficiency Act. This approach focuses transportation demand management efforts where they are most needed. Funds provided as a state match to local funds will establish up to eight GTECs.

The budget adds an additional \$2.6 million for vanpool grants for the successful Vanpool program in addition to the governor's requested \$6 million, bringing the total to \$8.6 million.

An additional \$1 million is provided for the trip reduction performance program (TRPP) which encourages innovative services, including teleworking, that eliminate vehicle trips to and from work.

The budget provides \$200,000 for a Commute Trip Reduction study of mobility education and how to reduce the number of parents who drive their kids to school, or kids who drive themselves to school.

- **Rural mobility grants**
In accord with the Partnership package, \$15 million is provided for public transportation in and between rural communities. This flexible grant program helps rural communities serve people who rely on public transportation.

- **Pedestrian and bicycle projects**

\$18 million is provided to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists and projects, to make sure children have safe routes to school.

Stable funding for the Washington State Patrol (WSP)

The WSP Highway account currently faces a \$35 million shortfall and competes for funding from other accounts that would otherwise fund construction projects. To increase patrols on high-accident corridors and to bring solvency to the WSP account, this budget increases the fee for driving record abstracts from \$5 to \$10 and increases the fee for temporary permits on new vehicle sales and leases.

The budget also provides:

- \$2.8 million for increasing commercial vehicle safety initiatives. WSP will use data-driven analysis to prioritize motor carriers for inspection and compliance reviews and place motor carriers out of service until violations have been corrected.
- \$92,000 for classroom technology and other equipment at the Training Academy;
- \$81,000 to replace aging traffic collision investigation equipment; and
- \$662,000 for electronic traffic information processing, to allow law enforcement officers to create and transmit citations and collision reports from the field.

Department of Licensing

To satisfy the federal Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, the Department of Licensing (DOL) receives \$8.9 million to implement an alternative, voluntary driver's license and identicard with enhanced security features for crossing the Canadian border. The funding is contingent on the passage of ESHB 1289, which would, in part, allow DOL to charge an additional fee for the enhanced license, raising an estimated \$5.3 million.

DOL receives \$716,000 for DOL-subsidized motorcycle training classes to accommodate an additional 3,000 students per year. Funding is contingent on the passage of SB 5273, which redirects the \$5 endorsement fee to the Motorcycle Safety Education Account.

The budget provides \$2.9 million for DOL to conduct 60 percent of the skills testing for those applying for a commercial driver's license. All skills testing is currently provided through third-party testers. Funding is contingent on the passage of SHB 1267, which raises the skills testing fee from \$50 to \$100.

Ferries

Except for needed preservation work, capital terminal spending is suspended while the WSDOT gathers information and develops standards for the most efficient balance

between capital and operating investments. For future terminal improvement design and construction funding requests, WSDOT will conduct cost benefit and life cycle cost analysis and provide that information to the Legislature for project scoping and funding decisions.

Operating costs are continued for all routes except the Seattle/Vashon passenger-only-ferry, which is funded through June 30, 2008, when funding responsibility for the run will be transferred to King County.

The budget provides \$22 million for ferry fuel cost increases and \$25.7 million to cover ongoing collective bargain agreements.

Other initiatives

- **Tolling**

The budget provides funding for WSDOT's tolling operations office and the activation of two new tolled projects, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and the SR 167 HOT lane.

- **Border crossing initiative**

ESHB 1289 provides \$8.9 million for DOL to implement an enhanced driver's license to allow Washington residents to return from Canada without a passport.

- **Interstate fuel tax auditors**

\$406,000 is provided for increased revenue collections enforcement by DOL that are expected to generate up to \$4 million in new revenue per biennium.

- **Compensation and benefits**

\$86 million is provided for compensation and benefits to both represented and unrepresented state employees in all transportation agencies.

- **Biofuel quality assurance**

\$1 million is provided to the Department of Agriculture's Motor Fuel Quality Program to inspect biofuel at the producer, distributor and retail levels.

- **Permit integration**

The Office of Regulatory Assistance will implement a successful streamlined permit pilot project statewide. This project developed multi-agency permits that integrate local, state and federal permits for transportation projects, following up work initiated under the Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee.