



**COUNTY ROAD
ADMINISTRATION BOARD**

2023

Washington State
County Road Administration Board

Annual Report

From Our Director



Sitting in a little, historic wood schoolhouse, it was a brisk, but sunny, September morning. In front of me, our 16 member staff topped off coffee and gathered around the table for a mid-year reflection on our strategic plan. In my hand, a folded print out of my notes highlighting our accomplishments to date.

When we had set that plan in to motion in January, we recommitted to *ensuring the success and accountability of all Washington county road departments* while leading the way in trusted, effective, and visionary transportation administration. Looking back, the last 12 months were an absolute reflection of that mission and vision.

We magnified our voice and presence with the legislature, counties, and the public.

The agency has a well-established reputation for quality work and a service-minded approach in our corner of government but has been overlooked in the past in favor of more assertive voices.

This year, significant ground has been made to take a more proactive, prominent role in the discussions surrounding transportation. You'll notice our annual report looks a bit different as we lead with recommendations and requests for the Legislature going into the new year. We are also exploring new ways to harness our extensive data resources to provide educational resources to decision-makers, stakeholders, and the public.

We continued to be physically present with our partners and our staff were on the road...a lot. We visited with every one of our counties, most more than once, for trainings, presentations to boards and commissions, compliance check ins, welcoming new engineers and bidding a fond farewell to retiring ones. We so deeply value the relationships we have formed with our county and statewide partners.

We provided innovative solutions, particularly in technology advancements.

The culmination of a multi-year effort, 2023 saw a monumental and impressive migration from legacy software to new technologies for the agency. While we continue to fine-tune and add program capabilities, I am proud of this painstaking work, especially for GIS-Mo. It is so versatile and cutting-edge, our staff has been recognized and invited to present our work and speak with committees, departments, and businesses at the state and national levels. Our online reporting programs also transitioned to a new application, allowing our staff to quickly pivot to meet the needs of changes to grant programs, RCW, or WAC going into the future.

We optimized resources for county transportation needs.

We are committed to continuous improvement and regularly evaluate ways to adapt to changing needs, streamline our work, develop resources, and provide counties with the support and tools they need to succeed. We are eagerly awaiting the results of our Rural Arterial Program Study to better meet the needs of the future.

The year was not without its challenges, in particular the 2023 legislative session. Financial resources for county roads have not kept pace with rising demands and costs for many years, and their funding programs have not received nearly the same support as other programs in the transportation budget. These trends are disheartening as counties have been forced to do more, with less, over the past decades.

The challenges to our county transportation system are immense.

The strains on our state budget are complex.

But with a new year comes new opportunities and we are hopeful 2024 will bring with it a recommitment by the Legislature to support and fund our county roads.

Nearly as old as our state, with its original slate chalkboards on the wall and humble plank flooring, that little schoolhouse we gathered in is a testament to the value of preservation and maintenance.

We passionately believe our roads deserve the same. It fuels the outstanding work we've done since 1965 to ensure success for the counties and residents of Washington – and our commitment to the work ahead.



A handwritten signature in gold ink that reads "Jane Wall".

Jane Wall
Executive Director

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2023 Recommendations and Requests

The agency is directed by law to provide the Legislature and Department of Transportation with recommendations for improving the administration of county road programs. This section will summarize our ideas and highest priority proposals for addressing the present transportation challenges in Washington.



State legislators, county officials, engineers and our staff assessing road surface conditions on Brooks Road in Spokane County during our fall 2023 project tour.

Recommit to the Historic State and County Partnership

Recognize county roads are a critical part of the big picture for transportation and be sure to include representative voices such as CRAB in planning and decision-making at the state level.

When you think of transportation, do you think WSDOT? **What you might not know, is that the majority of public roads in Washington are not state or city, but county roads – 59% of them!** It is a complex network that includes bridges, ferries, sidewalks, bike lanes, streetlights, and other infrastructure in a diverse range of rural and urban environments. It is managed by 39 county road departments. At the County Road Administration Board (CRAB), we oversee their compliance with state-mandated laws, rules, and performance standards, ensuring their success and accountability.

Washington State has always looked at counties and their road systems as being a partnership, and even spelled out counties' role as an "agent of the state" in statute. While that partnership has been mutually beneficial, it has changed over time, with more of the burden being placed on the counties. This state/county partnership for road operations and maintenance is funded by the state via a portion of the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax and by the counties via property taxes and road levies. However, in the face

of historic construction materials and labor costs since 2010, the increase in contributed resources has been lopsided.

On the *state side*, despite a significant 32% increase in gas tax revenues, MVFT direct distributions have supported a flat 15% of a county's road fund with MVFT-funded grant programs remaining stagnant at 4-5%. On the *county side*, road levies that supported 45% of a county's road fund in 2010 on average are now supporting 53%.

As a result, the need for increased revenue has been shouldered by the counties through road levy increases and reduced service levels on the county road system.

But what if the counties had received that same 32% increase to their portion of the MVFT?

Counties would have received an additional \$50 million per year via direct distributions and \$20 million per year via grant programs for the operation, maintenance, and preservation of the State's county road system. The increase would have helped restore the partnership between the counties and the state with

Increase State support of county roads through direct distributions to counties and increased funding to CRAB's grant programs.

the road levy supporting 50% of the road fund and MVFT supporting approximately 25%, with the balance coming from federal grants, real estate excise tax, impact fees and other local revenue options.

State legislators, county officials, engineers and our staff visiting the Bigelow Gulch corridor construction site in Spokane County during our October 2023 project tour.



Average demand is historically
THREE TIMES
higher than CAPP can
support and this year was no
exception with only
\$30.1 million
available for
\$72.4 million
of critical projects.

Restore the State's intended 50/50 partnership with counties in preserving county arterial and collector roads with an additional \$12 million/biennium investment through the CAPP Program.

Evaluate existing transportation programs to ensure resources are effective, comprehensive, efficient and being directed to the areas of greatest need.

Another way to look at the historic partnership between the counties and the State is through the lens of the County Arterial Preservation Program (CAPP), designed for the preservation of arterial and collector roads.

When it was created in 1990 as a part of a 5-cent gas tax increase, the Legislature designed CAPP to cover roughly 50% of the cost of performing preservation work on these roads. However, the costs of road construction and preservation have risen dramatically; counties are only able to resurface *less than a third* of the road miles they could have with the same budget in 1990.

While funding boosts from the Connecting Washington and Move Ahead Washington revenue packages were helpful, the big picture is that the state's share in the cost of preserving these essential roads has dropped to 41%, transferring the burden to counties. **To restore the 50/50 partnership as it was intended, the Legislature needs to provide an additional \$12 million/biennium to this critical program.**

Beyond specific programs, **there are holes in the multi-faceted county transportation system that do not currently qualify for existing funding programs and need to be addressed by the state.**

Some examples include:

- Local access roads are ineligible for County Arterial Preservation Program and Rural Arterial Program funding
- Short span bridges (under 20') are ineligible for Federal Bridge Funding; crippling fish passage efforts
- Census boundaries can leave rural areas officially designated urban in a funding gap where they are not eligible for either Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) or CRAB programs
- Gravel roads are ineligible for the CAPP program
- County roads can be "orphaned" in the annexation process between municipalities
- Portions of the grandfathered in road system are trapped in jurisdictional "doughnut holes" where it is logistically difficult to service them

"Lincoln County needs to be able to find funding for local access roads. Many of our local access paved roads are distressed and deteriorated without a funding source; inflation and fuel costs make it nearly impossible to maintain these roads. The rural counties continue to fight to do more with less every year."

- David Orvis, Lincoln County Public Works Director

Support What We Build: Invest in Preservation and Maintenance

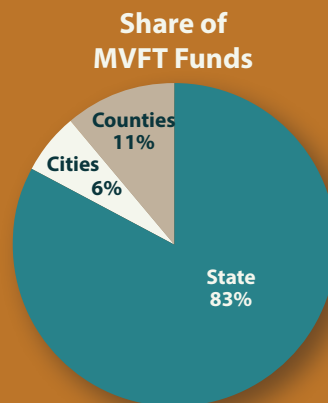
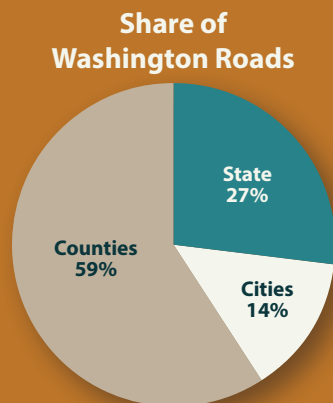
Fully invest in the preservation and maintenance needs of county roads and Rural Arterial and County Arterial Preservation Programs that support those efforts.

Our state's preservation and maintenance disinvestments are unsustainable. Continuing to drive resources into capital projects while turning a blind eye to compounding, deferred maintenance is equivalent to remodeling a kitchen when the whole roof is leaking. **Washington needs to do the hard work of developing a long-term plan for maintaining assets, funding the preservation backlog, and not worsening the problem with additional unfunded mandates.**

The Legislature already has proven and efficient tools at its disposal to do so. Among them, the high demand Rural Arterial Program and the County Arterial Preservation Program administered by CRAB address critical preservation and maintenance needs in the state. Unfortunately, over the past three decades revenues have not kept pace with inflation and the demand for these programs. **The Legislature needs to reassess how current revenue sources are being distributed for the MVFT and consider utilizing other existing revenue sources such as the Carbon Fee to address these shortfalls.**

County roads are primarily funded by local property taxes and a portion of the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT). However, property taxes have been capped at a 1% annual increase since 2007 and the county portion of the MVFT tax has remained nearly stagnant. In fact, since 1999, while the state has more than doubled (23 cents to 49 cents) its own portion of the MVFT, the county share has increased by mere ½ cent.

A disproportionate share of the dwindling MVFT is the biggest contributing factor to the \$1.23 billion transportation funding gap that counties are facing EACH YEAR to maintain our roads in the state.



"[Our] crews own the work; this is their roadway. They take a huge amount of pride in the ownership; they live and drive on these roads every day and have a sense of responsibility to them... To watch an asset that [our funding partners] paid millions for decay because we don't have the resources to take care of it feels terrible. We want to take care of these roads."

- Matt Zarecor, PE, Spokane County

Expand EXISTING funding sources such as the Climate Commitment Act and indexing the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax.

Explore NEW AND ALTERNATIVE funding sources such as the Road Usage Charge.

For example, many decision-makers do not realize that the RAP Program, which was established with a funding source of 2.5363% of the gas tax in 1990, has been overlooked during all seven gas tax increases that have occurred since.

Had the 2.5363% rate simply been applied to the new tax increase...

...it would have resulted in **\$256.8 million over the last 20 years that would have been invested into timely preservation and maintenance**, reducing the costs to counties and the state over the lifetime of those roads.

... **102+ critical RAP projects could have been completed**; it would have been a cost-effective, low-overhead way to put a dent in the most critical projects in the state's project backlog (a current study estimates the cost of deferred maintenance on WA county roads at \$4.7 to 6.3 billion).

With the trend toward higher efficiency and electric vehicles, the research paints a clear picture that the MVFT alone is not going to be able to support transportation funding in the future.

The Legislature must identify new revenue sources to replace the declining gas tax, ensuring that the change in funding method is revenue-neutral or increased for counties and the County Road Administration Board.

What if...

The RAP Program 2.5363% share of the gas tax had been applied to reflect gas tax increases?

\$256.8 million

would have been invested into timely preservation and maintenance **more than doubling** amount invested

As owners of 60% of the system, acting as agents of the state, the state has a duty to counties in ensuring they are adequately supported and funded.

Whether it be new revenue, or expanding the availability of existing revenues, the Legislature must do more for counties. The decades-long underinvestment by the state in the county road system is unsustainable and risks the safety and health of our road systems and the residents who utilize them. The state must do more to reinvest in its partnership with the counties so that we ensure all Washingtonians have safe, reliable roads, now and in the future.

Prioritize Safety on Our Roads

Increase funding to the Rural Arterial Program, a proven way to significantly improve safety on county roads.

The county road system is not only the largest in the state, but also the most *dangerous*. Despite a pandemic-driven reduction in vehicle miles traveled, fatal and serious injury crashes continued to rise 12% in 2017-2021. During that time, county road users were 88% more likely to be involved in a fatal collision than on a city street and 92% more likely than on a state highway.

As Washington works toward the goal of Target Zero, the data is clear that most crashes on county roads occur on rural, two-lane roadways. The RAP Program is specifically designed to assist counties with addressing these priority projects on a competitive basis, with safety being one of the top scoring criteria.

Since 2010, roads benefitting from the RAP program have seen a dramatic **56%** decrease in collisions and a **32%** reduction in serious injury/fatality collisions!

The Geometry of Safety



Mill Creek Road, Walla Walla County

Due in part to poor road geometry, the stretch of road surrounding the Y-shaped intersection had seen 45 collisions since 2009. In June 2023, the road was redesigned and reconstructed into a T-shape intersection with widened shoulders for improved safety and visibility and an improved clear zone. Learn more about the project [here](#).

Total Project Cost \$6.32 million

CRAB \$1.92 million

Local \$2.17 million

Federal/Other \$2.26 million

Combined with CRAB's exemplary transparency and remarkably low 3.1% grant program administrative overhead, the RAP Program is a high ROI means of producing real results in the county road system – not bureaucracy and process bloat.

How do preservation and maintenance projects directly impact fatality collisions?

By prioritizing investments in countermeasures related to rural, run-off-the-road incidents.

Studies show the most common Target Zero factor for fatality crashes is run-off-the-road, averaging 35-40% of reported crashes. Road projects can eliminate known safety hazards or, if a hazard cannot be removed, construct countermeasures such as guardrails or warning signage. Improvements to road geometry (banking, curves, narrow lanes, lack of shoulders, sight lines) and surface conditions (bumps, cracks, potholes, visible delineation, reflectors) give vehicles a better chance of staying on the road, especially in hazardous conditions. It is by this multi-pronged approach to improvements that roads are made safer for the movement of people and freight.

For example, no funding is currently available for ADA accommodations such as sidewalks, curbs and crosswalks on rural roads. Additionally, a lack of funding for local access roads further exacerbates health disparities and inequities for vulnerable populations and tribes. Safety is always of primary concern for counties and they are often on the frontlines of tangibly addressing controllable safety factors. However, the resources available to tackle safety issues and correct them continues to significantly lag behind the need.

Our agency is committed to these efforts and is leading by example with our Federal Facilitator Pilot Program, which will benefit multiple jurisdictions.

Support the WTSC and its priorities and recommendations to keep our roads safe.

Safety challenges are felt across all jurisdictions of the Washington's transportation system and our partners at the Washington Traffic Safety Commission have identified systemic factors and ways to address them.

"If our transportation network cannot safely and efficiently support commerce, we cannot succeed."

– Washington State Senator Mike Padden

Break down barriers to collaboration and partnership across jurisdictions in Washington.

Washington's residents rarely know or care where invisible jurisdictional lines are as they exit a state highway, navigate city streets and travel across a county road – they just expect the transportation system to get them safely and efficiently where they need to go. **Washington needs to explore ways to break down silos and promote a team approach to managing our transportation system.**

Prioritize a systemic approach to safety and recognize the key role played by counties in success.

Safety does not exist in a vacuum and Washington needs to identify and address the holes in our road system safety net that are contributing to the broader challenges in the state.



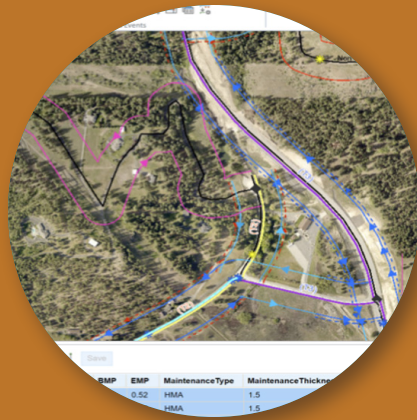
What does the safety data look like in YOUR legislative district? Check out our interactive dashboard to take a look!

Our Requests

Our Greenlit Investment in Modern Technology Needs a Fine Print Adjustment

Our agency is committed to providing support to reach compliance for our counties, and that includes our suite of software programs that facilitate data submission necessary for compliance, accountability, regulatory responsibilities, and Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax distribution.

We're building the future of transportation technology! Our cutting-edge GIS-Mo program is a map-centric, mobile and dynamic technology we implemented for all 39 counties to perform asset management for a fraction of the cost.



In 2023, we requested the Legislature fund ongoing maintenance costs for replacing legacy software tools as we continue to grow and expand efficient, modern technology services for counties. The Legislature agreed with us, granting the request, but the details directed the funding to come from the our grant program that is reserved for road maintenance and preservation on county arterial roads. While grant management is a part of the legacy software replacement, it is a small part and only represents 17% of our ask. The other 83% is to meet the statutory duties assigned to CRAB by the Legislature such as motor vehicle fuel tax distribution and insuring the appropriate use of county road funds.

We request the revenue sources earmarked for our programs be amended according to details linked on the next page, so we can move forward with our legacy software replacements and ongoing growth and expansion for programs such as GIS-Mo.

Help Us Help You Bring Transportation Dollars into WA – One Last Accounting Hurdle to Go!

Our agency is uniquely positioned to understand the transportation budget challenges being faced on the state and county levels in Washington and we want to explore ways we can continue to be a part of the solution.

With the 2021 passage of the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the door was opened to tremendous opportunities for local jurisdictions, including applying directly to the federal government for transportation infrastructure grants. Unfortunately, the municipalities that could most benefit do not have the capacity or resources to navigate the process.

Recognizing our agency's expertise and efficiency, we were asked by the Senate Transportation Committee to submit a proposal to the Legislature in 2023 outlining how we could provide the technical assistance needed by local governments and Tribes to navigate the federal system, pursue grant opportunities, and maximize the federal investment made to the transportation infrastructure of Washington state.

The Legislature agreed with the proposal, authorizing a four-

"Our two most important state agency partners are CRAB and TIB so anything you can do to fully fund those agencies and their budget requests ends up really helping [counties]."

- Axel Swanson, Washington State Association of County Engineers (WSACE) Managing Director

year pilot program. However, the funding was directed to come entirely from the Rural Arterial Program account, which the Attorney General's office concluded would be an inappropriate use of these funds.

We request the supplemental budget adjust the funding source of the program as outlined below so we can launch this potentially high ROI program for the state and bring much needed outside funding into our transportation network.

Don't Break the Tool That is Working: Restore Funds that Were Already Committed to Key Road Projects

Since 1983, our agency's popular Rural Arterial Program (RAP) has been a consistent, effective means of addressing the serious preservation and maintenance challenges in Washington.

Counties submit applications to our competitive grant program where they are evaluated and scored to ensure state funds go to the highest priority projects and are accounted for down to the last penny. First-in funding is then committed to the selected projects and incrementally disbursed as their reimbursements and

Infusing Federal Dollars into Local Roads



New Culvert

Selph Landing Bridge, Franklin County

Commercial vehicles have grown significantly in size since this 23' bridge was built in 1947 and it had to be restricted due to numerous concrete spalls and rusting rebar. The new design can safely accommodate the AASHTO and SHV truck load requirements as well as provide a larger turning radius for vehicles at the adjoining intersection. Learn more about the project [here](#).

Total Project Cost \$201,191

CRAB \$72,000

Federal/Other \$127,205

Local \$1,386

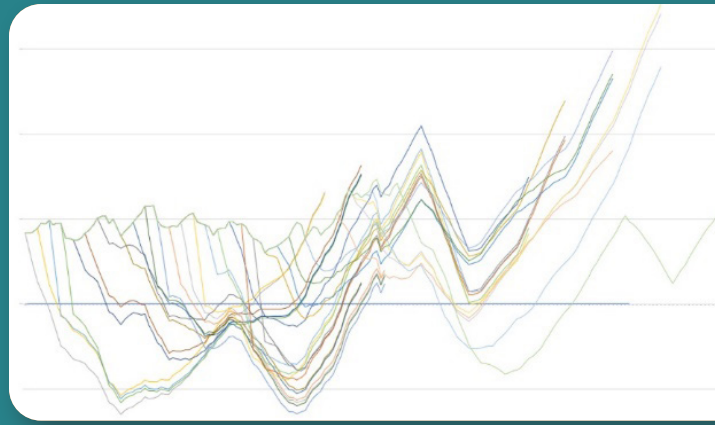
documentation are submitted. The entire process is administered by our deeply experienced staff who carefully monitor and assess revenue forecasts, existing program account balances, and expected project deliveries to maximize program impact while diligently managing the funding account.

Specific accounting-level details for these three requests were provided at the November 2023 Joint Transportation Committee meeting and can be found on our [website](#).

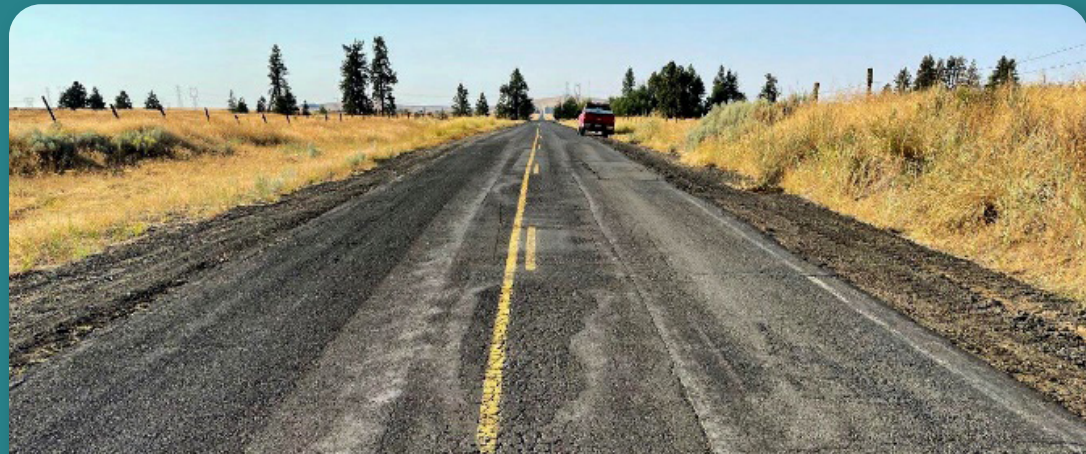
After carefully evaluating these factors, our board, who is directed in statute to allocate 90% of estimated available funds in April of every odd year, approved \$57.5 million to road projects across the state. Unfortunately, shortly after the Board's action, the 2023 supplemental budget retracted \$4.487 million from the account balance without warning.

As a result, at least ten unique projects across the State will be impacted, resulting in further diminishment of county preservation and maintenance efforts. The ripple effect on other projects and transportation decisions for those counties will be felt for years to come.

We request that the \$4.487 million be restored to the Rural Arterial Program, which is already facing demand level for these critical dollars four times higher than it can currently support.



Take a peek at a dashboard view of the multitude of factors and complex calculations involved with managing the cash flows of the Rural Arterial Program! You can learn more about "first in" funding on page 14.



Mountview Road is a significant farm-to-market, commercial freight, and community route in Lincoln County in very poor condition with known safety hazards. Its scheduled construction in April 2024 will be impacted by this decision.

Report on the State of County Road Administration

The agency is directed by law to provide the Legislature and Department of Transportation a report annually on the status of county road administration in each county.

Every year, we evaluate each of our 39 counties against a uniform set of engineering, maintenance, safety, financial, technical, and administrative practices collectively known as the Standards of Good Practice. The codified standards encompass 13 areas of responsibility:



By staying in compliance with the Standards of Good Practice and legislative directives, counties are eligible to receive approximately \$215 million in annual funding from Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT) distributions, the County Arterial Preservation Program (CAPP) and the Rural Arterial Program (RAP).

2023 Annual Certification of Good Practice

Each spring, our staff reviews compliance with the 13 Standards of Good Practice and provides a recommendation to the board whether to grant each county a Certificate of Good Practice. At the discretion of the board, a Conditional Certificate of Good Practice may be issued to give a county additional time to implement a corrective action plan to address an item that is out of compliance with the Standards of Good Practice.

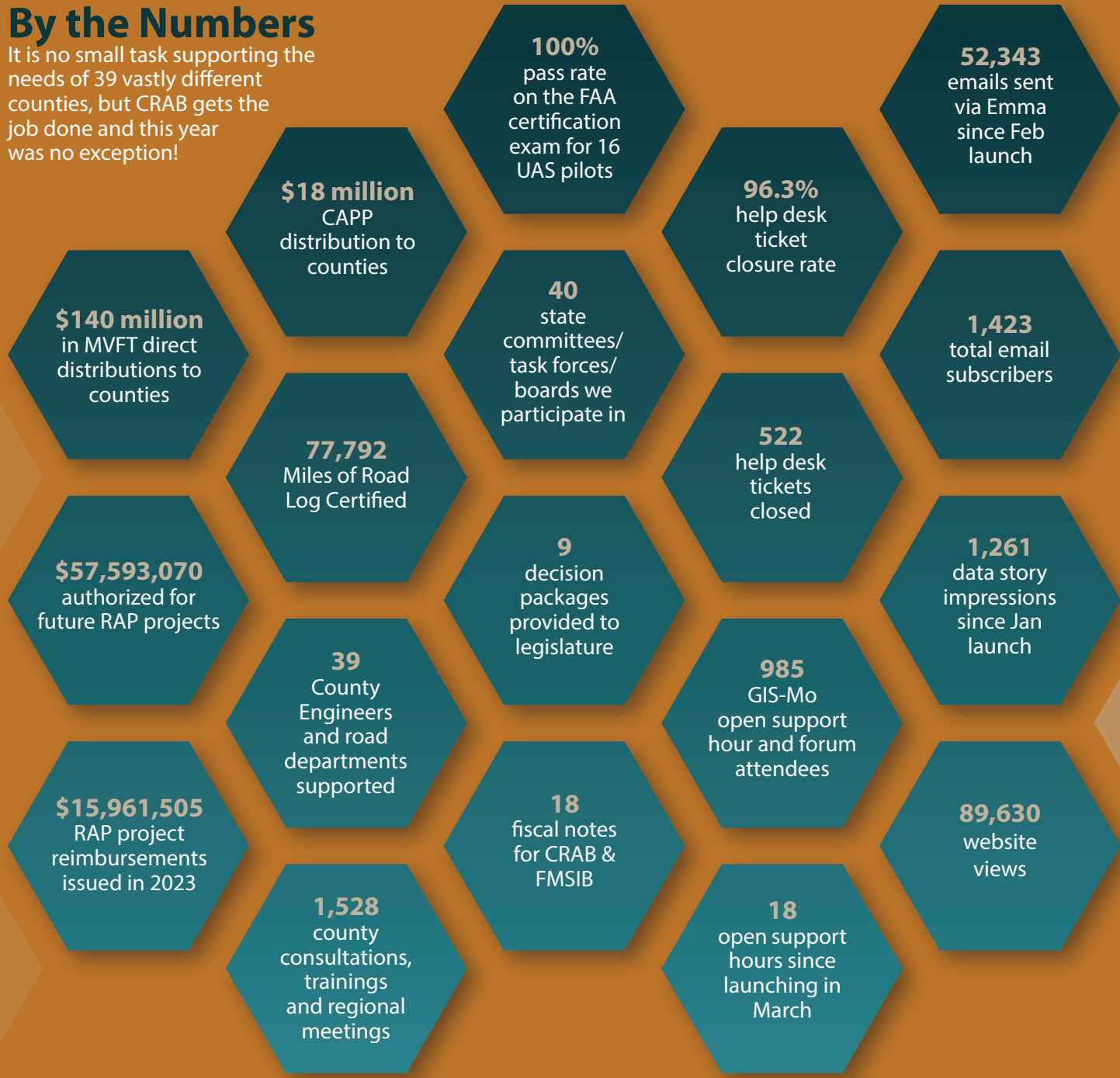
In April 2023, 33 counties received a Certificate of Good Practice. 6 received a Conditional Certificate of Good Practice due to being out of compliance with federal bridge load rating requirements. The Federal Highway Administration (FHA) requires all bridges in the National Bridge Inventory to have load ratings for specialized hauling vehicles, typically dump trucks with up to seven axels. All six counties are working towards completing the required load ratings and full compliance with the Standards of Good Practice. Five of the six counties have completed the load ratings by the end of 2023 ; the sixth will be completed in 2024.

Additional compliance-reviewed data for each county's road related revenues, expenditures, levy surveys, mileage, bridges, freight and goods systems and county forces can be found on our [website](#).

2023 Work and Accomplishments

By the Numbers

It is no small task supporting the needs of 39 vastly different counties, but CRAB gets the job done and this year was no exception!



“The knowledge base of the [agency staff] is appreciated, and their willingness to share their experiences is invaluable.”
– Raymond Belleza, Pierce County Transportation Engineer

Key Accomplishments



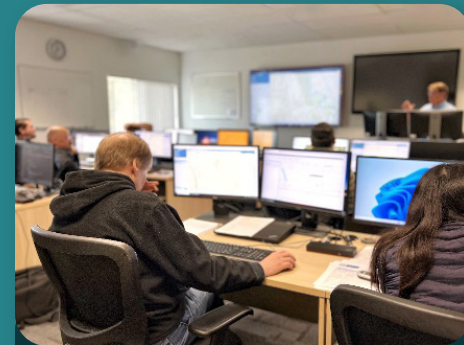
Chair Rob Coffman and Jane Wall presenting at the 2023 County Leaders Conference in Spokane, WA.

Providing Responsive Training and Support to County Officials, Engineers and Staff

Over the years our agency has developed a high-quality training curriculum for county elected officials, engineers and staff. We routinely solicit feedback to ensure our *content* is clear, helpful, relevant, and up to date but have taken the opportunity since COVID-19 to explore the most effective *channels* for our training programs. Our Engineering Division spend a significant amount of time on the road providing on-site training, travel-budget friendly online classes and hybrid options for regional meetings. In 2023, we continued our service-oriented approach by offering trainings by request and holding popular weekly open support hours online with our IT staff. As always, quick and easy one-on-one support is also available through our Help Desk. Going into the new year, we will continue to host our in-depth Road Design Conference and developing new training courses.

Making Strides in Information Technology Advancements

Our agency is directed to assist counties in developing uniform and efficient transportation-related information technology resources and 2023 has seen significant milestones reached in these efforts. Our legacy software, Mobility, was decommissioned in our ongoing transition to GIS-Mo, and our CARS and RAP Online programs have been upgraded to the SmartSimple platform. These changes streamline the data collection process and providing much more robust reporting tools for compliance, decision making and MVFT allocations. Despite the extensive work that went into these major initiatives, our Information Technology division was able to effectively continue providing a high level of service to our counties and maintain one of the consistently best cybersecurity scores in the state.



Mike Clark leading a cross-training session on the latest GIS-Mo and VueWorks program advancements.



Brian Bailey and Jason Bergquist sharing our Unmanned Aerial Systems program at the 2023 American Public Works Association (APWA) Conference in Wenatchee, WA.

Elevating our Agency Presence and Communication

Perhaps one of the most noticeable changes in 2023 would be the launch of our Communications Division. We have expanded our staff to magnify our presence and elevate communications with stakeholders and partners. These efforts have included developing an integrated communications plan, updated branding, exhibiting at regional conferences, a new monthly newsletter, a subscription-based email platform for targeted content, and changes to our website and social media channels. We have also seen increased recognition on the state and national levels for our developments in Transportation GIS technology and have received numerous requests for speaking engagements and presentations to share our expertise. We are excited for the future plans we have in development.

Developing Engaging and Dynamic Resources for Legislature, Counties and Citizens

Guided by our strategic plan, we are exploring avenues to provide content and tools to our audiences using technology in innovative ways. We published our first data story, *The Hidden Life of County Roads: The Origins of Washington State's Unsung Heroes and Their Keepers*, to provide a high-level, historical overview of our county road system, the challenges it faces today and our agency's role in overseeing it. Our library of video training resources for counties has been expanded on Pinnacle. We have also been providing immersive, on-site project tours and harnessing our expensive databases to develop dynamic dashboards for our legislative partners.



Our first story map made its debut in January 2023 at the WA State Senate Transportation Committee.

"[We value] not just the direct funding they provide, but the advice and immense support we get from CRAB. Just last week I asked a question of Derek [and he contacted] all 39 counties. Within a few hours I had additional information that helped me tremendously."

- Joe Rutan, PE, Kitsap County Engineer

2023 Projects

COMPLETED PROJECTS

15 RAP projects were completed this year for a \$16,503,791.20 total investment

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

138 RAP projects in progress; representing \$167.5 million in total commitment

Northwest Region

- A) Josh Wilson Road, Skagit County
- B) East Smith Road, Whatcom County

15 Projects in Progress, \$19.5 million investment

Northeast Region

- C) McKinney Road, Adams County
- D) Cunningham Road, Adams County
- E) Wenatchee Heights Road, Chelan County
- F) Klondike Road Rehabilitation, Ferry County
- G) Inchelium Highway, Ferry County

55 Projects in Progress, \$63.5 million investment

Puget Sound Region

9 Projects in Progress, \$9.8 million investment

Southwest Region

- H) NE Munch Road, Clark County
- I) NE Manley Road, Clark County
- J) North Shore – Cady Creek, Mason County
- K) North Shore – Great Bend, Mason County
- L) Vail Road, Thurston County
- M) Columbia Street Overlay, Wahkiakum County

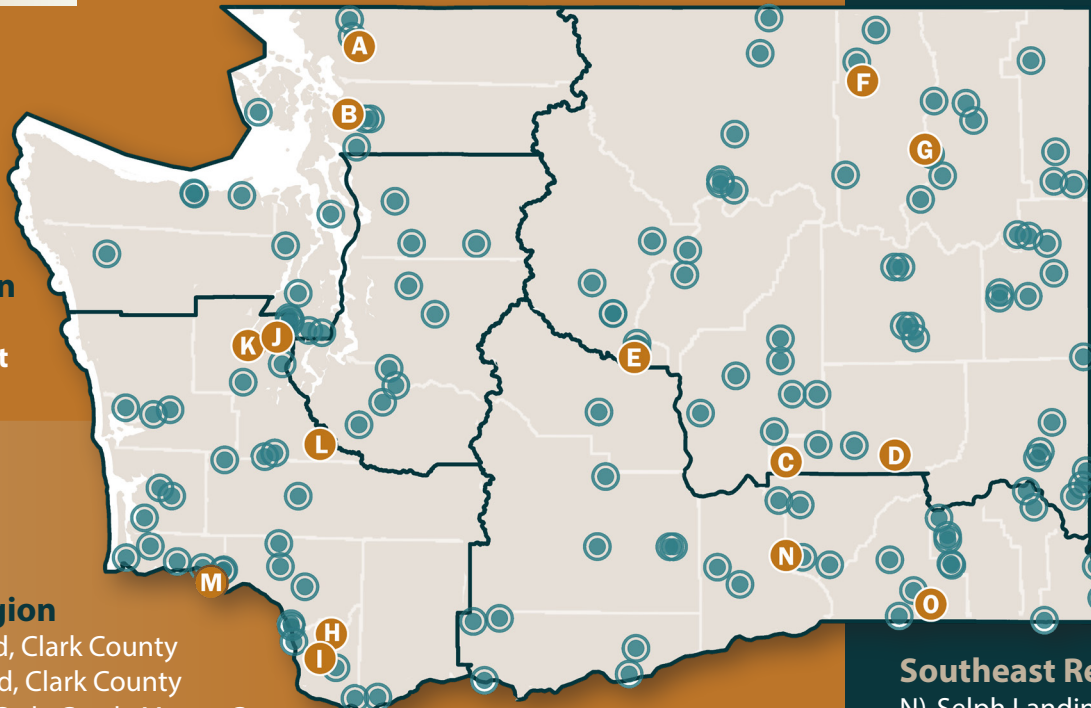
30 Projects in Progress, \$28.4 million investment

All 39 counties have one or more RAP projects in progress!

Southeast Region

- N) Selph Landing Bridge, Franklin County
- O) Mill Creek Road, Walla Walla County

29 Projects in Progress, \$46.3 million investment



Agency Roles and Responsibilities

The Washington State Legislature has charged CRAB with ensuring the success and accountability of all 39 county road departments. To do so, we have multiple areas of responsibility:



"[CRAB is] well organized and intended in supporting and being an excellent resource for the counties."

– Ken Lader, Clark County Engineer

Our Programs

Our agency is statutorily responsible for administering three grant programs and one revolving loan program: the Rural Arterial Program (RAP), the County Arterial Preservation Program (CAPP), the County Ferry Capital Improvement Program (CFCIP) and the Emergency Loan Program (ELP).

Our two primary grant programs, RAP and CAPP, improve freight haul and overall access to agricultural markets serving local economies and complement each other with their unique focus on different road deficiencies. In 2022, the County Road Administration Board managed a total of \$44.35 million in road and bridge funding through the two programs to assist counties in their efforts to maintain, rebuild and enhance their transportation systems statewide.

Rural Arterial Program

Washington's 12,400 miles of county rural arterial roads serve as vital links for commodities making their way to markets, communities, and ports. This pressure often exposes roads that are too weak, too narrow, too steep or too crooked to be safe. Fortunately, RAP addresses these same load capacity, traffic capacity, road geometry and safety deficiencies. The counties used \$18.25 million of these funds in 2022 to fix these conditions, improving haul and traffic capacity and safety.

While the program's balance remained higher than our target levels this year, it reflects a significant commitment for county projects across the state. **With 138 currently active projects, representing \$167.5 million in obligations scheduled for reimbursement over the next seven years, managing the complex cashflow requirements of the account is a primary concern.**

Like other jurisdictions, counties have faced numerous difficulties bringing these projects to construction, including material cost increases, workforce shortages and staffing interruptions, leading to delayed projects. We intend to remain a reliable funding resource and partner for the counties as these projects reach construction.

In 2023, we have made significant strides to further improve the program's effectiveness:

- **Historic Call for Projects Anticipated in Response to Historic Challenges**

After evaluating and reviewing a significant amount of data on revenue forecasts, existing program account balances, and expected project delivery, the board approved a recommendation to issue a \$70 million call for projects for the '25-'27' biennium in January 2024. These projects will likely be constructed in the 29-31 biennium.

"We appreciate how much support we get from CRAB. It doesn't matter the issue, when we call down there, they're very good at helping us through difficult or challenging situations. So we really appreciate working with the CRAB staff. This was especially true during Covid where it was really hard to get projects moved along administratively. CRAB was hugely helpful; they were the most streamlined and efficient with their funding that we encountered."

- David Smith, Mason County Engineering & Construction Manager

- **Streamlining RAP to Respond to County Needs**

Our agency reviewed and considered several modifications to WAC relating to the RAP program, providing additional clarity to stakeholders and allowing for more effective use of the program. The WAC edits have been approved and will be effective January 2024.

- **Leading by Example: Assessing Our Own Program Effectiveness**

Washington State's recently commissioned study determined that counties are facing an annual transportation funding gap of at least \$1 billion; however, the study was not intended to identify specific solutions.

In 2023, our agency requested and received approval to evaluate our RAP program to identify potential areas for improvement, program gaps, and potential new grant programs or opportunities to help address the existing funding gaps relating to county roads. We are providing counties with multiple opportunities and channels to provide input throughout the process and we look forward to

presenting the study's findings to the Joint Transportation Committee in 2025.

County Arterial Preservation Program

The CAPP program is designed to help counties fund needed pavement preservation on existing, paved arterial road networks and keep long-term, expensive rehabilitation costs to a minimum.

- **\$26.1 Million Invested in Freight and Goods Roads Still a Drop in the Bucket**

The CAPP program was able to invest \$26.1 million in projects in 2022, but it fell far short of the need with counties facing \$72.4 million in pavement preservation expenses for the year.

While the data clearly supports an ongoing preservation and maintenance strategy as the best approach to quality, cost-effective roads over the long term, counties do not have the resources to do so due to the historic trend of disinvestment. Over the last three decades, the demand for the program has averaged \$48.1 million annually, far higher than the program can support with an average of \$16.4 million per year.

- **Efficient and Transparent Deployment of Move Ahead Washington a Success with Counties**

In 2022, \$10 million of the Move Ahead Washington package was appropriated for county road preservation projects. Our agency is proud to share that within 30 days of receipt, 100% of the funds were successfully distributed to all 39 counties for immediate use. The counties got to work quickly deploying hundreds of projects across the state, and over 700 lane miles of arterial and collector roads have received much-needed seal coats, overlays and maintenance as a result.

As with any funds deployed through CRAB, these dollars are scrupulously tracked in our continued efforts to provide low cost, effective and transparent grant management. We are pleased to report that 95.9% of the Move Ahead Washington funds have been spent in 2022 **less than 6 months from the funds being available** with the remaining balance primarily tied to larger projects reaching completion in 2023 and 2024 in Snohomish County.

"The Rural Arterial Program helps Jefferson County preserve, and sometimes improve, our load ratings down there. The RAP and CAPP programs are essential for the improvement and preservation of county roads and we really appreciate the programs at CRAB."

- Monte Reinders, PE, Jefferson County Engineer



County Ferry Capital Improvement Program

CFCIP is a grant program that assists the four counties operating ferries (Whatcom, Skagit, Pierce, and Wahkiakum) with the cost of vessel replacement, land-side facilities improvements, and eligible heavy equipment maintenance needs.

In 2023, the agency continued annual funding for Pierce and Skagit County’s vessel replacements and issued the first of twenty annual payments for the Whatcom County vessel replacement.

Emergency Loan Program

The ELP is a revolving loan program created to assist county road departments (population < 800,000) with the cost of disaster response. Many counties, particularly smaller ones, struggle with cash flow issues resulting from a natural disaster and the length of time it takes to receive reimbursement from state and federal agencies, often months or years.

After a 2019 flooding and landslide emergency, Columbia County applied for two loans totaling \$812,196 to bridge the gap until their FEMA reimbursements are received. The county repaid one of the loans in January 2023 and the repayment due date for the second, which continues to accrue interest, was extended to April 2024. The county continues to work with FEMA to coordinate federal reimbursements.

No new loans were requested or issued in 2023 and the next call for CFCIP projects will be in 2025.

	2023 Investment	Completion Date
Pierce County	\$352,900	2026
Skagit County	\$375,000	2039
Whatcom County	\$500,000	2042

Financial Dashboard

CRAB has historically been able to manage its grant programs with low administrative and overhead costs. This is accomplished by highly professional and efficient staff at CRAB and being able to leverage the exceptional skills, knowledge, and professional standing of the county engineer offices in all 39 counties.

Breaking Ground Today; Saving Money Tomorrow



During Construction

By utilizing the flexible financial tools provided by the RAP Program, the county was able to save \$150,000 on the project!

McKinney Road, Adams County

39% of the daily traffic on the road is heavy truck traffic and the strain was showing; the 11' lanes had large areas of distress and eroding shoulders. The road was rehabilitated with a ground down and repaved surface, widened shoulders, replaced drainage facilities and modified slopes. Learn more about the project [here](#).

Total Project Cost \$1.55 million

CRAB \$1.07 million

Local \$484,000

	RAP Program	CAPP Program
21-23 Biennium	3.117%	3.7%
Historic Average	2%	3%

Since its inception in 1983, the demand for the RAP Program has been 4X higher than we can support.



Since its inception in 1990, the demand for the CAPP Program has been 3X higher than we can support.



What is first-in funding?

Counties, especially small ones, often need to gain multiple funding partners to finance road and bridge projects through the predesign, right-of-way acquisition and construction phases.

“First in” funders provide funding for the predesign phase, enabling a county to conduct the preliminary work of project viability and move the project forward if it is. In contrast, “last in” funders typically require letters of commitment from other funders before committing its own funds and give preference to local jurisdictions that have already made or obtained investments from others in the project.

As a first in funder, when our board authorizes funding for a RAP project, we are committing the funds *today* for the entire project that may last 4 to 6 years. While it adds a higher level of complexity to our program’s financial management, our partnership in getting a project off the ground, funding through multiple phases and opening the door for additional funding sources is highly valued across the state.

Our Team

Board Members Term Expires

Chair Rob Coffman , Lincoln County Commissioner	2025
Vice Chair Grant Morgan , P.E., Columbia County Engineer	2026
2nd Vice Chair Lindsey Pollock , Lewis County Commissioner	2026
Al French , Spokane County Commissioner	2026
Brad Peck , Franklin County Commissioner	2025
Carolina Mejia , Thurston County Commissioner	2024
Doug McCormick , P.E., Snohomish County Engineer	2024
Eric Pierson , P.E., Chelan County Engineer	2025
Art Swannack , Whitman County Commissioner	2024



County Road Administration Board Staff

Executive Director: Jane Wall

Administration: Jason Bergquist, Executive Assistant
Toni Cox, Administrative Assistant

Communications: Jacque Netzer, Communications Director

Engineering Services: Andrew Woods, P.E., Deputy Director
Derek Pohle, P.E., Support, Training & Compliance Manager
Steve Johnson, P.E., Grant Programs Manager
Mike Clark, C.E.T., Road Systems Inventory Manager
Brian Bailey, Design System & UAS Programs Manager

Information Services: Eric Hagenlock, IT Director
Scott Campbell, IT Systems Security Specialist
Angela Rice, Systems Administrator
Cameron Cole, GIS Manager
Liana Roberson, GIS Specialist
Donna Quach, Software Engineer
James Rea, Software Engineer



“CRAB staff are knowledgeable and friendly; any questions posed by any of my staff at any time receive a quick and concise response. They minimize paperwork and obstructions while keeping the county accountable, in order to deliver projects in an easy, timely matter.”

- David Orvis, Lincoln County Public Works Director



**COUNTY ROAD
ADMINISTRATION BOARD**

2404 Chandler Court SW • Suite 240
Olympia, WA 98502-6067
360-753-5989 • crab.wa.gov