

# TRANSPORTATION

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Governor Gregoire’s transportation budget continues progress on the state’s top transportation priorities of improving safety, lessening congestion and protecting the environment from consequences of making improvements. Improvements that promote safety and keep traffic flowing and commerce uninterrupted are of the utmost importance to Washington’s residents and economy.

Our Nickel- and Transportation-Partnership gas tax programs comprise nearly 400 highway projects totaling almost \$15 billion. So far we have delivered more than 25 percent of the program — 110 projects — and another 58 projects are under construction. Forty-two additional projects will be advertised by March 2008, bringing the total delivery level to 50 percent.

The Governor’s 2008 budget proposal keeps these projects moving forward and addresses immediate safety needs. Her budget also sets a path forward on replacing the unsafe Steel Electric-class ferries.

## **Governor Gregoire’s Budget for Transportation:**

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### **EMPHASIZES SAFETY**

**Moves forward with work on the Alaskan Way Viaduct.** Work is already under way to repair or replace about half of the seismically vulnerable viaduct. These “Moving Forward” projects are necessary to improve public safety and keep traffic moving no matter what replaces the viaduct in the central waterfront section.

Moving Forward requires:

- North end projects, including improvements to the Battery Street Tunnel and the Lenora Street to Battery Street section of the viaduct. These projects include mechanical and electrical upgrades and seismic retrofitting. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2008 and last for approximately two years.

- South end projects, including: (a) Replacing the viaduct from Holgate Street to S. King Street with a new surface roadway that connects to the existing viaduct; (b) Providing new access from State Route 99 directly to downtown by creating access to and from Alaskan Way near King Street; and (c) Creating a crossing for freight coming to and from the Port of Seattle. Construction will occur between 2009 and 2012.
- A comprehensive package of transportation and transit enhancements that will also be put in place before roadway closures begin in 2009.
- Repairing four columns in the Pioneer Square area to ensure the viaduct is safe for the next five years, before its scheduled removal in 2012. The work started in October 2007 and will be complete by April 2008.
- Relocating the utility lines to protect downtown Seattle's power supply in the event of an earthquake. The first phase of this work starts in spring 2008 and will be complete in spring 2009. The second phase is still in the early planning stages.

The upper limit of the total state commitment is \$2.8 billion. *(2007–09 expenditure \$330.5 million, multiple fund sources)*

**Continues work on Columbia River bridges.** Washington's aging transportation infrastructure extends beyond the reaches of central Puget Sound. The Interstate 5 bridges crossing the Columbia River carry 135,000 vehicles per day. At least one crash occurs each workday, a rate two times higher than for similar freeways in Oregon and Washington. The northbound bridge was built in 1917 and the southbound bridge was built in 1958. As both bridges are critical links for trucks travelling to Washington, replacing them is necessary for the safety of motorists as well as for the economy of our state. The Governor's budget will direct the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to work with the Federal Highway Administration to secure additional federal funding for the construction of a new bridge. Additional funding of \$6 million reflects a contribution from the state of Oregon toward the total project cost. The project was also recently awarded \$15 million under the U.S. Department of Transportation's Corridors of the Future Program. The funds are not included in the budget at this time because details, including which state(s) will receive the funds, are still being negotiated. *(2007–09 expenditure \$23.2 million, multiple fund sources)*

**Continues work along the North Spokane corridor.** The North Spokane corridor has been a priority for Spokane since 1946. This new corridor will bring greater safety for commuters in the Spokane region and an efficient route for the thousands of heavy trucks that pass daily through Spokane. Completion of the project will require a partnership between the state and the region. Governor Gregoire's budget will direct WSDOT to explore options for user fees to help fund construction of the corridor. The Governor will also recommend legislation that provides additional funding options for the region to assist in building the corridor. *(2007–09 expenditure \$169.6 million, multiple fund sources)*

**Fully funds concrete barriers in the Marysville area.** The June 2007 Cable Median Barrier Report requested by the Governor included specific recommendations on the use of concrete barriers on Interstate 5 near Marysville to prevent crossover accidents that have resulted in a number of head-on collisions in the past year. The report recommended installing a concrete barrier on a 10-mile stretch of I-5 near Marysville. The \$26.9 million project will be completed in the 2009–11 biennium. This project will construct a cast-in-place concrete barrier in the northbound direction, with an inside shoulder widened to 10 feet to prevent head-on collisions. *(2007–09 expenditure \$6.0 million, multiple fund sources)*

**Addresses immediate safety concerns on U.S. Highway 2.** A collision prevention and safety improvement project by WSDOT on U.S. 2 will remove roadside hazards, install rumble strips and apply new, high-visibility reflective striping. This project will apply these safety elements over 40 miles in the corridor from Monroe to the vicinity of Stevens Pass. This project is currently in the design stage with construction scheduled to begin in summer 2008. *(2007–09 expenditure \$3.9 million, multiple fund sources)*

**Constructs a suicide prevention fence on the Aurora Avenue Bridge.** The Aurora Avenue Bridge has the second highest suicide rate in the nation, behind the Golden Gate Bridge. Installation of an 8-foot suicide prevention fence with illumination on the Aurora Avenue Bridge will help make the bridge safer and can help prevent suicides. The \$7.5 million project will be completed in the 2009–11 biennium. *(2007–09 expenditure \$1.4 million, Motor Vehicle Account-State)*

**Purchases three new vessels to replace the 80-year-old Steel Electric-class ferries on the Port Townsend-Keystone route.** The Governor’s budget will provide \$100 million to fund the construction of three new “Pierce County-style” vessels and related terminal and other improvements. *(2007–09 expenditure \$13.4 million, Puget Sound Capital Construction Account-State)*

## ADDRESSES CONGESTION

**Adds new highway capacity throughout the state system to help relieve congestion.** As of September 2007, a total of 110 Nickel and Transportation Partnership Act (TPA) projects have been completed. By March 31, 2008, more than half of the projects funded by the Nickel and TPA programs are expected to be completed, under construction or advertised for bid. Completion of all of the Nickel and TPA projects will ultimately result in estimated savings for travelers and freight haulers of nearly 15 million hours of congestion reduction per year. That’s almost five hours of time stuck in traffic returned to each family member in our urban areas. *(2007–09 expenditure \$2.6 billion, multiple fund sources)*

**Supports multiple efforts to manage single-occupancy vehicle demand in order to ease congestion.** These efforts will include: (a) \$321 million in investments for lane miles, which will bring the total up to 263 HOV lane miles; (b) \$9 million for 2,686 vanpools that carry an average of 21,600 daily riders; (c) \$8 million to provide support to 1,172 employer worksites that subsidize public transportation or other non-single vehicle commute trips; (d) \$40 million in transit grants to support bus service; (e) \$4 million for new park and ride parking lots; (f) \$31 million for bicycle and pedestrian improvements; and (g) \$265 million for the rail program, including the operation of five state-sponsored Amtrak Cascade trips (two northbound and three southbound from Seattle). *(2007–09 expenditure \$678 million, multiple fund sources)*

**Supports multiple efforts to maximize traffic efficiencies in order to reduce congestion.** These efforts will include: (a) \$35 million for such items as 531 Web cameras, 180 variable message signs and 11 commercial vehicle weigh stations; (b) \$10 million for incident response; (c) \$9 million for traffic signals; (d) \$6.8 million for low-cost enhancements such as traffic control signs or minor highway access control; (e) \$2.6 million for variable tolling operations on the State Route 167 HOT lanes; and (f) \$6 million for traffic management centers. *(2007–09 expenditure \$69.4 million, multiple fund sources)*

## PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT

**Reduces pollutants entering the state’s waterways.** The Department of Ecology has developed new storm water permit requirements to reduce harmful pollutants entering our waterways from highway runoff. The Governor’s budget will include funding for monitoring water quality at 2,100 WSDOT storm water structures, developing a database to monitor storm water structures, and providing for the inspection and maintenance of storm water facilities. *(2007–09 expenditure \$9.2 million, Motor Vehicle Account-State)*

**Conserves 1.4 million gallons of fuel per year.** The state's ferry fleet consumes about 17.5 million gallons of fuel per year. As diesel prices remain at historic levels, the cost of fuel is a significant operating expense of the fleet. The budget will provide for engine retrofits that will allow ferry vessel captains to reduce the number of engines used when crossing the Puget Sound without jeopardizing passenger safety. Reducing the number of engines will save 1.4 million gallons of fuel annually, about an 8 percent reduction, while also benefiting the environment by reducing the amount of nitrous oxide and particulate matter emissions released. This initiative will pay for itself within four years. *(2007–09 expenditure \$6.2 million, Puget Sound Capital Construction Account-State)*