

County Road Administration Board

Grant Effectiveness Study



June 2024



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Contents

- Introduction 1**
- Study Process 2**
 - County Engagement 2
 - Data Analysis..... 2
- Background 4**
 - RAP Overview 4
 - Eligible and Ineligible Project Types..... 4
 - Funding for RAP 8
 - RAP Regions 10
 - The RAP Grant Process 11
 - Match Requirements 12
 - Recent Changes to RAP and its Administration..... 12
 - Equity and Environmental Justice 13
- Key Engagement Findings 14**
 - Summary Listing of Findings..... 14
 - Finding 1. Counties face increasing costs and need additional transportation funding..... 15
 - Finding 2. RAP is a successful program with strong County support for maintaining it without significant changes..... 18
 - Finding 3. Counties face significant funding challenges not addressed by RAP. 19
 - Finding 4. There is an opportunity to enhance consideration of equity in project prioritization. 21
 - Finding 5. Potential sources for new funding include road-related taxes or fees, or a redistribution of existing revenue. 23
- Recommendations 24**
 - Summary Listing of Recommendations 24
 - Recommendation 1. Update RAP to best meet County needs..... 25
 - Recommendation 2. Address critical County funding gaps not covered by RAP..... 27
 - Recommendation 3. Evaluate the desirability of establishing a design-only funding program. 28
 - Recommendation 4. Prioritize financial and grant portfolio management..... 29
 - Funding Options and Considerations 29

Appendix A: Workgroup Membership..... 33

Appendix B: RAP User Survey Instrument 34

Appendix C: RAP User Survey Findings 38

Appendix D: RAP Region Meeting Findings 75

Appendix E: Interviewees 77

Appendix F: Analysis of RAP Grant Applications and Awards..... 78

Introduction

County road facilities are multimodal and used by cars, buses, trucks, bicycles, pedestrians, farm vehicles, and more. A well-maintained county roadway network contributes to the economic health and quality of life of each county and Washington State overall. It provides key connections for commuting, freight transportation, emergency response, and regional accessibility.

The County Road Administration Board (CRAB) administers funding programs to preserve and enhance county transportation infrastructure. CRAB's mission is to ensure the success and accountability of all Washington County road departments. CRAB provides engineering and technology assistance to counties, maintains standards of good practice, and distributes state funding through grants or a direct distribution. CRAB's primary grant program is the Rural Arterial Program (RAP), which funds improvements on rural arterials and collectors. Since its creation over forty years ago, RAP has funded over \$650 million in county road improvements and demand for RAP funding remains higher than the available amount each biennium.

Arterials and collectors make up only 38% of total rural lane miles across the state. Over 60% of lane miles are classified as local access and are not eligible for RAP funding. Demands on the county road network have also evolved since RAP's creation. Rural areas of a county must address needs such as salmon-safe culverts, multimodal facilities, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) facilities. Many of these emerging and ongoing needs, while significant, are not eligible for CRAB's current funding opportunities, and counties have a limited ability to generate local funds.

To ensure CRAB continues to serve counties and our state, CRAB initiated this study to meet two objectives:

- Evaluate how well CRAB's primary grant funding program is meeting current County needs.
- Determine how the current program should be modified to enhance its effectiveness and if new programs should be developed to address County needs.

Study Process

The findings and recommendations in this report were developed through engagement with counties and analysis of grant application and award data from RAP, which is CRAB's primary grant program.

County Engagement

Workgroup. This study was guided by a workgroup comprised of CRAB staff and County staff. The workgroup provided guidance on the survey design, regional meeting discussion guide, project highlights, and recommendations. See [Appendix A: Workgroup Membership](#) for workgroup membership.

RAP user survey. In February 2024, the project team surveyed RAP grant users to gather input about the Program's current strengths and potential opportunities for improvement, plus gaps in funding programs beyond the scope of CRAB funding. The survey received 59 responses representing 38 of Washington's 39 counties. For more information, see [Appendix B: RAP User Survey Instrument](#) and [Appendix C: RAP User Survey Findings](#).

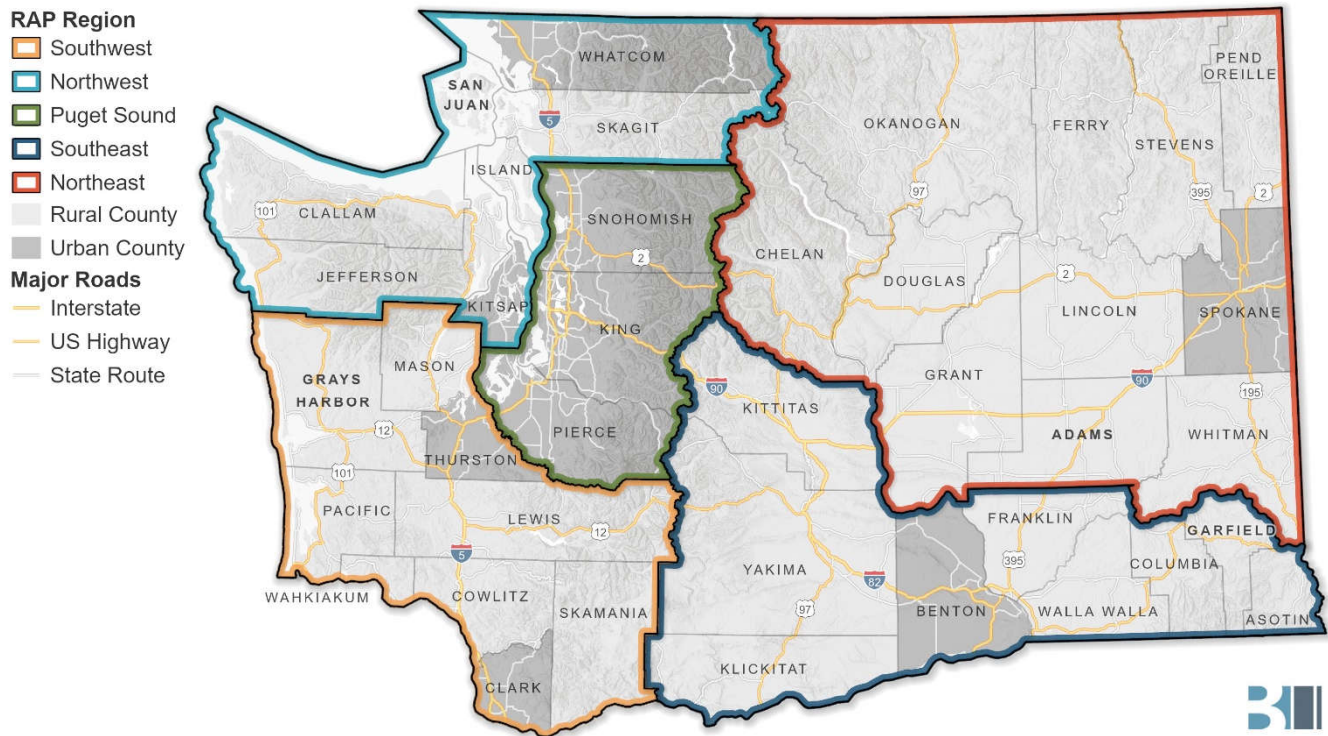
RAP region meetings. In March 2024, the project team hosted a two-hour, in-person meeting in each RAP region. See [Exhibit 1](#) for a map of RAP regions. The primary objective of these meetings was to discuss and augment the survey results, taking time to explore why respondents may have answered as they did and talk about potential adjustments to RAP. See [Appendix D: RAP Region Meeting Findings](#) for key takeaways from these discussions.

Interviews. In May 2024, the project team interviewed County staff to gather information for the project highlights included throughout this report. See [Appendix E: Interviewees](#) for a list of interviewees.

Data Analysis

The project team analyzed data on RAP applications and awards for each biennium from the 2015-2017 biennium to the 2023-2025 biennium. The data included information about each project's RAP region, county, project type, application score, length in road miles, total project cost, requested funding, and awarded funding. See [Appendix F: Analysis of RAP Grant Applications and Awards](#) for details.

Exhibit 1. RAP Regions and County Rural or Urban Designation



Sources: CRAB, 2024; Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM), 2024; BERK, 2024.

Background

RAP Overview

In 1983, the Washington State Legislature created RAP to help finance the reconstruction of rural arterial roads, which faced severe deterioration in the wake of railroad abandonments. The RAP program was initially established to fund construction only. Counties would do design on their own and then apply for construction funding. RAP was adapted in the 1990s to fund design as well, to help counties bring a project from design to construction. RAP has historically incorporated input from County engineers about their local priorities.

Chapter [36.79](#) of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) defines RAP, including CRAB's role and the methodology for allocating funding. RAP is defined as "improvement projects on those county roads in rural areas classified as rural arterials and collectors in accordance with the federal functional classification system and the construction of replacement bridges funded by the federal bridge replacement program on access roads in rural areas" ([RCW 36.79.010](#)).

By this definition, RAP addresses three key types of infrastructure: (1) rural arterials, (2) rural collectors, and (3) bridges funded by the federal bridge replacement program on rural access roads.

- **Rural arterials.** A rural arterial is a primary route in the county, linking cities and larger towns and providing a way to travel at high speed and with minimum interference. Arterials provide service to corridors with trip lengths and travel density greater than those served by rural collectors.
- **Rural collectors.** A collector "collects" traffic from local roads and connects traffic to arterial roadways. Collector routes are typically shorter than arterial routes.¹
- **Bridges funded by the federal Bridge Replacement Program.** The federal Bridge Replacement Program provides funding for highway bridge replacement and rehabilitation projects on public roads.²

Eligible and Ineligible Project Types

Exhibit 2 summarizes the types of projects that are eligible and ineligible for RAP funding per [RCW 36.79.010](#). The project types listed as ineligible for RAP funding could be elements of a larger RAP project. They are ineligible as a standalone project, and they do not factor into the scoring process. The following sections describe these project types in depth. This information was used in the RAP user survey to ask participants about potentially expanding the eligible project types for RAP.

¹ "Highway Functional Classification: Concepts, Criteria and Procedures, 2023 Edition", Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/hwy-functional-classification-2023.pdf>.

² "Implementation of FY 2023 Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program", Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/brr/20230210.cfm>.

Exhibit 2: Project Type and RAP Eligibility

Project Types Eligible for RAP	Project Types Not Eligible for RAP
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Rural arterial overlay, rehabilitation, and reconstruction▪ Drainage structures▪ Bridges (both off- and on-system)▪ Intersections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ ADA facilities▪ Bike and pedestrian facilities▪ Local access road improvements▪ Off-system non-federally funded bridges▪ Rural roads in a federal urban designated area▪ Roundabouts▪ Stormwater retention and treatment▪ Streetlights▪ Traffic signals

Note: An “off-system bridge” is defined as a highway bridge located on a public road other than a Federal-aid highway, per the Highway Infrastructure Program heading in title VIII of division J of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

Eligible Project Type Definitions

CRAB uses the following definitions for eligible project types:

- **Resurface and Restore (2R):** Although a 2R project may be done as construction, this project type mainly addresses maintenance-type resurfacing that is applied to prevent further structural damage to base materials. Some RAP rating points may be gained with two-to-four feet of total widening. Some points are allowed for clear zone safety improvements. Right-of-way is not eligible for RAP reimbursement.
- **Rehabilitation (3R):** This project type addresses roads with deficiencies throughout that will be improved toward design standards and minor portions (<50%) of the project may be re-aligned.
- **Reconstruction (RC):** In this project type, a significant length (>50%) of the project will:
 - Be realigned in vertical or horizontal alignment or a combination of both, and
 - Have extra lanes added for capacity improvements. A project consisting of two sharp reverse curves, for example, could be realigned via a reconstruction project.
- **Federal Aid Bridge Replacement (FA):** This project type applies to projects that have gained funding through the Federal Bridge Replacement Program. RAP funds can be used to provide the County with matching funds required by the federal program. RAP funding is limited to the federally-funded portions of the project.
- **Stand-Alone Bridge Replacement (SA):** If the structure is a federally-defined bridge (>20-foot span) and the County does not intend to seek federal funding, the project can be funded by RAP as a Stand-Alone Bridge, with County or other funds as match. These are allowable on rural arterial and collector roads.

- **Drainage (DR):** This project type replaces a crossing structure or short-span bridge that is shorter than 20 feet in span. The rating process addresses steel, concrete, wooden, plastic, and short-span bridge deficiencies. The length of the project is limited to the direct vicinity of the culvert or bridge and may address alignment issues at the location of the structure. These are allowable on rural arterial and collector roads.
- **Intersection (IS):** This project type addresses 3R or RC work limited to the vicinity of an existing intersection and may include additional travel lanes and right-of-way costs. These are allowable on rural arterial and collector roads.

Ineligible Project Types

There are several types of projects that are not eligible for RAP funding as a standalone project, described in the bullets below. Many are eligible for other sources of funding, as described in *Exhibit 3*.

- **ADA facilities.** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) includes requirements for pedestrian facilities to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. Many facilities constructed prior to the adoption of the ADA in 1990 are not ADA-compliant, and others constructed since 1990 are no longer compliant due to updates in ADA requirements for pedestrian facilities.
- **Bike and pedestrian facilities.** These projects improve or construct trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, and other facilities for bikers and pedestrians.
- **Local access road improvements.** A local access road primarily provides access to residential properties and circulation away from the arterial system.³ Local roads in rural areas typically serve very low density, dispersed developments with relatively low traffic volume. Roads not specified as arterials or collectors are classified as local roads.
- **Off-system non-federally funded bridges.** An “off-system bridge” is defined as a highway bridge located on a public road other than a federal-aid highway, per the Highway Infrastructure Program heading in title VIII of division J of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
- **Rural roads in a federal urban designated area.** The results of the 2020 Census led to some rural areas being changed to an urban designation, meaning roads in these areas are ineligible for RAP funding.
- **Roundabouts.** These projects replace existing roundabouts or install new roundabouts.
- **Stormwater retention and treatment.** These projects address stormwater runoff from highways to maintain safe driving conditions, preserve the condition of the roadway, and reduce issues with water quality.
- **Streetlights.** These projects replace existing streetlights or install new streetlights.
- **Traffic signals.** These projects replace existing traffic signals or install new traffic signals.

³ “Highway Functional Classification: Concepts, Criteria and Procedures, 2023 Edition”, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/statewide/related/hwy-functional-classification-2023.pdf>.

Exhibit 3. Funding Sources Available for Project Types Not Eligible for RAP Funding

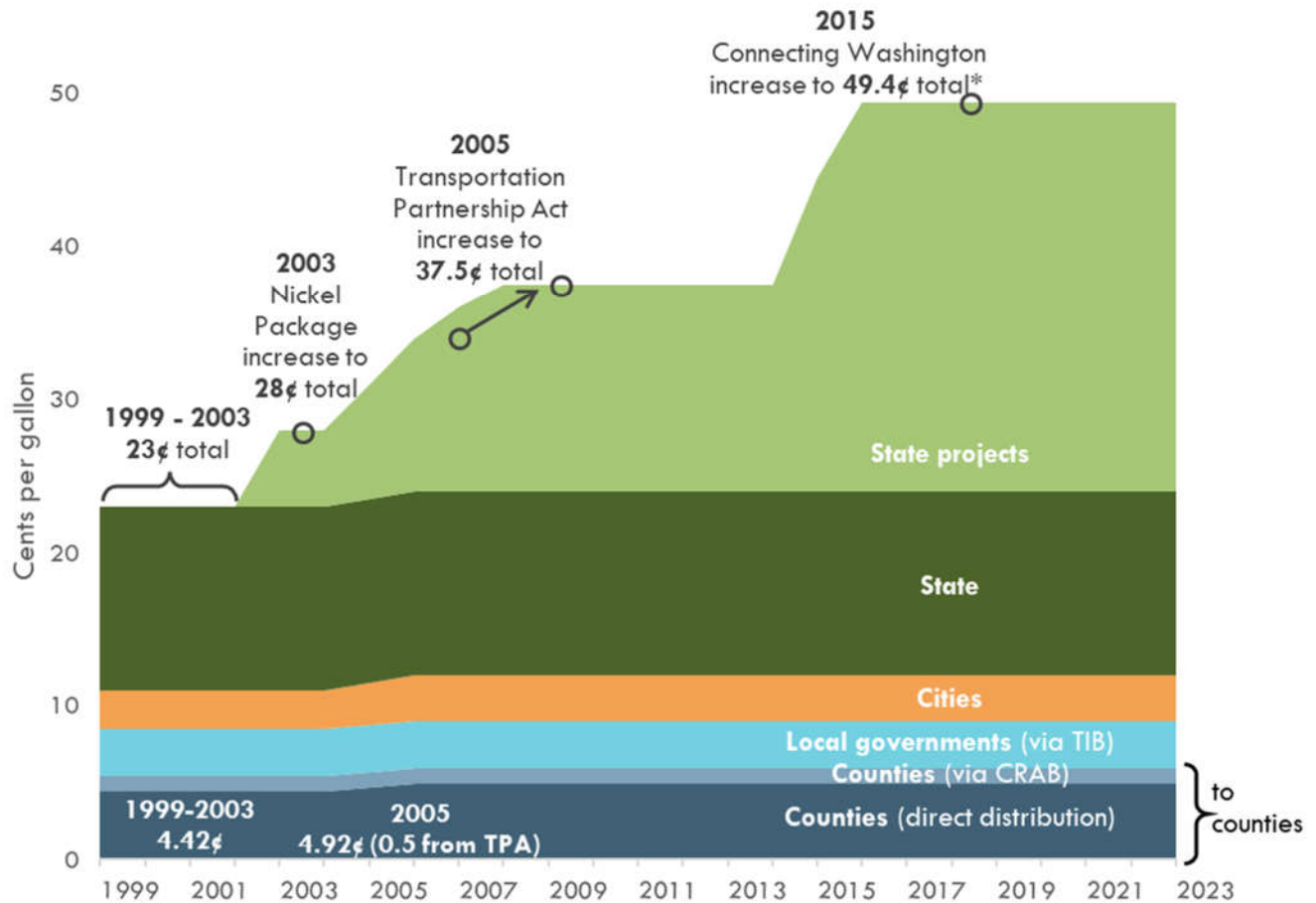
Project type	Other funding sources available
ADA facilities	State grant programs, federal grant programs, local funding
Bike and pedestrian facilities	State grant programs, federal grant programs, local funding
Local access road improvements	Local funding
Off-system non-federally funded bridges	Federal grant funding from new Bridge Formula Program, local funding
Rural roads in a federal urban designated area	State grant programs (TIB), federal grant programs, local funding
Roundabouts	Federal grant programs, local funding
Stormwater retention and treatment	State grant programs, federal grant programs, local funding
Streetlights	State grant programs, federal grant programs, local funding
Traffic signals	State grant programs, local funding

Source: BERK, 2024.

Funding for RAP

The Rural Arterial Trust Account (RATA) provides funding for RAP. The RATA is primarily funded by 2.5363% of the base Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT) rate (0.58 cents per gallon). The total MVFT rate has increased over time, as shown in *Exhibit 4*, but the amount dedicated to RAP has stayed the same.

Exhibit 4: Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Rate, 1999-2020



*While not a gas tax increment, counties received \$25.1M per year in 2017-19 & 2019-21 biennia, \$11.7M per year in 2015-17 biennium (of total \$16B Connecting Washington investment).

Source: BERK, 2024.

Other sources of revenue for RATA include:

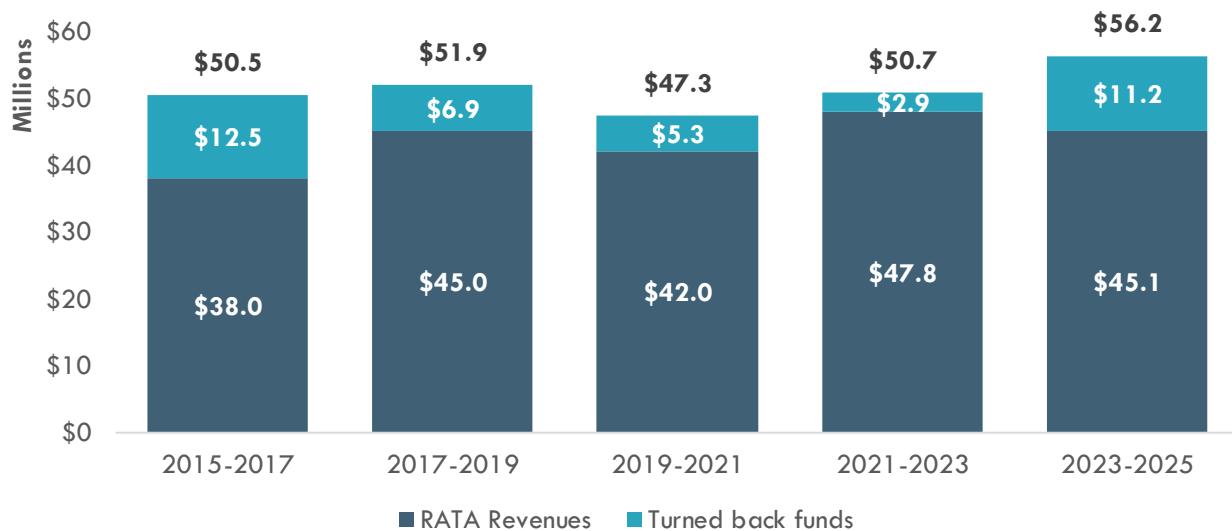
- **MVA Transfer.** The RATA account receives a quarterly transfer from the Motor Vehicle Account (MVA). This amount is subject to appropriation in the State’s biennial budget.
- **Electric vehicle (EV) fees.** An EV must pay a \$100 fee at the time of annual registration, of which 15% goes to the RATA ([RCW 46.17.323\(3\)\(iii\)](#)).
- **Interest.** The RATA account also earns interest on its fund balance.

CRAB can deposit funds that are returned to CRAB into RATA and reallocate them to projects. This may occur if a County does not use the total project budget or if a funded project does not occur.

As shown in *Exhibit 5*, the amount of RATA revenue has ranged between \$38 million and almost \$48 million per biennium. This revenue includes MVFT, a transfer from the MVA, and interest. The amount of returned funds ranged from a low of \$2.9 million in 2021-2023 to a high of \$12.5 million in 2015-2017. The total amount available to allocate to counties has typically been around \$50 million, with the lowest amount in 2019-2021 at \$47.3 million and the highest amount in 2023-2025 at \$56.2 million.

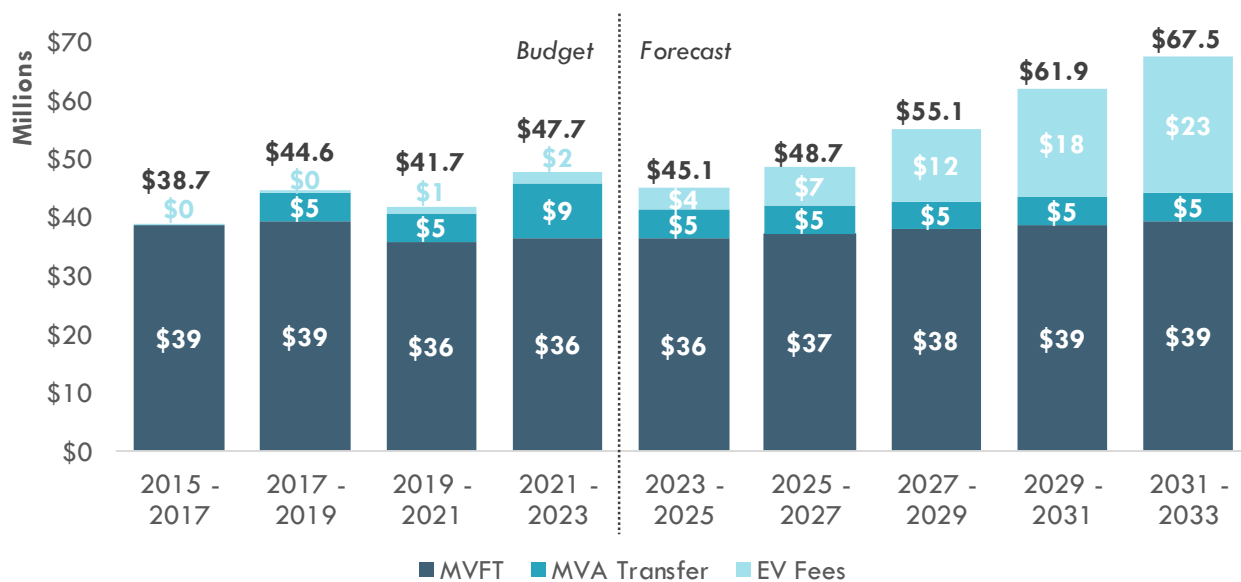
The transportation revenue forecast from February 2024 estimates revenues out to the 2031-2033 biennium. MVFT revenue is projected to remain relatively flat, increasing by 1% annually. Revenue from EV fees is projected to increase significantly over the forecast period, reaching a high of \$23 million in 2033 (*Exhibit 6*).

Exhibit 5: Total Available Funding to Allocate to RAP Projects, 2015-2025



Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 6: Budgeted and Forecasted RATA Funding, 2015-2033



Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

The CRAB Board has targeted that the RATA should have a balance of \$5 million at the end of the annual fiscal year. As of January 2024, the RATA had a balance of \$21.5 million. The RATA balance has historically cycled up and down due to the timing of reimbursements, as shown in *Exhibit 7*. The RATA balance reached a low of \$12 million in December 2020, as tax revenues declined. The balance started to increase in 2021 and reached a high of \$28.3 million in September 2023. CRAB staff attribute the increase in the RATA balance to additional returned funds and project delays due to increased project costs and significant staffing impacts in many counties.⁴

Exhibit 7: RATA Balance, 2015-2023



Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

RAP Regions

There are five RAP regions, defined in [RCW 36.79.030](#) and illustrated in *Exhibit 1*, above. *Exhibit 8* lists the counties within each region. Total RAP funds are allocated proportionately across the five regions, and counties compete for RAP funds within their region. The process for apportioning funding to the regions is stated in [RCW 36.79.040](#) and is based the ratio of rural land area and mileage of county arterials and collectors in rural areas compared to the statewide totals.

⁴ County Road Administration Board Meeting, July 2023, https://www.crab.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/July23BoardPacket%28FINAL%29_2.pdf.

Exhibit 8: RAP Regions and Counties

RAP Region	Counties
Northwest	Clallam, Island, Jefferson, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Whatcom
Northeast	Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Whitman
Southwest	Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum
Southeast	Asotin, Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Kittitas, Klickitat, Walla Walla, Yakima
Puget Sound	King, Pierce, Snohomish

Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

The RAP Grant Process

The RAP grant is based on a two-year cycle. Once the State Legislature has prepared the State biennial budget, documenting the funding amount budgeted for the upcoming biennium, the CRAB Board may issue a call for projects. The total biennial funding amount is apportioned to the five RAP regions, and each individual County's expected application limits are established, following the rules outlined in [WAC 136-130](#). The County application limits ensure that project selection is competitive, with the new funding going to the projects demonstrating the highest need (i.e., not all projects can receive funding).

Preliminary prospectus applications are due by March 1 following the call for projects, and counties are allowed to submit a maximum of five eligible projects at this stage. This initial list of projects helps CRAB staff understand County project needs across the state. CRAB staff then inspects each of these initial projects in person, meeting with County staff to discuss and prepare preliminary scoring based on road condition. Once all projects have been reviewed and the condition scores have been tabulated, CRAB will publish a draft array of ranked projects, and present this array to the CRAB Board.

After publication of the initial project array, counties begin preparing their final prospectus applications. This phase of application requires more specific project information and commitment, including proposed improvements, expected project costs, and commitment for project construction timing. Counties may only prepare final prospectus applications from their list of preliminary applications, and at this phase are now limited to a maximum application dollar amount, as established with the call for projects, and updated with any new budget forecast information and any potential turned back funds.

If any County does not apply for new projects, the County application limits will be adjusted to distribute the unused capacity among those counties that are proposing new projects.

The final prospectus applications also include the full project scoring worksheets, which examine specific project conditions and proposed improvements, such as geometric design, accident history, structural condition, and safety. The scoring criteria differs region to region, as County staff helped to shape the priorities within their regions.

Once all final prospectus applications have been submitted (in September following the call for projects), CRAB staff prepare the funding array for presentation to the CRAB Board. The Board may award funding to these projects, based on regional score ranking, funding available within each region, and limited by the County application limits. Ninety percent of the biennial funding amount may be awarded

by the Board at their April meeting, with the remaining 10% reserved until later (allowing for adjustments as necessary), typically awarding the remaining funds the following year.

RAP offers “first-in funding” for these County projects, meaning that funds are available for the full project life, from planning, through engineering design, and finally construction. This supports counties with secured funding for the life of the project. While the benefits of first-in funding are clear, the drawback is that this assigns project funding to projects that will take an average of six years to reach construction (to spend out the full grant). Managing the statewide RATA account balance and cashflow relies on counties meeting the proposed project schedules.

Match Requirements

RAP funding must be matched by the County at a rate of 10% local match. Typically, counties use locally generated funds to match the RAP award, but they may also use federal grant funds as a match. [RCW 36.79.120](#) states the match requirements for RAP projects, noting that counties “shall provide such matching funds as established by rules recommended by the board, subject to review, revision, and final approval by the office of financial management. Matching requirements shall be established after appropriate studies by the board, taking into account financial resources available to counties to meet arterial needs.”

With approval by the Office of Financial Management, CRAB authorized a temporary match adjustment for RAP projects reaching construction in 2023 and 2024, removing the 10% match requirement up to the original project cost estimate. This action was intended to help bring projects to construction and help meet increased costs due to inflation. This also helped use more of the balance in the RATA account.

Recent Changes to RAP and its Administration

In July 2023, CRAB made several changes to the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for RAP. The goals were to improve project delivery, improve clarification of program requirements, deploy RATA funds to meet County needs, and codify or eliminate unwritten rules. The changes are summarized below:

- All counties shall use current cost pricing to estimate project costs. Inflation and contingency rates will be applied by CRAB based upon project type. CRAB found that counties were inconsistently applying inflation in their project estimates.
- All project types shall be available for each region and no regional sub limits shall apply for project types.
- Counties may request an advance of RATA funds for partially funded projects once they get to the bid stage. Such a request by a County shall demonstrate the ability to proceed with the project ahead of the regular funding schedule and shall acknowledge that advancing RATA funds will correspondingly reduce the limit of RATA funds that may be allocated to the County in the next project program period. Counties are borrowing forward from their future allocations.

In March 2024, CRAB filed an emergency rule change to the WAC that eliminates the 25% cap on a request for increased funding for a project. CRAB staff found that the 25% limit on project increase requests was causing counties to delay capital improvements. The increase in the cost of projects required County staff to seek additional grant funds, putting the project on hold. This change is intended to assist the counties with making these critical public safety improvements as quickly as possible.

CRAB is also making a change to its internal processes to address the goals stated above, particularly to facilitate the use of RATA funds to meet ongoing County needs. CRAB looks at the biennial State budget forecast to set the County limits. In the current forecast, MVFT revenue is projected to remain flat, but EV fees are projected to increase. By setting higher project call amounts, future project costs can align with estimated future revenues. CRAB also has the option of putting out another project call to use available RATA funds. CRAB staff recommends waiting to see the impact of these regulatory and process changes before initiating another round of funding.

Equity and Environmental Justice

The State Legislature passed the Healthy Environment for All Act (HEAL Act) in 2021. It is intended to create a coordinated and collaborative approach to environmental justice, making it a priority and part of the mission of key State agencies. The law requires larger State agencies to identify and address environmental health disparities in overburdened communities and for vulnerable populations. CRAB is not identified as a participating agency and is not subject to the same requirements as larger agencies like WSDOT. CRAB participates as a “listen and learn” agency, which allows CRAB to stay current on progress and incorporate principles as appropriate.

Key Engagement Findings

This section describes key findings from our engagement with counties. We include brief case studies that illustrate key findings in action.

Summary Listing of Findings

- Finding 1. Counties face increasing costs and need additional transportation funding.**
- 1A. Most counties are challenged to fund transportation capital projects, including with grants, and expressed a need for additional transportation funding.
 - 1B. Project costs are increasing, pushing counties to adopt practices that lead to inefficiencies in project delivery.
- Finding 2. RAP is a successful program with strong County support for maintaining it without significant changes.**
- 2A. RAP continues to be an essential program for funding high-priority projects.
 - 2B. Satisfaction with the existing RAP process is generally very high.
 - 2C. County staff mostly want to maintain which project types are currently eligible for RAP funding.
- Finding 3. Counties face significant funding challenges not addressed by RAP.**
- 3A. Counties need funding support for projects on local access roads and short-span bridges.
 - 3B. Fish passage barriers are becoming a high priority for some counties.
- Finding 4. There is an opportunity to enhance consideration of equity in project prioritization.**
- Finding 5. Potential sources for new funding include road-related taxes or fees, or a redistribution of existing revenue.**

Finding 1. Counties face increasing costs and need additional transportation funding.

1A. Most counties are challenged to fund transportation capital projects, including with grants, and expressed a need for additional transportation funding.

Counties describe difficulties acquiring adequate funding in the face of competing priorities for limited County resources and inflation that is increasing more quickly than most County funding sources.

Existing grant programs may not always resolve counties' funding issues. In the survey, many counties expressed difficulties with grant programs in general, including grant requirements and match requirements. Some counties note that the 10% RAP match requirement can be burdensome, sometimes encouraging the use of federal money as matching funds and thereby adding significant complexity to the delivery of a project, or at other times reducing funding from other programs like self-funded road maintenance. Meeting participants discussed the possibility of changing the 10% match requirement to a sliding scale based on criteria, but not all regions supported this change.

Existing RAP funding is fulfilling a greatly reduced and diminishing level of project need. When survey respondents allocated hypothetical new State grant funding across preservation, capital projects, and projects that are currently ineligible for CRAB funding, most allocated at least some additional funds to capital projects.

Project Highlight: Francis Road, Skagit County

Francis Road is a roughly five-mile major collector connecting the communities of Mount Vernon and Sedro-Woolley via SR9, which is frequently flooded by the Skagit River. Over time, use of this road has expanded beyond its traditional farming purposes—today, the road serves as a commuter route and occasionally as a principal bypass when I-5 is closed due to an emergency. To meet these new uses of this road, Skagit County seeks to widen a 0.6 mile portion of this roadway to include 12-foot travel lanes and eight-foot wide paved shoulders.

Skagit County began preliminary design work in 2018, and following delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, completed its design in 2022. The County intended for RAP funds to fully fund the construction phase, while the County used other funding sources, including County funds, for the design and right-of-way phases of this project.

However, due to unprecedented materials and labor price escalation post-COVID, the County is once again seeking additional construction funds as of June 2024. In the meantime, the environmental permit landscape continues to evolve, and the County may need to reapply permits that had previously been granted.

The years of funding challenges have impacted the County's ability to fund other projects as well. This project has consumed a large portion the County's RAP allocation during its ongoing attempts to begin construction.

1 B. Project costs are increasing, pushing counties to adopt practices that lead to inefficiencies in project delivery.

Over the last five biennia, there has been an increase in the average project cost per RAP grant application and the average amount requested per RAP grant application, and two-thirds of surveyed counties reported they are only “somewhat satisfied” or “not satisfied” with the size of RAP awards.

Given increasing costs, counties can do less with their total funding. Increased costs also mean that RAP funding is a less meaningful amount on a per-project basis. To try to address this issue, counties report dividing projects into smaller pieces in grant applications or prioritizing a smaller number of larger projects for RAP funding. The former generally increases costs, compared to implementing a larger project, typically due to repeated mobilization, fewer bidders, and reduced scale economies. The latter practice is reflected in the decrease in the number of new requests in 2023-2025 from a high in 2019-2021.

Instead of dividing a project into phases, counties may wait for several funding cycles to accumulate enough funds to complete a project. This practice lengthens the overall project timeline, which can create complications such as expired permits, changed regulations, or increased costs due to inflation. Such complications can delay the project further or lead to its cancellation.

In some cases, counties also borrow ahead from their future allocation in order to have enough funding to complete a project, once a project gets to the bid stage. This practice allows counties to complete larger projects but obligates future funding that could be used for other projects.

Project Highlight: The Lind-Hatton Road Corridor, Adams County

The Lind-Hatton Road corridor is a 16-mile paved secondary route and major collector that runs parallel to I-395 in Adams County. The road connects SR-21 at the corridor’s northern terminus to SR-26 at the south.

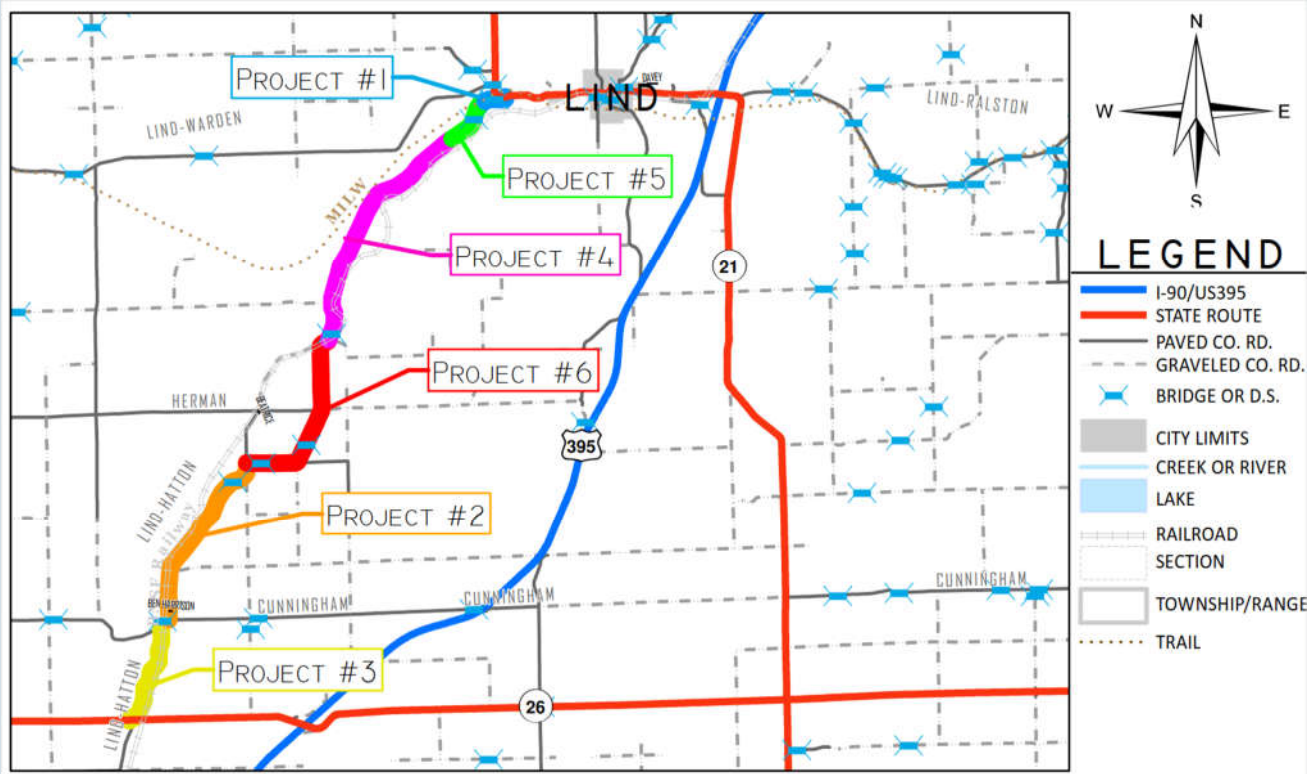
The corridor has played a pivotal role in the local economy, supporting a large storage facility for wheat, potato, and other crops and a National Foods operation that houses millions of chickens. For many years, the corridor was the only paved road in a 25-mile stretch between two highways (I-395 and SR-17) that reach the Tri-Cities (the largest nearby metropolitan area), elevating its importance for local trade and resulting in a high volume of truck traffic on this road.

This high level of traffic accelerated the corridor’s deterioration, necessitating improvements. By the early 2000s, Adams County looked to conduct a series of improvements, including realignments, reconstruction, repaving, and an intersection improvement. However, funding was not available for the full suite of improvements.

Therefore, to fund the improvements, Adams County resorted to dividing the corridor into six separate projects and executing these projects in the order of their ability to obtain funding rather than in a logical order based on road needs. Some segments of the road were more competitive for RAP funds due to their alignment, pavement condition, or connectivity to other roads. In some cases, the County had expended its biennial limit of for RAP funds and chose to utilize federal funds to continue the reconstruction projects.

Construction of the improvement projects spanned across 22 years, with construction of the first two projects in 2003 and construction of the final project anticipated to be completed in 2025.

Adams County described conflicting pressures in dividing the improvement projects: had they waited to begin construction until obtaining full funding, they would have risked inflation increasing their project costs. Further, segments of the corridor that score low for RAP funding (i.e., those without curves, poor pavement, or a history of fatal collisions) could have reduced how well the corridor’s competed for RAP funds, potentially risking the entire project’s ability to obtain RAP funding. However, by choosing to divide the improvement projects, Adams County lost their economy of scale, leading to increased project costs.



Project Highlight: Sundale/Highway 8, Klickitat County

Sundale/Highway 8 in Klickitat County primarily serves agricultural property. New vineyards have been recently planted, increasing the volume of truck traffic and wear on the existing dirt road. The County wants to improve the road by increasing the width, fixing safety concerns, adding a structural section, and putting on a hard surface. These improvements would make the road safer for travel during all weather and accommodate the higher level of traffic. This project scored highly in the RAP process because it provides access for the vineyard industry and includes safety improvements.

The County applied for RAP funding for this project during the 2019-2021 biennium and was awarded funding in April 2019. The Final Prospectus for the project, which includes the total cost estimate, was prepared in fall 2018. The project proceeded through the design phase and reached construction in early 2024, but the final cost was over the original project estimate. The total cost will be \$4.1 million for construction, or \$1 million per mile. County staff noted that in 2018, a similar project cost about two-thirds this amount, or \$650,000 to \$700,000 per mile.

To move this project forward, the County requested additional funding from RAP to help cover the increased cost. The additional funding is borrowed from their 2025-2027 County limit. This in effect obligates a portion of future funding for Klickitat County, so it cannot use it for other projects. With this additional funding, the County was able to award the construction contract, and proceed into the construction phase. In addition, if the County can complete the project by the end of 2024, CRAB will not require the County to pay the 10% match.

Without the additional RAP funding, the project likely would not have moved forward because the project is ineligible for other state or federal grants. Had that occurred, the cost to maintain the existing road would have increased, limiting the County's ability to fund other high-priority road projects.

Finding 2. RAP is a successful program with strong County support for maintaining it without significant changes.

2A. RAP continues to be an essential program for funding high-priority projects.

The scores given to funded projects over the past several biennia remain high, indicating that counties' projects continue to perform well when evaluated against regional scoring criteria.

Further, counties continue to support funding RAP. When survey respondents allocated \$100 in *existing* State grant funding across project categories, including capital projects (i.e., RAP funding), preservation projects (i.e., County Arterial Preservation Program (CAPP) funding), and projects that are currently ineligible for CRAB funding, most counties allocated roughly half of funding to RAP, indicating the importance of this program.

2B. Satisfaction with the existing RAP process is generally very high.

For most of the program elements evaluated in the survey, at least half of counties indicated they are "very satisfied" and most of the remaining counties indicated they are "somewhat satisfied." County staff noted that the RAP application and award process is easy and predictable, and that they value the support they receive from CRAB staff.

2C. County staff mostly want to maintain which project types are currently eligible for RAP funding.

While one-third of counties reported in the survey that they would “absolutely” expand eligibility to new project types and one-half reported that it would depend, upon further discussion in RAP Region meetings, most counties did not support expanding RAP eligibility for fear of diluting the current program’s effectiveness.

The greatest percentage of applications is for 3R projects (rehabilitation), followed by 2R projects (resurfacing and restoration). In the user survey, counties most highly prioritized 3R projects, 2R projects, and reconstruction projects for RAP funds. Counties assigned a lower priority to bridges, drainage structures, and intersections, stating that they are often eligible for funding from other sources. Some counties in Western Washington noted that they may have greater need for funding for bridges and drainage structures and fish passage barrier removal in the future.

Finding 3. Counties face significant funding challenges not addressed by RAP.

3A. Counties need funding support for projects on local access roads and short-span bridges.

In the RAP user survey, counties shared which project types would be the highest priorities if a new grant program were created. Top priorities include funding for local access roads and short-span bridges. Local access roads and short-span bridges are not currently eligible for any State grant funding. With no other grants available to backfill these needs, counties must use locally generated revenues for these projects. Counties expressed concerns about expanding project type eligibility for existing RAP funding to include local access roads and short-span bridges, given that RAP funding is already short of meeting existing needs.

Project Highlight: Hesseltine Road, Lincoln County

In February 2023, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) closed Route 174 in both directions due to a fuel tanker truck accident. During this accident, a fuel truck rolled off the road, requiring hazardous material cleanup and traffic diversion in Lincoln County. A detour was directed by WSDOT onto Hesseltine Road (County Road #44050), a local access road maintained by Lincoln County since 1952. This road was selected because it was the best option for safety, sight distance, and road width, even though this type of county road is not designed to handle the volume and weight of traffic that a State Route can handle. The diversion of traffic lasted approximately 13 hours and caused damage to the paved section of the road, particularly along the road’s shoulders and surface.

In order to fund the repairs to Hesseltine Road, Lincoln County sought funding from both WSDOT and the party responsible for the fuel truck accident on Route 174, but was not able to collect funding from either of these sources. Because Hesseltine Road is a local access road that does not qualify for federal or state funding, including RAP funding, all the repairs for the road needed to be paid for from the County road fund. The repair project cost about \$28,000 in total and included patch work rather than a new overlay, because of the relatively low average daily traffic (ADT) that Hesseltine road experiences. Had it been eligible for federal or state funding, such as RAP, the County may have considered more extensive repairs, or could have used the funds taken from the County road fund to address other road projects that may be considered higher priority.

Project Highlight: Washington Boulevard, Kitsap County

Washington Boulevard is a local access road located in Kitsap County, just north of the ferry terminal in Kingston. It serves as the sole access for 22 private homes. Part of the road crosses a large deep-seated landslide complex along a steep coastal bluff. In 2006, there was a period of extreme rainfall followed by significant damage to the roadway. The County evaluated options to maintain access on this road. At the time, the cost to complete a significant improvement was estimated at \$4 to \$6 million. The County dedicates \$3 million annually to its capital program for roads, meaning that this one project would use up to two years of available funding. With this in mind, the County chose to monitor the roadway and make minor improvements because of the high cost of the major improvement and because there was no risk of catastrophic failure of the road.

Following periods of instability and additional roadway damage, access was temporarily limited, restricting access by passenger vehicles, delivery trucks, and emergency vehicles. As a result, the residents who relied on the road for access began pushing for a permanent solution. In 2018, the County decided to move forward with a permanent solution including slope dewatering, which was completed in 2021. The project cost \$1.3 million and was funded by the County road fund because there was no other funding source available for a project of this financial scale. Because it is a local access road, the project was not eligible for RAP or other grant programs. Had the project been eligible for RAP, County staff would have likely applied for funding and completed the improvement sooner, rather than expend funds for several years to keep up with temporary maintenance activities.

Project Highlight: Hosheit Road, Okanogan County

Okanogan County has a short-span bridge on a local access road that is not eligible for RAP funding nor other grant programs. Hosheit Road is a primitive road that is 2.5 miles long with an average daily traffic (ADT) of 62. It provides access to many large parcels.

During a high water runoff event after fires in 2015, Tunk Creek washed out the culvert under Hosheit Road. Three temporary, smaller culverts were placed under the road in 2017 to reopen the road and the County received a temporary permit from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to install smaller culverts. Now, this situation needs to be remedied with a larger bridge, which will likely exceed a 20-foot span. This project is likely to cost \$600,000 to \$800,000 based on current WDFW requirements, but the project is not eligible for most grant funding sources. It is ineligible for RAP funding because it is on a local access road, and ineligible for federal bridge funding because there is no current bridge at the location. While there are grants available for fish passage projects, this project would not create any habitat gain and so likely would not be competitive.

As a result, this project will have to be funded with local County dollars. The County's annual road fund budget is \$16 million, which includes capital projects funding. To add an unplanned \$800,000 project, the County would have to reduce funding for other programs such as preservation. A project of this type is becoming a higher priority for the County because the state of repair is declining, and a washed-out culvert makes a road impassable.

The County has similar structures under 20 feet and staff have been applying for RAP funding in the DR (drainage) category. This has been successful, but applying for drainage projects with RAP funding is directly taking away from the County's eligibility for 2R (resurfacing and restoration) and 3R (rehabilitation) projects.

3B. Fish passage barriers are becoming a high priority for some counties.

In the user survey, many counties, particularly those in the Northwest and Puget Sound regions, would prioritize a dedicated program for fish barrier removal projects. Fish passage barrier removal projects are eligible for RAP funding, but they do not score as highly as other project types because the focus of RAP is improving the condition of rural arterials and collectors. County staff noted that they may

complete a road project up to the culvert because replacing or repairing the culvert adds significant cost and complexity.

There are other ongoing federal and state efforts to prioritize and fund fish passage barrier removal. In 2020, the State Legislature directed the Department of Fish and Wildlife, WSDOT, and the Fish Barrier Removal Board to develop a comprehensive statewide strategy for how to prioritize culvert projects. The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), established new funding opportunities to replace or remove culverts.⁵

Project Highlight: Fish Passage Barrier Program, Thurston County

A “road-first” project prioritizes preservation, capacity, and safety. A “fish-first” project prioritizes improving the habitat for fish and enhancing fish passage. When a county has a road-first project that crosses fish-bearing water, it must ensure the structure meets fish passage standards but it likely will not score well in existing grant programs for fish passage projects because the habitat gain is not the project’s focus. As a result, counties often modify project limits to separate out the portion that impacts fish-bearing streams, and these portions of the project may go unaddressed.

Thurston County has a dedicated program for enhancing fish passage. The program provides \$2 million in funding per year using REET 2 revenues and specifically prioritizes barriers for removal based on biological needs, not human needs (i.e., fish-first projects). For example, the top fish passage project at Thurston County is a culvert replacement on Thompson Creek which will open 10 or more miles of habitat, although the culvert itself is only 15 years old. The County successfully obtained state grants for this project from the Brian Abbott program (\$500,000) and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (\$80,000) because it scored so highly.

Thurston County created this program in response to the federal court injunction issued in 2013 that requires the State to correct barriers to salmon and steelhead within northwestern Washington. While the injunction does not apply to counties, Thurston County wanted to take a proactive approach to addressing fish barriers in case requirements arise in the future.

Thurston County is facing another challenge related to culvert projects, which is addressing emergency culvert replacement. If a culvert carries fish-bearing waters, the County must meet fish passage standards. A culvert off Kellogg Drive NE has a failed 3-ft diameter culvert, but the permanent fix needed will mostly be either a total road abandonment or a new 100-foot-long bridge costing over \$10 million.

Finding 4. There is an opportunity to enhance consideration of equity in project prioritization.

There is a large variation in whether counties have a philosophy and/or policy to consider equity and environmental justice in prioritizing transportation projects. Most counties do not prioritize preservation or improvements based on equity or environmental justice, as prioritization is based on factors such as pavement condition, safety, and traffic volume. County staff expressed uncertainty about how to identify overburdened or vulnerable communities in rural areas. Existing tools such as the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map can serve as a resource. This map compares census tracts, which can be large in a rural county. This limits the ability to identify overburdened communities within a county.⁶

⁵ <https://wsace.org/wp-content/uploads/Agency-Report-FBRB-to-WSACE-27JUN23.pdf>.

⁶ “Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map”, Washington State Department of Health, <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/washington-environmental-health-disparities-map>.

Equity-focused transportation investments in rural areas could focus on:

- Providing access to employment, services, and education for isolated communities.
- Providing access to employment and housing for itinerant agricultural workers.
- Improving access to Tribal lands.
- Prioritizing a state of good repair to and within underserved communities, particularly those that score highly on the Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map.

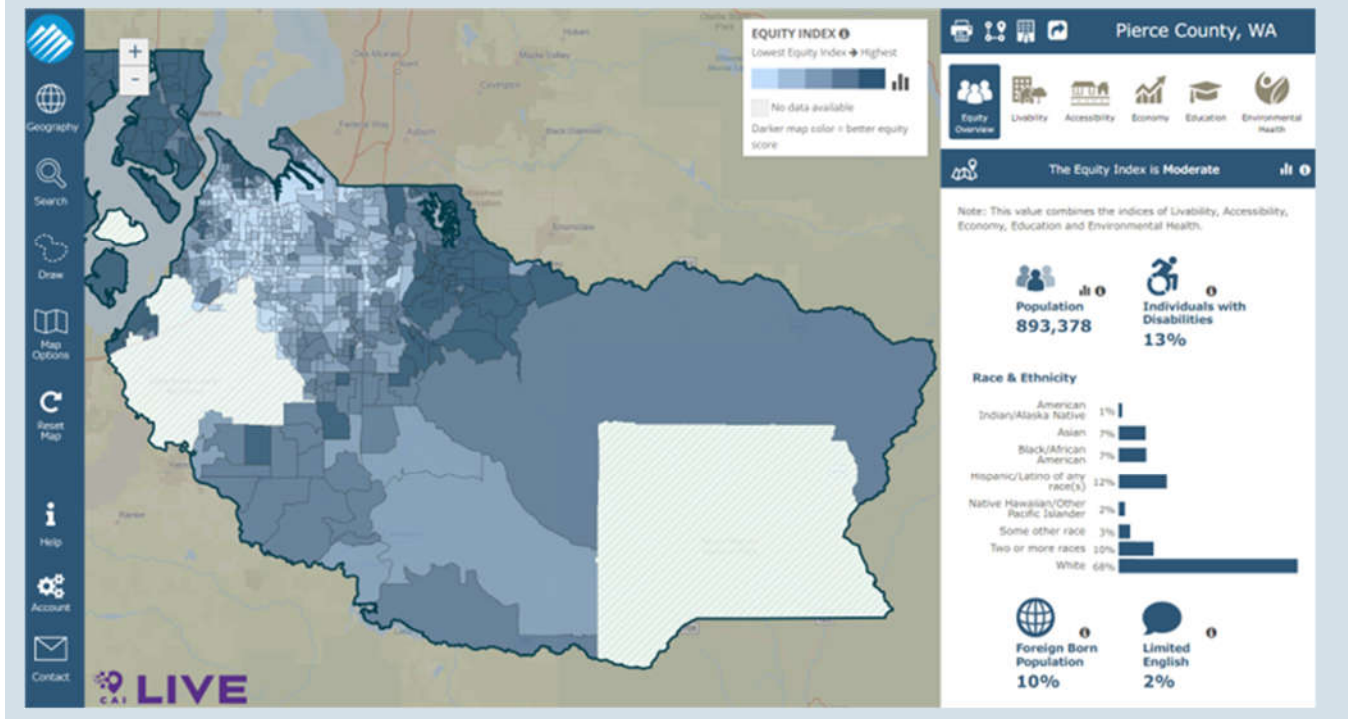
Project Highlight: Equity in Decision Making, Pierce County

Pierce County developed a process to incorporate equity into decision making at the County Council level. Any resolution or ordinance put forward to the Council must be accompanied by an Equity Note. The note includes information such as how many people in the County are impacted by the proposal, what efforts staff have taken to reach out to those impacted, and if they are from low equity areas. An Equity Note is required for countywide plans that go to County Council for approval, such as the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program.

The County also developed an Equity Index, in partnership with the City of Tacoma and a consultant. The Equity Index is a mapping tool that visually highlights opportunities to improve equitable access and outcomes for residents of Pierce County. For County staff who work on road projects, the Equity Index is a useful tool in the project planning stage. The Equity Index is an easy way for staff to look at the area where a project is planned and identify characteristics of the population.

The County has implemented processes to incorporate equity into project planning. For example, at the start of every project, staff puts together a limited English proficiency report. This report identifies the languages spoken in the area and determines translation needs for outreach materials.

Incorporating equity into project prioritization can be challenging. County staff already look at multiple criteria when prioritizing transportation projects, such as: safety, asset condition, concurrency, competitiveness for grants, and access (e.g., connection to a county center, or a walking route to a school). Staff is currently exploring how to incorporate equity as a criterion in this process.



Finding 5. Potential sources for new funding include road-related taxes or fees, or a redistribution of existing revenue.

Regional meeting participants discussed potential funding sources for a new grant program. Ideas discussed include a fee on tire purchases, a dedicated statewide sales tax, and a road usage charge (RUC). Participants also discussed reallocating the gas tax to distribute more of the existing revenue to roads. Participants raised concerns about a road usage charge, including privacy and whether it would be subject to the 18th Amendment requiring the funds be expended for “highway purposes.”

Staff discussed if the State’s “cap and invest” program, which funds climate projects focused on improving clean transportation options, could be used for County transportation projects. These funds can perhaps best be targeted at projects with an environmental benefit, such as culvert projects or stormwater projects. Projects that add multimodal infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks and bike lanes) could also be a good fit, as they provide alternative transportation options. These project types do not exist in every region, and they may not fully fulfill the intent of the program.

Recommendations

This section describes recommendations based on the findings from our engagement with counties. This section also describes funding options raised by County staff.

Summary Listing of Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Update RAP to best meet County needs.

- 1A. Maintain RAP's current project type eligibility and grant process.
- 1B. Increase the size of RAP grant awards.
- 1C. Use equity considerations to refine project selections.
- 1D. Seek the ability to adaptively modify match requirements to achieve program goals and respond to changes in the economic environment.

Recommendation 2. Address critical County funding gaps not covered by RAP.

- 2A. Create a new funding program for local access roads and short-span bridges on local access roads.
- 2B. Develop a strategy to address rural roads in federally urban-designated areas.

Recommendation 3. Evaluate the desirability of establishing a design-only funding program.

Recommendation 4. Prioritize financial and grant portfolio management.

Funding Options and Considerations

- Increase in MVFT Revenues
- Additional Fee on Tire Purchases
- Increase in Sales Tax
- State Climate Commitment Act Funds
- Federal Bridge Formula Program Funding

Recommendation 1. Update RAP to best meet County needs.

1 A. Maintain RAP's current project type eligibility and grant process.

Based on the ongoing demand for RAP funding (Finding 1) and strong County support for the program (Finding 2), CRAB should maintain the current project types that are eligible for RAP funding.

CRAB should also maintain the current grant application timeline and procedures. Counties gave these program elements high marks in the survey and have integrated the current RAP grant cycle in their annual workplans. CRAB and County staff evaluated the benefits and challenges associated with potentially shortening the timeline for applications and awards, given that a long timeline can lead to a higher final project cost than estimated in the application due to inflation. However, CRAB staff are already working to address this challenge by applying inflationary estimates to all project applications, and the merits of shortening the grant cycle were outweighed by the disruption and rush it would generate in the annual County workflow.

1 B. Increase the size of RAP grant awards.

Of all the elements of RAP, counties expressed being least satisfied with the size of RAP grant awards. Project costs are increasing, pushing counties to break up projects into phases, request multiple rounds of funding, or borrow forward from their future RAP allocation (Finding 1B). CRAB should explore increasing the size of awards so that counties can more often get full funding for a project in one grant cycle. Counties would then be able to complete projects in a timelier manner. To increase the award size with the same amount of funding, fewer counties would be awarded grants per cycle.

1 C. Use equity considerations to refine project selections.

County staff typically rely on pavement condition assessments, accident data, and other quantifiable factors to prioritize capital investments and inform their applications for RAP funding. Equity is not explicitly used to inform applications (Finding 4). CRAB should modify the RAP application to create an opportunity for staff to present available quantitative and qualitative data about the equity impacts of projects, such as a narrative description of how a project would advance equity goals.

Factors that counties can consider when determining the equity impacts of a project include:

- **Geographic isolation.** How does the project improve access to education, employment, and services for a geographically isolated community? Supporting data could come from the Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer, County GIS analysis, or narrative case making.
- **Providing access to or on a Reservation.** Does the project improve access to a Tribal Reservation, or does it improve or expand transportation infrastructure on a Reservation?
- **Socioeconomics of impacted communities.** How does the project improve access for less well-resourced communities? A less well-resourced community could be one with a lower median household income or high poverty, high unemployment, or a high concentration of Tribal members, itinerant farmworkers, or other communities.
- **Quality infrastructure.** How does the project ensure a state of good repair and resilient infrastructure serving areas with high representation of vulnerable populations?

1D. Seek the ability to adaptively modify match requirements to achieve program goals and respond to changes in the economic environment.

Match requirements are often thought of as a way to ensure a partnership between the granting agency and the receiving agency, and a show of commitment from the receiving agency. In some cases, however, the inflexible application of a fixed match amount can create unintended consequences.

- **In counties with more limited resources, the 10% match on a RAP-funded project may represent a significant portion of the County road fund.** Paying the match may diminish the County's ability to make other investments in road maintenance and preservation or other desirable investments, thereby effectively penalizing less-resourced counties by undermining their ability to make responsible investments in its road system.
- **A fixed match amount reduces CRAB's ability to use a reduced match as an incentive for near-term construction in times of high inflation.** As described on page 12, CRAB obtained OFM support for a recent temporary match adjustment for RAP projects reaching construction in 2023 and 2024, a time of high inflation.

It is also important to note that as the cost of projects has increased significantly in recent years, RAP funds are often not able to cover the full cost of the project, so counties often contribute a portion of the total cost in addition to the match.

We recommend that CRAB be given the ability to modify match requirements to achieve program equity goals and use match adjustments to accelerate or decelerate County spending to respond in a timely fashion to changes in its operating environment, including variations in inflation and RATA balance. Relative measures of County fiscal capacity are recommended as a way to determine an appropriate match level, beginning at 0% for each County. Such measures might include:

- The ratio between the county road district's assessed value and the lane miles it is responsible for (i.e., assessed value divided by the number of lane miles).
- The needs component of the motor vehicle tax evaluation.

A change in statute would be required to grant CRAB this ability.

EXAMPLES OF MATCH FLEXIBILITY FROM OTHER PROGRAMS

- The Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) employs a sliding scale match. For TIB's Small City Arterial Program, the required match is 0%, 5%, or 10% based on a city's total assessed value. For cities with the smallest valuation, under \$100 million, no match is required.
- The Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is another program with variation in match requirements. The federal share is 80% with a 20% local match except for certain safety projects, which can receive up to 100% federal funding.

Recommendation 2. Address critical County funding gaps not covered by RAP.

2A. Create a new funding program for local access roads and short-span bridges on local access roads.

As described in Finding 3A, counties face significant challenges in addressing funding needs in two essential parts of the statewide road network: local access roads and short-span bridges on local access roads. Counties typically must use locally generated revenues for these projects, and less resourced counties struggle to maintain these essential elements of the state transportation network.

CRAB should seek legislative support for a new program to address these needs. By establishing a new program, CRAB can ensure that RAP maintains its focus on existing project types, as those needs remain high.

We recommend that this new funding mechanism be implemented as a competitive grant program, similar to RAP, and that it integrate a strong equity focus, prioritizing investment in less resourced counties and more economically-disadvantaged and geographically-isolated communities that are more dependent on the local road network for access to jobs, schools, groceries, and daily goods.

2B. Develop a strategy to address rural roads in federally urban-designated areas.

The results of the 2020 Census led to some rural areas being changed to an urban designation as noted in the *RAP Overview* section of this report. A road in such an area may still meet the description of a rural, local access road, but it is ineligible for RAP funding. While counties could apply for funding from the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), which provides grants to urban unincorporated counties, these projects may not compete well against other projects in urban areas. This is because other projects in urban areas typically have a higher traffic volume and safety needs, and TIB's design requirements, including significant bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, are more appropriate for truly urban streets.

CRAB should study the impacts of this designation change to determine the magnitude of need that cannot be met by RAP or other grant programs. CRAB and TIB could collaborate to determine how projects on these roads might be eligible for grant funding.

Project Highlight: Rural Roads in an Urban Designated Area, Walla Walla County

The Census Bureau delineates geographic areas as urban or rural. “Urban areas” represent densely developed territory and encompass residential, commercial, and other nonresidential urban land uses. The Census Bureau delineates urban areas after each decennial census by applying specific criteria to decennial census and other data. “Rural areas” encompass all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area.

In 2020, the Census Bureau updated its definition of urban areas to note that “each urban area must encompass at least 2,000 housing units or at least 5,000 people. This is a change from the previous minimum of 2,500 people, which had been in place since the 1910 Census.” Further, “urban areas are defined primarily based on housing unit density measured at the census block level.”

This urban/rural classification has impacted some counties and their eligibility for RAP. In Walla Walla County, roads were reclassified as urban two decades ago, so the County has been designing and constructing them according to urban standards. However, in the 2020 Census, some of these roads have been reclassified as rural again. While the change from urban to rural designation does mean that the County can apply for RAP funding through CRAB, it also means that some of the urban attributes of the area will no longer be funded. The County is now facing a challenge in trying to connect a new rural piece of road to a recently constructed “physically” urban road.

Recommendation 3. Evaluate the desirability of establishing a design-only funding program.

We recommend that CRAB explore the merits and feasibility of creating a design-only grant program, limiting RAP funding to construction. This recommendation is designed to achieve two primary benefits:

- **Projects that receive design-only funding would be developed to the point that they would be ready to receive construction funding.** Depending on program design (per below), funding for construction could come from RAP, the new program described in Recommendation 2, or other funding sources, including federal funding programs. A design program could thus be used as leverage to access resources from outside of Washington.
- **The separation of design and construction funding would greatly ease portfolio management challenges currently faced by CRAB and streamline the application of construction funds in shovel-ready projects.** CRAB currently manages funds over multiple biennia and there is uncertainty about the level of spending in the upcoming biennium. Design projects can be completed on a certain timeline, which makes management of the grant portfolio predictable, with little variance. Once a project is designed, construction funding may be awarded only when the project sponsor demonstrates that the project is ready to go, after the most variable and uncertain components of a project are completed, including permitting and right-of-way acquisition. This phasing of project funding—first, design, and then, when the project is ready, construction—would allow CRAB to continue to be a first-in funder while reducing the uncertainty associated with the role.

A design-only program would likely also serve to reduce the use of federal funds in the planning and engineering phase of county projects. This would be beneficial as the federalization of design brings unnecessary complexity and cost to this phase of work.

It is also important to acknowledge potential downsides or risks associated with this approach, including the following:

- Some portion of design-only grants may not result in construction.

- Counties may not be guaranteed construction funding for all projects that receive design funding.

CRAB must engage with its grant program users and the Legislature to further explore the pros, cons, and tradeoffs of this approach, and to answer key questions about how such a program should be designed. Some of these are listed below:

- Should the design-only program be created as a competitive grant program like RAP, or an allocation like CAPP or Surface Transportation Block Grants (STP), with analogous requirements that design funds only be used for RAP-eligible project types?
- Should a design-only program be used to feed construction-ready projects to RAP only, or to other potential funding programs?
- Would the receipt of design-only funding guarantee or prioritize the project in competing for RAP construction funding?
- How much funding would be appropriate? From what funding source?

Recommendation 4. Prioritize financial and grant portfolio management.

CRAB should conduct a root cause analysis of why the RATA balance has increased in recent years and deploy actions to address relevant drivers. Potential actions may include:

- Increasing RAP's ability to absorb delays in individual projects without meaningful impacts on overall ability to deploy funds.
- Assessing whether the first-in funding policy, which funds the early stages of a project where there is risk, is contributing to funds getting turned back.
- Using accelerators and decelerators to incentivize or disincentivize County spending in line with portfolio management goals.
- Advocating for changes to statute that would better enable CRAB staff to manage grant programs effectively and efficiently.

Funding Options and Considerations

During our engagement, County staff were asked what potential funding sources could be used for a new grant program, knowing that State revenues are limited. This section provides a summary of several options raised by County staff, which are noted in Finding 5.

Increase in MVFT Revenues

MVFT revenue currently comprises most of the funding for RAP. CRAB can continue to request that a greater share of state MVFT revenues be dedicated to the county road system. As mentioned above in the overview of RAP and shown in *Exhibit 4*, the share of state MVFT revenues allocated to the program has not changed since 1990. County roads comprise 59% of the State's road network, yet counties

receive 11% of total MVFT revenues.⁷ MVFT revenue is projected to grow at 1% annually, which means that over time the revenue will not be able to keep up with expenditures. The State is actively exploring alternatives, such as a road usage charge (RUC), to have revenues for transportation with more growth potential.

Additional Fee on Tire Purchases

The State could explore an additional fee on tire purchases to increase revenue for road projects. Such a fee would have a direct link to transportation, and especially target heavier vehicles that go through tires more quickly and put greater demand on the road network. The State currently collects a fee on the retail sale of each new tire sold for vehicles. This fee was imposed in 2005 to fund removal and prevention of waste tire piles. Other states impose a fee on tire purchases with a similar focus on preventing waste. Staff raised a concern that an additional fee on tire purchases may lead individuals to delay the purchase of new tires, which would impact vehicle safety. The State would need to determine how a potential tire fee would be collected and distributed to local jurisdictions.

Increase in Sales Tax

The State could explore an increase in the sales tax that is dedicated to transportation. County staff noted the link between a sales tax and the transportation of goods. Sales tax has more growth potential than the MVFT, though sales tax is a more volatile revenue source, subject to economic conditions. Sales tax is also a regressive tax because it takes a larger percentage of income from low-income earners than from high-income earners. Washington also has a relatively high total sales tax rate, ranking in the top five of all states when combining the state sales tax rate and average local tax rate.⁸

Counties can levy their own sales tax for transportation by implementing a Transportation Benefit District (TBD) and a TBD sales tax. A TBD can levy a sales tax of up to 0.3%, and 0.1% of this may be imposed by a majority vote of the governing board if the TBD includes all of the territory within the jurisdiction forming the TBD.⁹ Otherwise, the sales tax must be approved by a simple majority of voters. There are currently five counties that have established a TBD but only one is funded.¹⁰ King County, Pierce County, Snohomish County, and Thurston County have established a TBD but they are not funded. Whatcom County created the Point Roberts Transportation Benefit District in 1991. It is funded by a \$0.01 border area fuel tax.

State Climate Commitment Act Funds

In 2021, the State Legislature passed the Climate Commitment Act (CCA). The CCA's cap and invest program sets a limit on overall carbon emissions in the state and requires businesses to obtain allowances equal to the covered greenhouse gas emissions. These allowances can be obtained through quarterly

⁷ County Road Administration Board, 2023 Annual Report, <https://www.crab.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-01/CRAB%202023%20annual%20report%20%28004%29.pdf>.

⁸ Walczak, Jared, "State and Local Sales Tax Rates, 2024", Tax Foundation, <https://taxfoundation.org/data/all/state/2024-sales-taxes/>.

⁹ "Transportation Benefit Districts (TBDs)", Municipal Research and Services Center, <https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/finance/revenues/transportation-benefit-districts>.

¹⁰ One TBD is a partial-county TBD serving the Point Roberts peninsula and it relies on the border area fuel tax (MRSC).

auctions or bought and sold on a secondary market. The proceeds from these auctions must be invested in climate projects focused on improving clean transportation options and addressing issues of environmental justice and health inequity in Washington.¹¹ An initiative to repeal the CCA will be on the November 2024 ballot, so the future of this program is uncertain.

If this program continues, it may be a source of funding for county road projects. [RCW 70A.65.230](#) states that not less than 35% of the funding must provide direct and meaningful benefits to vulnerable populations within the boundaries of overburdened communities. “Benefits” means investments or activities that:

- (a) Reduce vulnerable population characteristics, environmental burdens, or associated risks that contribute significantly to the cumulative impact designation of overburdened communities;
- (b) Meaningfully protect an overburdened community from, or support community response to, the impacts of air pollution or climate change; or
- (c) Meet a community need identified by vulnerable members of the overburdened community that is consistent with the intent of this chapter.

An “overburdened community” means a geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined in [RCW 19.405.020](#). The State Department of Health developed an Environmental Health Disparities Map that compares communities across the state for environmental health disparities.

County staff can use this map to determine if the county has overburdened communities and potentially use CCA funding for investments in the road network that would meet the benefits defined in State code.

Federal Bridge Formula Program Funding

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), established a new program called the Bridge Formula Program (BFP) to fund replacement, rehabilitation, preservation, and construction of highway bridges. Funding is apportioned to each state based on a formula. The program sets aside 15% of each state’s allocation for use on “off-system” bridges, or bridges on local roads. Federal guidance notes that federal funds can be used for 100% of the cost of repairing or rehabilitating such locally owned off-system bridges.¹²

Retail Delivery Fee

A funding mechanism recently implemented in other states is a retail delivery fee. A fee related to the transportation of goods has a strong link to road improvements, as the road network is impacted by the rise in e-commerce. As of July 2024, Colorado and Minnesota assess fees on taxable retail items delivered to an address in their respective states. The retailer or marketplace facilitator already responsible for collecting the state sales tax on tangible personal property sold and delivered must also

¹¹ “Climate Commitment Act”, Department of Ecology, <https://ecology.wa.gov/air-climate/climate-commitment-act>.

¹² “Bridge Formula Program”, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/docs/bridge_formula_program.pdf.

collect and remit the retail delivery fee.¹³ The revenue generated from a retail delivery fee could be used to support improvements to the road network. The Joint Transportation Commission received a draft study in June 2024 evaluating a potential retail delivery fee in Washington. The study noted policy considerations related to equity, transparency, revenue distribution, and practical implementation should the State want to pursue this fee.

¹³ “Retail Delivery Fee Analysis”, CDM Smith, prepared for the Joint Transportation Committee, June 2024, [RetailDelFee_DraftFinalReport.pdf \(wa.gov\)](#).

Appendix A: Workgroup Membership

Name	Title	Organization
Brandi Coylar, PE	Capital Projects Program Manager	Spokane County
Dean Cornelison, PE	County Engineer	Whitman County
Craig Erdman, PE	County Engineer	Franklin County
Steve Johnson, PE	Grant Programs Manager	CRAB
Melissa Mohr	Transportation Planner	Kitsap County
Leticia Neal, PE	Transportation Improvement Manager	Pierce County
Todd O'Brien, PE	Director of Public Works	Adams County
Josh Thomson, PE	County Engineer	Okanogan County
Jane Wall	Executive Director	CRAB
Drew Woods, PE	Deputy Director	CRAB

Appendix B: RAP User Survey Instrument



CRAB Rural Arterial Program (RAP) Grant User Survey

The County Road Administration Board (CRAB) is currently evaluating its most popular funding program, the Rural Arterial Program (RAP), to determine how it, or potential new programs, could better meet current needs among counties. CRAB does not intend to discontinue or significantly modify RAP; instead, the goal is to make incremental improvements and/or consider creation of a new program.

This survey will gather input from all current RAP grant users about the Program's current strengths and potential opportunities for improvement. The survey will also evaluate gaps in funding programs beyond the scope of CRAB funding. We invite county staff and officials who work with CRAB and are familiar with RAP to participate in this survey. We are not limiting responses to one person per county, and encourage multiple staff and officials from each county to participate in this survey. The number of respondents from a county will not increase the weight given to that county in survey analysis.

Please submit your responses no later than Thursday, February 15, 2024. Please contact katherine@berkconsulting.com with questions.

Thank you for providing input!

About You

We are asking for identifying information so we can analyze findings by region, county size, and other characteristics.

* 1. Your position. This question must be answered.

* 2. Your county. This question must be answered.

Satisfaction with and Potential Improvements to RAP

3. Please rate your satisfaction with the following elements of RAP over the past three funding cycles:

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not satisfied	Unsure
Communications about RAP via email and the CRAB website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support from CRAB staff for RAP applicants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The grant application itself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scoring process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grant cycle timing and length	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Funding match requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Size of the awards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of using the funds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How it supports your county's capital projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How it meets CRAB's stated objective of supporting the safe and efficient movement of people and goods over county roads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you selected "not satisfied" for any option, please explain or offer suggestions for improvement.

4. How would you assess the flexibility within the regions to score projects using regional criteria? Skip this question if you don't know.

Regions should have more flexibility	Regions have the right amount of flexibility	Regions should have less flexibility	Unsure
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

County Needs

5. RAP currently funds the following project types. Please rank the following types in order of priority for your county.

Select "unsure" for any options you aren't familiar with. Select this option before you begin ranking, as SurveyMonkey will clear your inputted rankings after you select this option.

- ☰ 2R (overlay projects) Unsure
- ☰ 3R (rehabilitation projects, potentially including alignment, structure, width, and roadside) Unsure
- ☰ Reconstruction Unsure
- ☰ Drainage structures Unsure
- ☰ Bridges (both off- and on-system) Unsure
- ☰ Intersections Unsure

* 6. RAP currently does NOT fund the following project types. If a new program were created with new funding (i.e., would not impact the existing RAP program), which of the following would be top priorities for your county?

This question must be answered and you may select up to your top three priorities.

- ADA facilities
- Bike and pedestrian facilities
- Dedicated program for fish barrier removal
- Emergency and evacuation routes
- Local access road improvements
- Off-system non-federally funded bridges (not currently funded by RAP)
- Roads of a rural nature in Census-designated urban areas
- Roundabouts
- Stormwater retention and treatment
- Streetlights
- Traffic signals
- Other (please specify)

7. If the total amount of RAP funding were to remain the same, would you want to add eligibility for new project types such as those listed in Question 7?

Yes, absolutely	It depends	No, absolutely not	Unsure
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

8. What potential funding sources should be considered for potential new grant programs that address currently ineligible project types such as those listed in Question 7? Please provide your suggestions for a compelling rationale to a state policymaker for applying these funds to county road needs.

9. How would you allocate \$100 in existing state grant funding to CRAB across each of the following categories of projects? Currently 55% of CRAB's funding goes to RAP and 45% goes to CAPP.

Preservation projects currently funded through CAPP

Capital projects currently funded through RAP

Project types from Question 7 that are not currently eligible for CAPP or RAP (such as ADA facilities, bike and pedestrian facilities, off-system non-federally funded bridges, emergency and evacuation routes, a dedicated program for fish barrier removal, local access road improvements, roundabouts, rural roads in a federal urban designated area, stormwater retention and treatment, streetlights, traffic signals, etc.)

9. How would you allocate \$100 in existing state grant funding to CRAB across each of the following categories of projects? Currently 55% of CRAB's funding goes to RAP and 45% goes to CAPP.

Preservation projects currently funded through CAPP

Capital projects currently funded through RAP

Project types from Question 7 that are not currently eligible for CAPP or RAP (such as ADA facilities, bike and pedestrian facilities, off-system non-federally funded bridges, emergency and evacuation routes, a dedicated program for fish barrier removal, local access road improvements, roundabouts, rural roads in a federal urban designated area, stormwater retention and treatment, streetlights, traffic signals, etc.)

10. How would you allocate \$100 in new state grant funding across each of the following categories of projects?

Preservation projects currently funded through CAPP

Capital projects currently funded through RAP

Project types from Question 7 not currently eligible for CAPP or RAP (such as those listed above, in Question 10)

Your County

11. What would you identify as your top challenge in funding transportation capital projects?

12. Does your county have a philosophy and/or policy to consider equity and environmental justice in prioritizing transportation projects?

Yes

No

Unsure

Please explain.

Concluding Thoughts

13. What else would you like to share about your county's transportation infrastructure funding needs, either as related to RAP or more broadly?

Appendix C: RAP User Survey Findings

Introduction

Overview

In February 2024, CRAB and BERK surveyed RAP grant users to gather input about the Program's current strengths and potential opportunities for improvement, plus gaps in funding programs beyond the scope of CRAB funding. The survey was open for three weeks from January 31 through February 20 and collected feedback from 59 participants across 38 of Washington's 39 counties.

CRAB promoted the survey via its email listserv to all current grant users, including County staff (e.g., engineers, public works directors, engineering staff, or finance and accounting staff) and County decisionmakers (e.g., commissioners, councilmembers, executives, or administrators). After collecting an initial round of survey responses, CRAB conducted personalized email follow-ups to grant users from counties not yet represented in the survey participant list in an effort to maximize representation across counties. See *Exhibit 9* for a full list of respondents by position type and county. Most respondents (83%) self-identified as county engineers, public works directors, or county engineering staff.

See *Appendix B: RAP User Survey Instrument* for the full survey instrument.

Approach to Analysis

Weighting

The number of individuals who could provide responses from each county was not restricted and the number of individuals who responded from each participating county varied, ranging from one to five respondents. This was likely due to variation across County staffing and ability to participate in feedback requests like this survey. To avoid bias toward counties with multiple respondents, quantitative responses (i.e., responses to multiple choice, ranking, and constant sum questions) were weighted to give each county equal representation in survey responses.

The percentages shown in the charts throughout this report reflect the proportion of counties (i.e., of *weighted* respondents) that responded in a given way. Similarly, all n-values reflect the number of counties that responded to a given question, not the number of individual respondents.

The analysis does not quantify—and therefore does not weight—responses to qualitative survey responses (i.e., responses to open-ended questions).

Disaggregation

The analysis also disaggregates counties' responses to each question based on the following two factors through crosstabulations ("crosstabs"):

- **RAP region.** RAP funding is distributed to five regions in Washington. Disaggregation identifies questions for which counties' responses varied by region.
- **Rural or urban designation.** The Office of Financial Management (OFM) classifies each county as rural or urban. Disaggregation identifies questions for which counties' responses varied by their rural or urban designation.

Exhibit 9. Respondents by Position Type and County

County	Total respondents from county	County Engineer or Public Works Director	County engineering staff	Commissioner or Councilmember	County finance or accounting staff	Other
Adams	2	2				
Asotin	1	1				
Benton	1	1				
Chelan	1		1			
Clallam	0					
Clark	1					1
Columbia	1	1				
Cowlitz	1	1				
Douglas	1		1			
Ferry	1	1				
Franklin	2	1	1			
Garfield	1	1				
Grant	1	1				
Grays Harbor	2	1			1	
Island	1	1				
Jefferson	1		1			
King	2				1	1
Kitsap	2	1	1			
Kittitas	1	1				
Klickitat	1	1				
Lewis	1	1				
Lincoln	2	1		1		
Mason	1	1				
Okanogan	2	1	1			
Pacific	1	1				
Pend Oreille	1	1				
Pierce	1		1			
San Juan	1		1			
Skagit	5	1	3	1		
Skamania	2	1		1		
Snohomish	1	1				
Spokane	5	1	3		1	
Stevens	1	1				
Thurston	2	1	1			
Wahkiakum	1				1	
Walla Walla	2	1	1			
Whatcom	3	1	1		1	
Whitman	1	1				
Yakima	2	1	1			
Total	59	31	18	3	5	2

Note: The survey also included “County Executive or Administrator” as an option. No respondent selected this option.

Source: BERK, 2024.

Key Takeaways

Most counties face challenges funding transportation capital projects. Counties describe facing a range of funding-related challenges in implementing transportation capital projects, including difficulties acquiring adequate funding in the face of competing priorities and inflation. Many counties also express difficulties with grant programs, including grant requirements and match requirements. *See: [Challenges](#).*

Counties express an overall very high level of satisfaction with RAP as it is now. For most of the program elements included in the survey, between half and all of counties indicated they are “very satisfied” and most of the remaining counties indicated they are “somewhat satisfied.” Consistent with the funding-related challenges counties face, two-thirds of counties are only “somewhat satisfied” or “not satisfied” with the size of RAP awards. *See: [Satisfaction with Current Elements of RAP and Regional Flexibility in Scoring Projects](#).*

Counties most highly prioritize 3R projects, 2R projects, and reconstruction projects for RAP funds. Counties assign a lower priority to bridges, drainage structures, and intersections. *See: [Prioritization of RAP Funds for Currently Eligible Project Types](#).*

On average, counties are tentatively supportive of expanding project type eligibility for existing RAP funding. One-third of counties report they would “absolutely” expand eligibility to new project types and one-half report that it would depend. *See: [Expanding Project Type Eligibility for Existing RAP Funding](#).*

If the RAP program were to expand with hypothetical new funding, counties’ highest priorities for new project types to fund are local access road improvements and off-system non-federally-funded bridges. Many counties would also prioritize a dedicated program for fish barrier removal and roads of a rural nature in Census-designated urban areas. *See: [Prioritization of Hypothetical New Funding for Currently Ineligible Project Types](#).*

Counties want to see existing state funding distributed evenly between preservation projects and capital projects. When allocating \$100 in existing state grant funding across project categories, including preservation projects (i.e., RAP funding), capital projects (i.e., CAPP funding), and projects that are currently ineligible for CRAB funding, most counties allocated roughly half of funding to each of preservation and capital projects, with little or no funding allocated to projects that are currently ineligible for CRAB funding. *See: [Allocation of Existing State Grant Funding Across Project Categories](#).*

Counties have no clear consensus about how hypothetical new state grant funding should be allocated across preservation projects, capital projects, and projects that are currently ineligible for CRAB funding—though most would like to see at least some portion of additional funds allocated to preservation and capital projects. There was no clear pattern in how counties allocated \$100 in hypothetical new state grant funding across these three project categories. Notably, most counties allocated at least some hypothetical new funding to preservation and capital projects, indicating that existing funding is not fulfilling all needs for these project categories. *See: [Allocation of Hypothetical New State Grant Funding Across Project Categories](#).*

There is a large variation in whether counties have a philosophy and/or policy to consider equity and environmental justice in prioritizing transportation projects. 38% of responding counties said yes, 32% said no, and 27% said they were unsure. *See: [County Equity Policies](#).*

Detailed Findings

Challenges

The survey asked the following open-ended question: “What would you identify as your top challenge in funding transportation capital projects?” Forty-seven respondents provided comments, primarily in the following topic areas:

- **Limited funding for competing priorities.** Many respondents commented that limited funding is their top challenge, with limitations referring to both the general availability of awards, as well as the ability of an award to cover a project's full lifetime costs.

“Competing priorities, never-ending list of needs and very limited funding. Projects are also getting more expensive at a much faster rate than revenue growth. Regulation has increased the time it takes to deliver projects which impacts costs.”

- **Inflation.** Many respondents commented that their top challenge is inflation, as project costs have risen while award amounts and revenue have remained the same or fallen. Similarly, many noted that project cost estimates are no longer accurate by the time projects are approved, which leads to budget shortfalls.

“Project costs have soared over the past five years. This has led to funding shortfalls on projects that were estimated long before the project was awarded grant funding. These shortfalls have depleted surplus funding that was once available for small projects in areas that did not qualify for grants. These projects now sit with no way of moving them forward.”

- **Grant requirements.** Many respondents commented that their top challenge is grant requirements, particularly new or changing requirements, which often lead to increased project costs and extended project timelines.

“Relying on federal funding, tracking the variety of funding requirements, and the speed at which funding requirements change.”

“For RAP funded projects we struggle to find projects that make sense, or serve a need that will score well and be competitive under the current scoring forms for our region.”

- **Match requirements.** Several respondents commented that match requirements are their top challenge. These respondents noted that it can be difficult to come up with sufficient match funds to complete a project, especially for larger projects.

“Having the match available for capital projects while still having adequate funds for maintenance projects.”

- **Permits.** Several respondents commented that permits are their top challenge, as permitting processes can be restrictive, and increase project timelines and costs.

- **Other challenges.** Several other challenges were discussed in the open-ended responses. These include limited staffing, trouble determining how to assess prioritization, lack of education for elected officials, limited ability to meet eligibility, and competition with others to win awards.

“Realistically it would be deciding what is most important. We have so much that needs to be done, but we don’t [have] enough people (or match) to do it all. I feel as though we are receiving (mostly) what we need (other than previous answers to questions). If we had more people, we could do more capital projects. But then we would need more money for the match too. We can only do so much.”

See [Open-Ended Responses](#) for all responses.

Current State of RAP

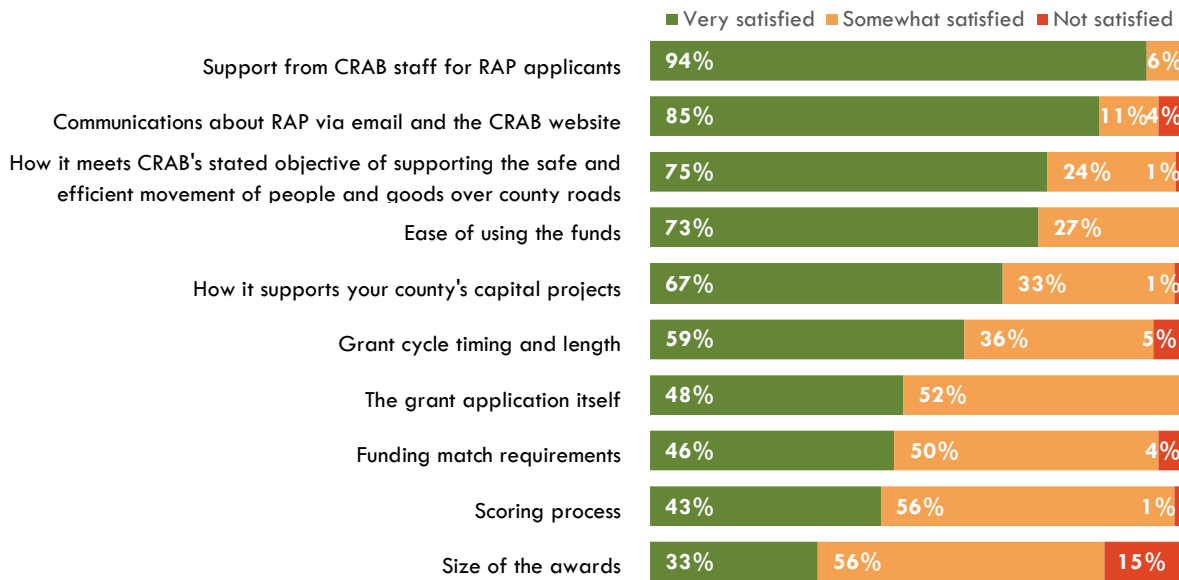
Satisfaction with Current Elements of RAP

Exhibit 10 shows counties’ satisfaction with a range of elements of RAP. In general, there is a relatively high level of satisfaction with most elements of RAP, with few or no counties indicating that they are “not satisfied” with any of the elements surveyed.

- **Very high satisfaction.** Satisfaction is highest with support from CRAB for RAP applicants and communications about RAP via email and the CRAB website, with 94% and 85% of counties respectively indicating they are “very satisfied” with these elements of RAP. This indicates CRAB effectively shares information with grant users. There is also very high satisfaction with RAP’s ability to meet CRAB’s stated objective, with 75% of counties indicating they are “very satisfied” with these elements of RAP.
- **Moderately high satisfaction.** There is moderately high satisfaction with the ease of using funds; how RAP supports each county’s capital projects; and the grant cycle timing and length; with 61% to 72% of counties indicating they are “very satisfied” and 28% to 36% of counties indicating they are “somewhat satisfied” with these elements of RAP. There is slightly lower satisfaction, though still moderately high, with the grant application; funding match requirements; and the scoring process; with about one-half of counties indicating they are “very satisfied” and the other half of counties indicating they are “somewhat satisfied” with these elements of RAP.
- **Moderate satisfaction.** More than half of counties indicated they are “somewhat satisfied” with the size of awards, with one-third indicating they are “very satisfied” and 14% indicating they are “not satisfied.”

Exhibit 10. Satisfaction with Elements of RAP (n = 33 to 38 per element)

Survey question: “Please rate your satisfaction with the following elements of RAP over the past three funding cycles:”



Source: BERK, 2024.

Crosstabs

Some responses varied by region and rural or urban classification.

- RAP Region:** Counties in the Southwest Region indicated lower satisfaction with communications and higher satisfaction with both the award size and ease of using the funds. Counties in the Puget Sound Region indicated the highest satisfaction with grant cycle timing and length. Counties in the Southwest and Southeast Regions indicated lower satisfaction with RAP’s ability to meet CRAB’s stated objective. Counties in the Northwest Region expressed the highest satisfaction with how RAP supports their county’s capital projects.
- Rural and Urban Classification:** Urban counties expressed higher satisfaction with grant cycle timing and length and the scoring process than rural counties.

Full crosstabs for this question can be found in [Exhibit 17](#) and [Exhibit 18](#) in [Full Crosstabs](#).

Open-Ended Responses

After indicating their satisfaction with element of RAP, respondents were asked to offer explanations for any “not satisfied” responses. Sixteen respondents provided comments, primarily in the topic areas described in the following bullets. Some notable quotes are provided.

- Awards sizes.** Most respondents commented on dissatisfaction with award sizes. Respondents expressed that awards are not sufficient to cover the full cost of projects over their full lifetime, especially as project costs have increased in recent years.

“Larger grant sizes would benefit capital projects, and more advance notice regarding meetings, grant applications, etc.”

- **Communications from CRAB.** While communications from CRAB were scored highly by most respondents (*Exhibit 10*), several expressed specific dissatisfaction. Suggestions for improvement included more advance notice for meetings and application periods, personalized emails, a more up-to-date CRAB website, and more clarity around changes to requirements.

“The email updates from CRAB are so frequent due to the wide variety of announcements. Suggestions: Set up a subscription option similar to WSDOT where users can select what type of information they want to be emailed about.”

- **Funding requirements.** Several respondents addressed dissatisfaction with elements of funding requirements, like match requirements and eligibility. For example, three respondents commented that some projects that are partially or fully ineligible for CRAB funding should be eligible.
- **Timing.** Several respondents commented on their dissatisfaction with long timelines for grant funding and project delivery.

“Funding is limited and there simply isn’t enough funding to complete the size or length of projects needed without phasing or supplementing with additional funding.”

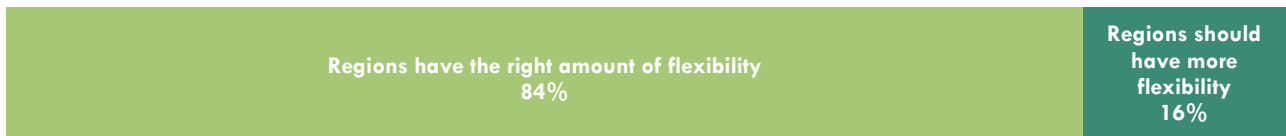
See [Open-Ended Responses](#) for all responses.

Regional Flexibility in Scoring Projects

Exhibit 11 shows counties’ evaluation of regions’ flexibility to score projects using regional criteria. Several counties (12) did not respond to this question or indicated they were unsure. Of the 26 counties that responded, most (84%) indicated that regions have the right amount of flexibility, while 16% indicated that regions should have more flexibility. No counties indicated that regions should have less flexibility.

Exhibit 11. Evaluation of the Regional Flexibility in Scoring Projects (n = 26)

Survey question: “How would you assess the flexibility within the regions to score projects using regional criteria? Skip this question if you don’t know.”



Note: No counties indicated that regions should have less flexibility.

Source: BERK, 2024.

Crosstabs

Some responses varied by region.

- **RAP Region:** A larger proportion of respondents from the Northwest region indicated that regions should have more flexibility than respondents from other regions.
- **Rural and Urban Classification:** There were no notable differences in responses by counties’ rural or urban classification.

Full crosstabs for this question can be found in *Exhibit 19* and *Exhibit 20* in [Full Crosstabs](#).

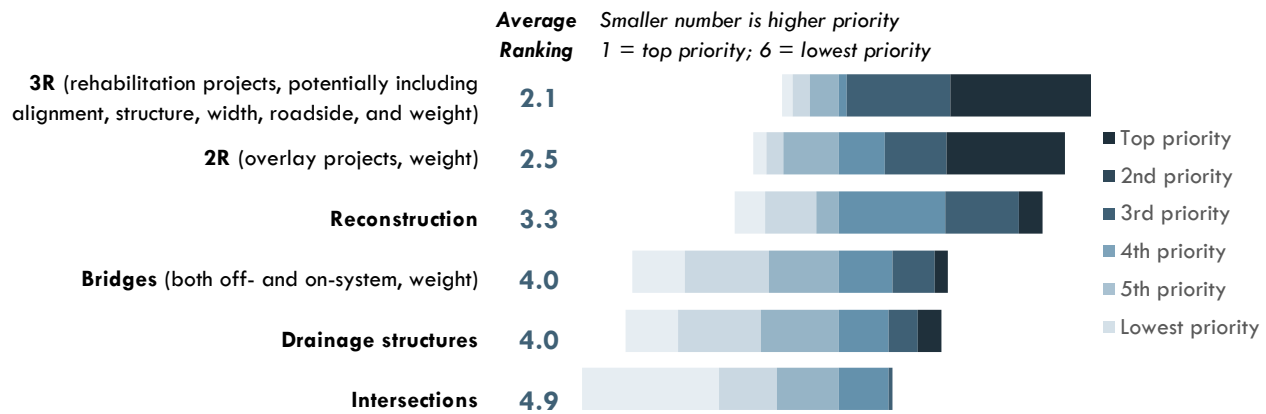
Prioritization of RAP Funds for Currently Eligible Project Types

Exhibit 12 shows how counties prioritize RAP funds for six currently eligible project types.

- **Higher priorities.** Counties most highly prioritize 3R projects (i.e., rehabilitation projects, potentially including alignment, structure, width, roadside, and weight), with most counties (76%) including this project type in their first or second priority. Counties also highly prioritize 2R projects (e.g., overlay, weight), with 56% of counties including this project type in their first or second priority. Counties prioritize reconstruction projects slightly lower, with 55% of counties including this project type in their second or third priority.
- **Moderate priorities.** Counties prioritize drainage structures and bridges (e.g., off-system, on-system, and weight projects) similarly, with 63% and 66% of counties respectively including each of these in their bottom three priorities. Few counties selected either of these options as their top priority.
- **Low priority.** Intersections are counties’ lowest-priority project type, with 79% of counties including this project type in their bottom three priorities. No county indicated this as a top priority and 42% of counties indicated this as their lowest priority.

Exhibit 12. Prioritization of Currently Eligible Project Types for RAP Funding (n = 34 to 35 per option)

Survey question: “RAP currently funds the following project types. Please rank the following types in order of priority for your county. Select “unsure” for any options you aren’t familiar with.”



Ranking	3R	2R	Reconstruction	Drainage structures	Bridges	Intersections
Top priority	44%	37%	7%	4%	7%	0%
2nd priority	32%	19%	22%	13%	9%	1%
3rd priority	2%	14%	33%	17%	15%	16%
4th priority	9%	17%	7%	21%	24%	19%
5th priority	5%	5%	16%	26%	26%	18%
Lowest priority	3%	4%	9%	16%	16%	42%

Source: BERK, 2024.

Crosstabs

Some responses varied by region and rural or urban classification.

- **RAP Region:** Puget Sound region prioritized bridges and intersections more highly than other counties.
- **Rural and Urban Classification:** Urban counties more highly prioritized bridges and intersections, with these as their third and fourth priorities, with reconstruction and drainage structures as their lowest priorities. Rural counties prioritized drainage structures more highly than bridges.

Full crosstabs for this question can be found in *Exhibit 21* and *Exhibit 22* in [Full Crosstabs](#).

Expanding the RAP Program

Expanding Project Type Eligibility for Existing RAP Funding

Exhibit 13 shows counties' support for expanding the eligibility for existing RAP funding to other project types. About half (51%) of respondents indicate that expanding eligibility to new project types would depend on how it were done. One-third (33%) say they would “absolutely” want to expand eligibility, and one in six (16%) say they would “absolutely not” want to expand eligibility.

Exhibit 13. Support for Expanding Project Type Eligibility for Existing RAP Funding (n = 37)

Survey question: “If the total amount of RAP funding were to remain the same, would you want to add eligibility for new project types such as those listed in Question 7?”



Source: BERK, 2024.

Crosstabs

Some responses varied by region and rural or urban classification.

- **RAP Region:** Higher proportions of counties in the Northwest and Northeast regions indicated they would “absolutely” want to expand eligibility and higher proportions of counties in the Southwest and Puget Sound regions indicated they would “absolutely not” want to expand eligibility.
- **Rural and Urban Classification:** A higher proportion of rural counties indicated they would “absolutely” want to expand eligibility than urban counties.

Full crosstabs for this question can be found in *Exhibit 23* and *Exhibit 24* in [Full Crosstabs](#).

Open-Ended Responses

Respondents could provide open-ended answers as an “other” response. Seven respondents provided comments, primarily in the following topic areas:

- **Concern for limited funding.** Most respondents expressed concern around whether expanded eligibility would strain funding. One respondent noted that added eligibility could make sense if currently eligible facilities are funded, and another suggested that added eligibility vary by county.

“If we were able to get all caught up on eligible facilities, then yes, but until then keep it the same.”

- **Funding flexibility.** Several respondents noted that flexibility in funding eligibility could be helpful.

“Funding flexibility is good especially in terms of direct application. Limited funding divided further into additional [spots] is not a helpful scenario.”

- **Concern around regulations for fish passage.** One response expressed concern around adding eligibility for fish passage, due to the current status of legalities and directives.

See [Open-Ended Responses](#) for all responses.

Prioritization of Hypothetical New Funding for Currently Ineligible Project Types

Exhibit 14 shows how counties would prioritize hypothetical new funding for eleven project types not currently eligible for RAP funding. Respondents could select up to three options to fund with new funding.

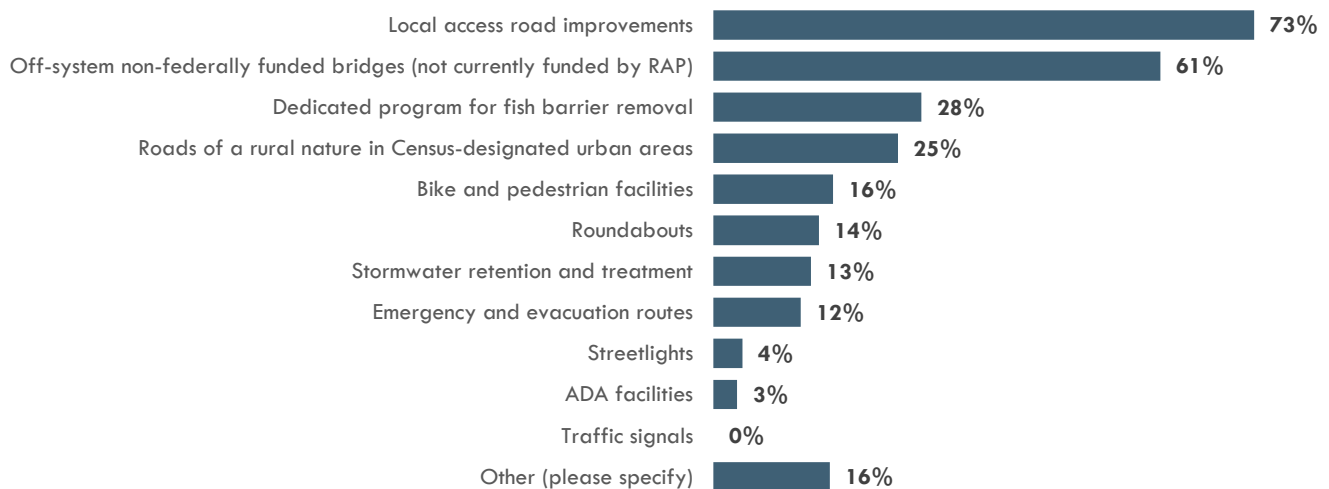
Counties' highest priority is local access road improvements, with 73% of counties including this in their top three priorities. Counties' second highest priority is off-system, non-federally-funded bridges not currently funded by RAP, with 61% of respondents including this in their top three priorities.

Roughly one-quarter of counties included dedicated programs for fish barrier removal (28%) and roads of a rural nature in Census-designated urban areas (25%) in their top three priorities.

No more than roughly one in six counties included any other given project type in their top three priorities.

Exhibit 14. Prioritization of New Project Types for Hypothetical New RAP Funding (n = 38)

Survey question: "RAP currently does NOT fund the following project types. If a new program were created with new funding (i.e., would not impact the existing RAP program), which of the following would be top priorities for your county? This question must be answered and you may select up to your top three priorities."



Source: BERK, 2024.

Crosstabs

Some responses varied by region and rural or urban classification.

- **RAP Region:** Higher proportions of counties in the eastern regions prioritize local access road improvements and off-system non-federally-funded bridges, while few counties in the Northwest region prioritize the latter. Most counties that prioritize dedicated program for fish barrier removal and roundabouts are in the Northwest and Puget Sound regions.
- **Rural and Urban Classification:** Rural counties prioritize local access road improvements at roughly twice the rate of urban counties, while the converse is true for dedicated programs for fish barrier removal. Most counties who prioritize roundabouts are urban.

Full crosstabs for this question can be found in [Exhibit 25](#) and [Exhibit 26](#) in [Full Crosstabs](#).

Open-Ended Responses

As shown in *Exhibit 14*, some counties offered “other” suggestions for priorities through open-ended responses. Five respondents provided options that differ from the options provided in the survey:

- **Culvert replacements.** Two respondents commented on the need for funding for non-fish passage culvert replacements.
- **Short-span bridges.** One respondent commented on the need for funding specifically for short-span bridges that are not NBI-eligible.
- **Unpaved roads.** One respondent commented on the need for funding to pave roads that are currently unpaved.
- **None of the above.** One respondent indicated that they would not prioritize any of the listed options.

See [Open-Ended Responses](#) for all responses.

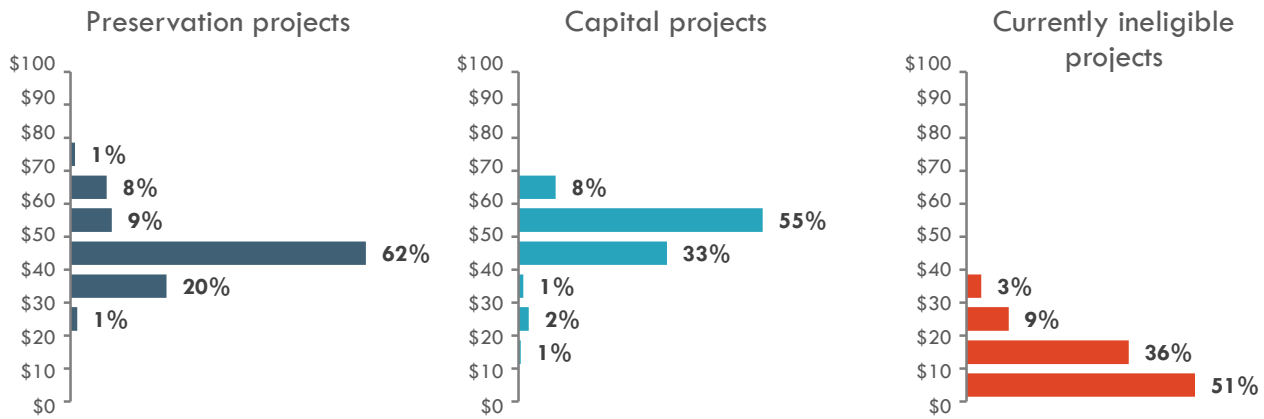
Allocation of State Funds by Project Category

Allocation of Existing State Grant Funding Across Project Categories

Exhibit 15 shows how counties would allocate \$100 in existing state grant funding across project categories, including preservation projects (i.e., RAP funding), capital projects (i.e., CAPP funding), and projects that are currently ineligible for CRAB funding. There was clear consensus among counties regarding the rough allocation of funds across these project categories: most counties (82%) allocated between \$30 and \$50 to preservation projects, most (88%) allocated between \$40 and \$60 to capital projects, and most (87%) allocated between \$0 and \$20 to currently ineligible projects.

Exhibit 15. Allocation of \$100 in Existing State Grant Funding Across Project Categories (n = 36)

Survey question: “How would you allocate \$100 in existing state grant funding to CRAB across each of the following categories of projects? Currently 55% of CRAB’s funding goes to RAP and 45% goes to CAPP.”



Source: BERK, 2024.

Crosstabs

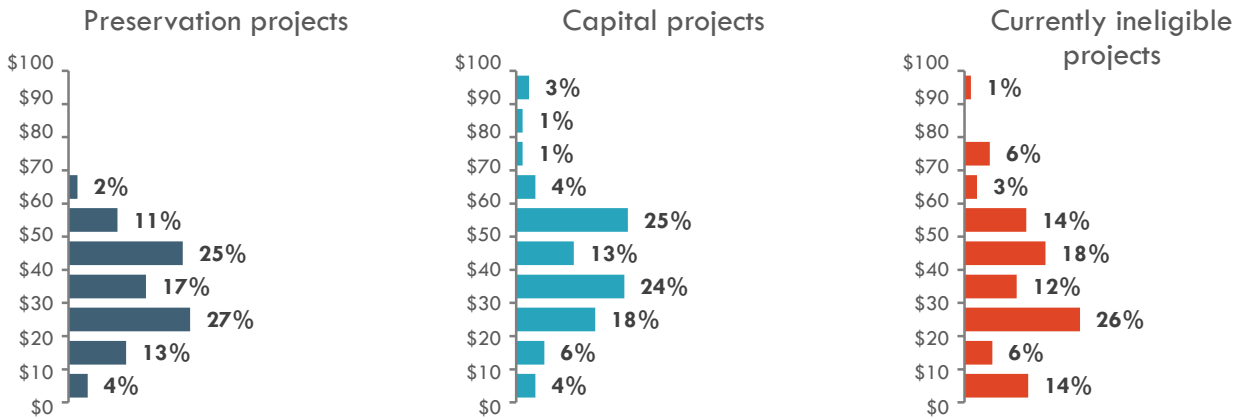
There were no notable differences in responses by RAP region or counties’ rural or urban classification. Full crosstabs for this question can be found in [Exhibit 27](#) and [Exhibit 28](#) in [Full Crosstabs](#).

Allocation of Hypothetical New State Grant Funding Across Project Categories

Exhibit 16 shows how counties would allocate \$100 in hypothetical new state grant funding across project categories. There is no clear consensus among counties about the appropriate amount of funding to allocate to project categories, with most counties allocating anywhere between \$0 and \$60 to each category. Notably, most counties allocated at least some hypothetical new funding to preservation and capital projects, indicating that existing funding is not fulfilling all needs for these project categories.

Exhibit 16. Allocation of \$100 in Hypothetical New State Grant Funding Across Project Categories (n = 35)

Survey question: “How would you allocate \$100 in new state grant funding across each of the following categories of projects?”



Source: BERK, 2024.

Crosstabs

There were no notable differences in responses by RAP region or counties’ rural or urban classification.

Full crosstabs for this question can be found in *Exhibit 29* and *Exhibit 30* in [Full Crosstabs](#).

Potential Additional Funding Sources

The survey asked the following question about potential funding sources to support new grant programs: “What potential funding sources should be considered for potential new grant programs that address currently ineligible project types such as those listed in Question 7? Please provide your suggestions for a compelling rationale to a state policymaker for applying these funds to county road needs.” Twenty-six respondents provided open-ended comments to this question, primarily addressing the following topic areas:

- **Existing state and federal sources.** Many respondents commented on the possibility of using existing state and federal funding sources through reallocation. Several respondents said that existing funds are not currently equitably distributed. One respondent noted that it may be helpful to assess all current uses of funds to identify uses that are no longer desired. Several respondents suggested using fuel tax funding, whether through a more equitable share of current funds, or the addition of new fuel taxes. Two respondents suggested using cap and trade funds for new grant programs.

“Federal pass through and other state increase [dollars] should continue to be pushed to provide equity amongst receiving agencies.”

“Increased percentage of fuel tax or other transportation revenue sources. Counties are responsible for the largest amount of arterial road miles and as such need the resources to preserve and improve that road system. The rest of the state and local system comes crashing down without a resilient County road system.”

“Review of all existing funding to clean processes and find use of dollars still pushed to outdated directives.”

“Increase to RAP funding from State Motor Vehicle Fund.”

- **New taxes and fees.** Two respondents suggested the creation of a carbon tax to fund new grant programs, especially those tied to environmental issues. One respondent commented on the possibility of creating a road usage charge to supplement diminishing fuel tax funding. One respondent suggested the creation of a tax for tire purchases, as a way to supplement fuel tax funding. One respondent commented on the possibility of using use fee applications for new funding.

“Recognizing that taxing vehicle fuel doesn't work well when some vehicles are fueled with electrons, but still wanting to charge more [money] to heavier users, what about a fee on purchasing tires?”

- **New grants.** One respondent suggested that block grants would be a good source of new funding because they allow for decisions around how funding is used to be made at the local level.
- **Private funding partnerships.** One respondent suggested that new funding should come from innovation in private funding partnerships.

See [Open-Ended Responses](#) for all responses.

County Equity Policies

The survey asked respondents to explain their answer to the question, “Does your county have a philosophy and/or policy to consider equity and environmental justice in prioritizing transportation projects? Please explain.” Counties were fairly evenly split, with 38% of responding counties saying yes, 32% saying no, and 27% saying they were unsure. In some cases, respondents from the same county answered the question differently.

Thirty respondents provided open-ended comments, primarily within the following topic areas:

- **Formal and informal policies.** Many respondents commented to explain that their county performs formal equity reviews for transportation projects based on federal (i.e., Title VI), state, or county restrictions. One respondent noted that their county currently has informal policies in place that are in the process of being formalized.
- **Lack of policies.** Many respondents commented to explain why their county does not have any equity policies in place for transportation projects, often stating that the county is not densely populated or that there are not enough resources at the county to perform this work.

See [Open-Ended Responses](#) for all responses.

Other Comments: Open-Ended Responses

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide other comments at the end of the survey. Twenty-five respondents provided comments, primarily in the following topic areas:

- **Lack of funding.** Many respondents commented that there is not enough funding available for projects, as costs have risen and regulations have expanded over the last several years.

“These are critical funds to our capital program. However, our road system is degrading rapidly and the project cost escalation has not been met with additional funding. Our roads need a serious injection of funding.”

“There are more priorities and unfunded mandates added to our unfunded needs each year. Examples include ADA, Fish Barrier, Active Transportation, etc. This all requires extensive funding, on top of the funding it takes to preserve the existing system. More funding is desperately needed for County roads.”

“The past would say that most, if not all, Programs require matching funds. Our County needs direct allocation of funds to cover maintenance and preservation to free up general road fund dollars to cover the matching funds required to commit to programs.”

- **Preservation and maintenance.** Several respondents commented on the importance of funding preservation and maintenance projects, particularly because this can free up funding for other uses, such as matching dollars.

“The past would say that most, if not all, Programs require matching funds. Our County needs direct allocation of funds to cover maintenance and preservation to free up general road fund dollars to cover the matching funds required to commit to programs.”

“Operational funding is critical. Preservation and maintenance of the existing system will need to be prioritized over capital improvement until such time that capital improvement funding is sufficient to address system-wide issues.”

- **Grant requirements** Several respondents commented that grant requirements can increase difficulty in using funding. One respondent noted that changing regulations can result in increased administrative costs, and therefore lower efficiency in project delivery. Another respondent commented on the importance of flexibility in funding requirements.

“Please do not add more criteria or burden to the current process. We already find ourselves applying for projects that fit the funding criteria rather than what we know our residents need, which is frustrating. More requirements or criteria will make RAP less usable and flexible.”

- **Other comments.** Several other topics were raised in the open-ended comments, including difficulty in meeting match requirements, appreciation for CRAB as an organization, difficulty in meeting eligibility requirements, and the importance of funding for bridges specifically.

“There are more priorities and unfunded mandates added to our unfunded needs each year. Examples include ADA, Fish Barrier, Active Transportation, etc. This all requires extensive funding, on top of the funding it takes to preserve the existing system. More funding is desperately needed for County roads.”

“The more we can get away from federal funding and the ever-changing guidelines, closer to a model that is consistent and adequately funds us, we will be able to reduce administration costs and efficiently deliver projects.”

See [Open-Ended Responses](#) for all responses.

Full Crosstabs

Satisfaction with Current Elements of RAP

Exhibit 17. Regional Crosstab: Satisfaction with Elements of RAP

Survey question: "Please rate your satisfaction with the following elements of RAP over the past three funding cycles:"

Option	Response	Southwest	Northwest	Puget Sound	Northeast	Southeast
Support from CRAB staff for RAP applicants	Very satisfied	83%	100%	100%	92%	100%
	Somewhat satisfied	17%	0%	0%	8%	0%
	Not satisfied	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Total responding counties	9	6	3	11	9
Communications about RAP via email and the CRAB website	Very satisfied	72%	83%	100%	88%	89%
	Somewhat satisfied	17%	17%	0%	12%	6%
	Not satisfied	11%	0%	0%	0%	6%
	Total responding counties	9	6	3	11	9
How it meets CRAB's stated objective	Very satisfied	56%	86%	100%	80%	72%
	Somewhat satisfied	44%	14%	0%	17%	28%
	Not satisfied	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%
	Total responding counties	9	6	3	11	9
Ease of using the funds	Very satisfied	83%	69%	67%	79%	61%
	Somewhat satisfied	17%	31%	33%	21%	39%
	Not satisfied	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Total responding counties	9	6	3	11	9
How it supports your county's capital projects	Very satisfied	69%	88%	67%	58%	61%
	Somewhat satisfied	31%	12%	33%	39%	39%
	Not satisfied	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%
	Total responding counties	8	6	3	11	9
Grant cycle timing and length	Very satisfied	56%	55%	83%	56%	63%
	Somewhat satisfied	44%	45%	17%	36%	25%
	Not satisfied	0%	0%	0%	8%	13%
	Total responding counties	9	6	3	11	8
The grant application itself	Very satisfied	36%	53%	50%	42%	63%
	Somewhat satisfied	64%	47%	50%	58%	38%
	Not satisfied	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Total responding counties	7	6	2	10	8
Funding match requirements	Very satisfied	33%	46%	50%	58%	44%
	Somewhat satisfied	61%	54%	50%	33%	56%
	Not satisfied	6%	0%	0%	9%	0%
	Total responding counties	9	6	3	11	8
Scoring process	Very satisfied	57%	42%	33%	48%	31%
	Somewhat satisfied	43%	58%	67%	48%	69%
	Not satisfied	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%
	Total responding counties	7	6	3	11	8
Size of the awards	Very satisfied	50%	23%	17%	20%	38%
	Somewhat satisfied	39%	68%	50%	63%	50%
	Not satisfied	11%	8%	33%	17%	13%
	Total responding counties	9	6	3	10	8

Source: BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 18. Rural/Urban Crosstab: Satisfaction with Elements of RAP

Survey question: "Please rate your satisfaction with the following elements of RAP over the past three funding cycles:"

Option	Response	Urban	Rural
Support from CRAB staff for RAP applicants	Very satisfied	96%	93%
	Somewhat satisfied	4%	7%
	Not satisfied	0%	0%
	Total responding counties	9	29
Communications about RAP via email and the CRAB website	Very satisfied	74%	88%
	Somewhat satisfied	15%	10%
	Not satisfied	11%	2%
	Total responding counties	9	29
How it meets CRAB's stated objective	Very satisfied	83%	72%
	Somewhat satisfied	13%	28%
	Not satisfied	4%	0%
	Total responding counties	9	29
Ease of using the funds	Very satisfied	76%	72%
	Somewhat satisfied	24%	28%
	Not satisfied	0%	0%
	Total responding counties	9	29
How it supports your county's capital projects	Very satisfied	76%	64%
	Somewhat satisfied	20%	36%
	Not satisfied	4%	0%
	Total responding counties	9	28
Grant cycle timing and length	Very satisfied	85%	51%
	Somewhat satisfied	11%	44%
	Not satisfied	4%	5%
	Total responding counties	9	28
The grant application itself	Very satisfied	58%	45%
	Somewhat satisfied	42%	55%
	Not satisfied	0%	0%
	Total responding counties	8	25
Funding match requirements	Very satisfied	56%	43%
	Somewhat satisfied	44%	51%
	Not satisfied	0%	5%
	Total responding counties	9	28
Scoring process	Very satisfied	59%	38%
	Somewhat satisfied	37%	62%
	Not satisfied	4%	0%
	Total responding counties	9	26
Size of the awards	Very satisfied	17%	37%
	Somewhat satisfied	48%	56%
	Not satisfied	35%	7%
	Total responding counties	9	27

Source: BERK, 2024.

Regional Flexibility in Scoring Projects

Exhibit 19. Regional Crosstab: Evaluation of the Regional Flexibility in Scoring Projects

Survey question: “How would you assess the flexibility within the regions to score projects using regional criteria? Skip this question if you don’t know.”

Answer	Southwest	Northwest	Puget Sound	Northeast	Southeast
Regions have the right amount of flexibility	88%	63%	100%	88%	86%
Regions should have more flexibility	13%	38%	0%	13%	14%
Total responding counties	8	4	2	6	7

Source: BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 20. Rural/Urban Crosstab: Evaluation of the Regional Flexibility in Scoring Projects

Survey question: “How would you assess the flexibility within the regions to score projects using regional criteria? Skip this question if you don’t know.”

Answer	Urban	Rural
Regions have the right amount of flexibility	84%	84%
Regions should have more flexibility	16%	16%
Total responding counties	8	19

Source: BERK, 2024.

Prioritization of RAP Funds for Currently Eligible Project Types

Exhibit 21. Regional Crosstab: Prioritization of Currently Eligible Project Types for RAP Funding

Survey question: "RAP currently funds the following project types. Please rank the following types in order of priority for your county. Select "unsure" for any options you aren't familiar with."

Option	Southwest	Northwest	Puget Sound	Northeast	Southeast
3R	2.9	2.2	2.7	1.6	1.6
2R	2.9	1.9	2.3	2.3	2.7
Reconstruction	3.5	3.6	5.0	3.3	2.4
Bridges	3.4	5.1	2.8	4.2	4.1
Drainage structures	3.3	3.4	4.8	4.2	4.4
Intersections	4.5	4.6	3.3	5.4	5.2
Total responding counties	8	5 to 6	3	10 to 11	8 to 9

Source: BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 22. Rural/Urban Crosstab: Prioritization of Currently Eligible Project Types for RAP Funding

Survey question: "RAP currently funds the following project types. Please rank the following types in order of priority for your county. Select "unsure" for any options you aren't familiar with."

Option	Urban	Rural
3R	2.1	2.0
2R	2.6	2.4
Reconstruction	4.3	3.0
Bridges	3.3	4.3
Drainage structures	4.6	3.8
Intersections	4.1	5.1
Total responding counties	9	26 to 28

Source: BERK, 2024.

Expanding Project Type Eligibility for Existing RAP Funding

Exhibit 23. Regional Crosstab: Support for Expanding Project Type Eligibility for Existing RAP Funding

Survey question: "If the total amount of RAP funding were to remain the same, would you want to add eligibility for new project types such as those listed in Question 7?"

Answer	Southwest	Northwest	Puget Sound	Northeast	Southeast
Yes, absolutely	13%	60%	0%	50%	22%
It depends	50%	32%	50%	45%	72%
No, absolutely not	38%	8%	50%	5%	6%
Total responding counties	8	6	3	11	9

Source: BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 24. Rural/Urban Crosstab: Support for Expanding Project Type Eligibility for Existing RAP Funding

Survey question: "If the total amount of RAP funding were to remain the same, would you want to add eligibility for new project types such as those listed in Question 7?"

Answer	Urban	Rural
Yes, absolutely	11%	38%
It depends	67%	44%
No, absolutely not	22%	14%
Total responding counties	9	28

Source: BERK, 2024.

Prioritization of Hypothetical New Funding for Currently Ineligible Project Types

Exhibit 25. Regional Crosstab: Prioritization of New Project Types for Hypothetical New RAP Funding

Survey question: “RAP currently does NOT fund the following project types. If a new program were created with new funding (i.e., would not impact the existing RAP program), which of the following would be top priorities for your county? This question must be answered and you may select up to your top three priorities.”

Option	Southwest	Northwest	Puget Sound	Northeast	Southeast
Local access road improvements	72%	54%	50%	78%	89%
Off-system non-federally funded bridges (not currently funded by RAP)	56%	7%	67%	83%	72%
Dedicated program for fish barrier removal	11%	72%	83%	26%	0%
Roads of a rural nature in Census-designated urban areas	17%	35%	17%	22%	33%
Bike and pedestrian facilities	11%	36%	0%	9%	22%
Roundabouts	11%	42%	50%	4%	0%
Stormwater retention and treatment	17%	26%	17%	0%	17%
Emergency and evacuation routes	22%	0%	0%	5%	22%
Streetlights	11%	0%	17%	0%	0%
ADA facilities	6%	12%	0%	0%	0%
Traffic signals	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other (please specify)	11%	17%	0%	18%	22%
Total responding counties	9	6	3	11	9

Source: BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 26. Rural/Urban Crosstab: Prioritization of New Project Types for Hypothetical New RAP Funding

Survey question: “RAP currently does NOT fund the following project types. If a new program were created with new funding (i.e., would not impact the existing RAP program), which of the following would be top priorities for your county? This question must be answered and you may select up to your top three priorities.”

Answer	Urban	Rural
Local access road improvements	44%	82%
Off-system non-federally funded bridges (not currently funded by RAP)	62%	60%
Dedicated program for fish barrier removal	49%	22%
Roads of a rural nature in Census-designated urban areas	27%	24%
Bike and pedestrian facilities	13%	17%
Roundabouts	47%	4%
Stormwater retention and treatment	9%	14%
Emergency and evacuation routes	0%	16%
Streetlights	6%	3%
ADA facilities	4%	3%
Traffic signals	0%	0%
Other (please specify)	22%	14%
Total responding counties	9	29

Source: BERK, 2024.

Allocation of Existing State Grant Funding Across Project Categories

Exhibit 27. Regional Crosstab: Allocation of \$100 in Existing State Grant Funding Across Project Categories

Survey question: "How would you allocate \$100 in existing state grant funding to CRAB across each of the following categories of projects? Currently 55% of CRAB's funding goes to RAP and 45% goes to CAPP."

Preservation projects					
Amount	Southwest	Northwest	Puget Sound	Northeast	Southeast
\$0 - \$9	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$10 - \$19	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$20 - \$29	0%	0%	17%	0%	0%
\$30 - \$39	22%	37%	0%	11%	22%
\$40 - \$49	78%	49%	83%	63%	44%
\$50 - \$59	0%	0%	0%	18%	17%
\$60 - \$69	0%	8%	0%	8%	17%
\$70 - \$79	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%
\$80 - \$89	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$90 - \$100	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Capital projects					
Amount	Southwest	Northwest	Puget Sound	Northeast	Southeast
\$0 - \$9	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$10 - \$19	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%
\$20 - \$29	0%	14%	0%	0%	0%
\$30 - \$39	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%
\$40 - \$49	0%	46%	50%	36%	50%
\$50 - \$59	72%	41%	50%	58%	44%
\$60 - \$69	28%	0%	0%	0%	6%
\$70 - \$79	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$80 - \$89	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$90 - \$100	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Currently ineligible projects					
Amount	Southwest	Northwest	Puget Sound	Northeast	Southeast
\$0 - \$9	72%	36%	33%	36%	61%
\$10 - \$19	28%	27%	50%	60%	22%
\$20 - \$29	0%	20%	17%	2%	17%
\$30 - \$39	0%	17%	0%	2%	0%
\$40 - \$49	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$50 - \$59	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$60 - \$69	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$70 - \$79	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$80 - \$89	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$90 - \$100	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total responding counties	9	6	3	9	9

Source: BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 28. Rural/Urban Crosstab: Allocation of \$100 in Existing State Grant Funding Across Project Types

Survey question: “How would you allocate \$100 in existing state grant funding to CRAB across each of the following categories of projects? Currently 55% of CRAB’s funding goes to RAP and 45% goes to CAPP.”

Amount	Preservation projects		Capital projects		Currently ineligible projects	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
\$0 - \$9	0%	0%	0%	0%	49%	52%
\$10 - \$19	0%	0%	2%	0%	41%	34%
\$20 - \$29	6%	0%	9%	0%	8%	10%
\$30 - \$39	0%	27%	4%	0%	2%	4%
\$40 - \$49	76%	57%	23%	37%	0%	0%
\$50 - \$59	7%	9%	50%	56%	0%	0%
\$60 - \$69	8%	7%	11%	7%	0%	0%
\$70 - \$79	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$80 - \$89	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$90 - \$100	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total responding counties	9	27	9	27	9	27

Source: BERK, 2024.

Allocation of Hypothetical New State Grant Funding Across Project Categories

Exhibit 29. Regional Crosstab: Allocation of \$100 in Hypothetical New State Grant Funding Across Project Categories

Survey question: “How would you allocate \$100 in new state grant funding across each of the following categories of projects?”

Preservation projects					
Amount	Southwest	Northwest	Puget Sound	Northeast	Southeast
\$0 - \$9	0%	20%	0%	6%	0%
\$10 - \$19	11%	10%	0%	22%	11%
\$20 - \$29	17%	30%	17%	44%	22%
\$30 - \$39	17%	21%	33%	6%	22%
\$40 - \$49	44%	12%	33%	20%	17%
\$50 - \$59	11%	7%	0%	0%	28%
\$60 - \$69	0%	0%	17%	2%	0%
\$70 - \$79	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$80 - \$89	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$90 - \$100	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Capital projects					
Amount	Southwest	Northwest	Puget Sound	Northeast	Southeast
\$0 - \$9	0%	0%	0%	6%	11%
\$10 - \$19	11%	0%	0%	13%	0%
\$20 - \$29	6%	13%	17%	33%	17%
\$30 - \$39	22%	31%	33%	16%	28%
\$40 - \$49	6%	22%	33%	4%	17%
\$50 - \$59	44%	4%	17%	22%	22%
\$60 - \$69	11%	0%	0%	6%	0%
\$70 - \$79	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
\$80 - \$89	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%
\$90 - \$100	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%

Currently ineligible projects					
Amount	Southwest	Northwest	Puget Sound	Northeast	Southeast
\$0 - \$9	33%	30%	0%	0%	6%
\$10 - \$19	11%	4%	0%	0%	11%
\$20 - \$29	22%	15%	67%	26%	22%
\$30 - \$39	17%	8%	0%	2%	22%
\$40 - \$49	0%	37%	33%	22%	17%
\$50 - \$59	6%	7%	0%	33%	11%
\$60 - \$69	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%
\$70 - \$79	11%	0%	0%	11%	0%
\$80 - \$89	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
\$90 - \$100	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%
Total responding counties	9	5	3	9	9

Source: BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 30. Rural/Urban Crosstab: Regional Crosstab: Allocation of \$100 in Hypothetical New State Grant Funding Across Project Types

Survey question: “How would you allocate \$100 in new state grant funding across each of the following categories of projects?”

Amount	Preservation projects		Capital projects		Currently ineligible projects	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
\$0 - \$9	0%	6%	0%	6%	28%	10%
\$10 - \$19	6%	15%	2%	8%	0%	8%
\$20 - \$29	11%	33%	13%	19%	46%	19%
\$30 - \$39	30%	13%	19%	26%	2%	15%
\$40 - \$49	42%	20%	21%	10%	20%	17%
\$50 - \$59	4%	13%	28%	24%	4%	17%
\$60 - \$69	8%	0%	11%	2%	0%	4%
\$70 - \$79	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	8%
\$80 - \$89	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%
\$90 - \$100	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	2%
Total responding counties	9	26	9	26	9	26

Source: BERK, 2024.

Open-Ended Responses

Challenges

N = 47 respondents

Survey question: "What would you identify as your top challenge in funding transportation capital projects?"

Match requirements
The overwhelming amount of our existing system needing repair or replacement on a limited budget where the money doesn't accomplish what it has in the past due to both escalation and newly imposed regulations.
Having the match available for capital projects while still having adequate funds for maintenance projects.
Securing local funding for transportation projects is virtually non-existent in the County's budget. The struggle to keep cash in the county road budget for large pay estimate is always on-going.
Reconstruction of gravel road base/subbase.
Educating elected officials of the funding challenges and gaining their support to address
Relying on federal funding, tracking the variety of funding requirements, and the speed at which funding requirements change.
The primary challenge is getting enough money for a project with inflation costs. The secondary challenge is the match can be difficult depending on the size of the project.
Estimates made by current values, by the time everything is approved costs have increased
Staffing level to deliver projects
Project timelines battling inflation.
Right of way and Environmental Costs and Approval
Preservation and maintenance and the costs associated with them.
With increased construction cost additional County Limit for RAP projects per Biennium.
Coming up with matching funds.
The one percent annual increase to County Road levy does not keep up with inflation, and MVFT is decreasing on an annual basis. Both limit the amount and scope of necessary capital projects and decrease our level of service.
Design costs and escalating CN estimates over a long design period. Keeping within a forecast schedule to get to CN.
Cost of projects including inflationary factors.
Inflation and uncertainty of CN phase in 3 years.
Realistically it would be deciding what is most important. We have so much that needs to be done, but we don't enough people (or match) to do it all. I feel as though we are receiving (mostly) what we need (other than previous answers to questions). If we had more people, we could do more capital projects. But then we would need more money for the match too. We can only do so much.
Local funding of for local access roads and maintenance operations. Costs have continued rise and revenue has stayed flat or decreased.
for me personally knowing what funding sources are out there and what projects apply to them well. Our bridge program has done well with federal funding in the past. possibly too well to where its hard to get more funded. our timber bridges are showing signs of decay.
permit timelines continue to impact execution & drive up costs
Regulation.
Obtaining full budget for all phases of a project
Consistent funding sources; Funding rural/low density areas; permitting processes significantly increasing project timelines and costs.

The need for capacity improvements is in urban areas. The cost of expanding the footprint in urban areas is completely prohibitive due to the price of real estate on that specific block, utilities, discovering a historic UST, stormwater, federal permitting, etc.

Sufficient funding for all of the needs. Duration needed to obtain funding.

For RAP funded projects we struggle to find projects that make sense, or serve a need that will score well and be competitive under the current scoring forms for our region.

dealing with federal funds thru local programs and headquarters

meeting eligibility requirements and scoring criteria for a project that I know makes sense and is the best investment for my county.

Competing priorities, never-ending list of needs and very limited funding. Projects are also getting more expensive at a much faster rate than revenue growth. Regulation has increased the time it takes to deliver projects which impacts costs.

Limited funds available for removal of fish passage barriers relative to the amount identified in the county. This is coupled with a lack of leniency from DFW to allow dilapidated 18" culverts to be replaced with 48"/60" HDPE as they insist on holding us to the 1.5x bankfull width standard, drastically increasing the cost of the project.

Our percentage on large projects

County uses its majority local dollars trying to keeping up with its existing maintenance activities. No extra dollars are currently available to fund any new and improve infrastructure that are much needed due to growth.

Runaway Consultant and Contractor costs

Project costs have soared over the past five years. This has led to funding shortfalls on projects that were estimated long before the project was awarded grant funding. These shortfalls have depleted surplus funding that was once available for small projects in areas that did not qualify for grants. These projects now sit with no way of moving them forward.

Agency match obligation

To many strings attached to funding. Give the local agencies more control and flexibility to meet their individual needs.

Maintaining what we already have.

The rising cost of construction and how that can create partially funded projects as they are moved through the process that is now much longer and difficult because of environmental restrictions/permits.

No grant funding mechanism for short span bridges

Lack of a funding source for short span bridges.

Big increases in construction costs and flatlined revenues

Our top challenge is meeting the permit requirements that come along with certain funding types, especially FHWA. Federal Nexus permit timelines are having a major impact on schedules and it has made us less likely to pursue federal funding. That makes State funding with lower requirements, such as RAP very attractive to us.

With regards to RAP, we don't have as much traffic on our roadways as some the counties we compete against for RAP funding. We compete for 2R projects better than 3R/RC because of this.

Inflation

Satisfaction with Current Elements of RAP

N = 16 respondents.

Survey question: "Please rate your satisfaction with the following elements of RAP over the past three funding cycles:"

Funding is limited and there simply isn't enough funding to complete the size or length of projects needed without phasing or supplementing with additional funding. More funding is needed to complete these projects or preservation /reconstruction through direct allocation. There is a County funding gap between urban and rural. We have urban rural roads that are not eligible for CRAB funding and do not score or are also not eligible for urban funding opportunities.

The typical size of award is failing to match the growing cost of requirements, particularly due to the increasing constraints imposed on the multiple phases of the project. How it supports your capital projects

Would love to see this program grow so we can rely less on federal funding.

Funding match requirements - Prefer 100% match Size of the awards - Project costs are going up, and the funding is not keeping pace.

100% funding and increase the grant award amount.

The email updates from CRAB are so frequent due to the wide variety of announcements. Suggestions: Setup a subscription option similar to WSDOT where users can select what type of information they want to be emailed about; specific to GISMo updates, its understood that its constantly being updated. If it is possible, move those updates to only the website with a hovering window stating the most recent update and a link to an update log that includes what the update means to the end user. As a new user for submitting the RAP application, the email regarding the hard change to SAW was missed because it looked like one of the often received GISMo updates.

Grant application timing is fine the concern is with partial funded projects that take 2 or 3 biennium to get funded and chasing the project costs compared to inflation. Also submitting for funding on projects that are 3-4 years in the future.

Size of awards are not keeping up with increased costs.

for unsure selections - I have not participated in the grant application/scoring process yet. the current call will be my first time applying for projects.

n/a

Since this is my first time doing the RAP Application I am unsure about the ease of the grant application itself. I am also unsure of the scoring process due to this being my first time doing this application.

Need more money

Thank you CRAB for your continued support.

Larger grant sizes would benefit capital projects, and more advance notice regarding meetings, grant applications, etc.

We would like to see larger amounts of CRAB funding. More advance notice for events (meetings, applications...etc.).

Project delivery time just keeps getting longer. I'm sure who's fault that is. It just takes us a long time to deliver on a project.

Expanding Project Type Eligibility for Existing RAP Funding

N = 7 respondents

Survey question: "If the total amount of RAP funding were to remain the same, would you want to add eligibility for new project types such as those listed in Question 7?"

Funding flexibility is good especially in terms of direct application. Limited funding divided further into additional \$pots is not a helpful scenario. Concerns around opening additional funding opportunities for Fish Passage with the current legal status and directives in play.

If we were able to get all caught up on eligible facilities, then yes, but until then keep it the same.

I believe this is meant to say Question #6. Yes, local access road improvements

Could this be left up to each region to decide? Such as roads in urban areas, allow a percentage of a project to be on urban roadway. Sometimes it doesn't make sense to end the project at road classification change and getting additional funding for a small segment of road can be a challenge when competing for urban funding.

assuming question 7 is referring to question 6

I'm assuming you mean the project types in Question 6?

Had to answer it this way in honor of Walt Olsen!

Prioritization of Hypothetical New Funding for Currently Ineligible Project Types

N = 6 respondents

Survey question: "RAP currently does NOT fund the following project types. If a new program were created with new funding (i.e., would not impact the existing RAP program), which of the following would be top priorities for your county? This question must be answered and you may select up to your top three priorities."

Paving unpaved roads

Short span bridges (less than 20' length) that are not NBI eligible. I realize these are potentially eligibel for DR projects but if separate funding were to become available these could be a specific focus.

Culvert Replacements (For Culverts in streams that don't have special fish in them)

Non-fish passage culvert replacement

I would like to select this 3 times. [Note: refers to selection of "Off-system non-federally funded bridges (not currently funded by RAP)"]

None of the above

Potential Additional Funding Sources

N = 26 respondents

Survey question: "What potential funding sources should be considered for potential new grant programs that address currently ineligible project types such as those listed in Question 7? Please provide your suggestions for a compelling rationale to a state policymaker for applying these funds to county road needs."

Cap and trade funds should fund a program to pave gravel roads to improve air quality and reduce emissions.

- Federal pass through and other state increase \$ should continue to be pushed to provide equity amongst receiving agencies.
- Opportunities to receive funding from newer technologies and innovations in transportation or other markets. Tax fees etc where the use is not already overburdened.
- Innovative private funding partnerships
- use fee applications.
- Review of all existing funding to clean processes and find use of dollars still pushed to outdated directives.
- New utilities and review of the grant funding that supports their infrastructure.

The County's are responsible for maintenance of the majority of roadway miles that are used and should receive a more equitable piece of the funds collected by the State for roadway projects

The facilities I identified often have the least amount of available funding outside of local. Addressing funding gaps to make sure there are opportunities for the complete system should be the goal.

Cap and Invest Funding should be used to fund many County Road Needs. The Cap and Invest program is driving up fuel costs, which makes our project costs higher. It also drives electric car use, which further diminishes the Fuel tax revenue.

Fish barrier removal must start to be funded by the state. The requirement is untenable within county budgets.

Unhappy with the way WSDOT handles funding, would prefer CRAB handled it.

Carbon tax. In moving to electrify the transportation system, they (electric vehicles) will need roads to drive on. We have to tie the improvements to the roads to carbon reduction. Have not come up with a clever way yet, but it's there.

Not sure on a funding source but funding for local access road improvements is needed in Adams County

Increase to RAP funding from State Motor Vehicle Fund.

Non-Federal funds that use existing gas tax dollars.

Culvert replacement is an extremely costly endeavor. Our roadways were built right next to streams, the meanderings of which are directed through deteriorating culverts multiple times in a single stretch. With the new WDFW rulings, all streams with ANY TYPE of fish (which is basically all water in this state) must adhere to strict regulations as to what a culvert is replaced with, as the existing culverts are now considered a "Fish Barrier". Now the more important issue here is that only streams/rivers with Anadromous fish are considered for grant funding for "Fish Barrier" removal/replacement. So, while Fish and Wildlife tell us that we can't replace a culvert with another culvert of relatively the same size because of the importance of fish, those fish are not important enough to be given special priority by this State's Legislature. We recently needed to replace a crossing that was but a mere trickle of a stream with a 9-foot wide concrete box culvert because there were a few small minnows swimming in a mudhole during the WDFW visit. We need a Culvert Replacement Program.

Block grants allowing the local legislative authority and county engineer to determine best use on county road system.

unsure

(1) Partial reallocation of WSDOT's 83% of the MVFT for their 27% of roads. (2) 1-time redistribution of Injunction funding from State projects that have no actual fish passage benefit, to County projects that have a high documented value?

n/a

Recognizing that taxing vehicle fuel doesn't work well when some vehicles are fueled with electrons, but still wanting to charge more \$ to heavier users, what about a fee on purchasing tires? <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2010/mv1.cfm> Washington has about 4.8 million registered private vehicles, plus some trailers & RVs. If tires last 5 years... that's about 1 million sets of tires per year. \$10/set could net close to \$10 million per year, and when a set of tires for a basic Ford Taurus from Costco costs \$1,000... it's not that big of an increase.

Carbon tax revenue should support environmental causes such as replacing reasonable culverts with big expensive culverts or bridges.

Increased percentage of fuel tax or other transportation revenue sources. Counties are responsible for the largest amount of arterial road miles and as such need the resources to preserve and improve that road system. The rest of the state and local system comes crashing down without a resilient County road system.

Miles User fee, electricity tax, since majority property tax within rural counties are already used for Arterials, maybe Rural streets terminals (i.e. State and Fed could help to fund rural streets too)

We struggle to repair existing roads that may not qualify for state and/or federal grants. This leads to long term road closures until funding can be secured.

fair share of gas tax, share of climate commitment act \$.

Maybe not answering this question directly but more funding for preservation and small span bridges that do not compete with 2R projects.

Currently there is no funding source for short span bridges for the SW region, which is a major drawback for those projects.

For short span bridges there are no other funding sources.

With the current state of the State budget and the overspending that WSDOT is currently maintaining. I believe it is going to be increasingly more difficult to sustain our current grant funding level much less increase it.

County Equity Policies

N = 30 respondents

Survey question: "Does your county have a philosophy and/or policy to consider equity and environmental justice in prioritizing transportation projects? Please explain."

- The County includes equity and environmental justice in its planning process and does project specific reviews during scoping and design.
- Our County predominantly is rural without many pockets of dense population. Our projects primarily focus on maintaining and enhancing farm-to-market roads.
- Garfield County has the smallest population, and population density, of all counties in WA. Our income is below average, and any transportation project provides equity to the county as a whole, improving the citizen's ability to compete with other counties for job creation, travel for employment, access to services, and attracting other forms of revenue (tourism dollars, etc.).
- DEI director hired by county supports our TIP and maintenance development
- IMO this isn't a problem in Lewis County. As a condition of our federal funding we include it, but currently the age of our infrastructure and gaps in our system are primarily driving the need.
- It isn't that our county does not have a philosophy to consider equity or environmental justice. We do not have the population base or resources to put towards them.
- Working on this as part of a Countywide Safety Action Plan
- When adding projects to our TIP and/or seeking project funding, we divide the County into regions that serve people of differing backgrounds, score the facilities within those regions and compile a list where each regions top priority then becomes the County's 1A/1B/1C/1D priority projects. If one region within the County is awarded a grant we will seek grant opportunities in a different region, sometimes moving down the priority list so that each region has the potential of having a project occurring simultaneously. This allows each region to be represented in our efforts to improve capital facilities. In terms of environmental justice we are seeking to maintain existing roadways, not expanding our network of roads with new ones. In all of our projects, commute trip reduction, efficient flow of commercial vehicles and opportunities to fund multimodal road projects weigh heavily on establishing the order of priority on our TIP in hopes to reduce carbon emissions.
- Philosophy only being improving major corridors that move residential, commodities, and regional transportation needs in a safe efficient manner.
- We currently look at each project on an individual basis and make determinations from there.
- We are always working to identify and prioritize projects in underserved communities within our county.
- We consider various aspects when prioritizing our projects, and consider both in prioritizing projects. Large projects come directly from our (extended) 20-year Capital Facilities Plan. Smaller projects arise from our managed "Ongoing Programs", which have their individual prioritizations, which would be influenced more by environmental justice, as potential funding has scoring specific to certain needs. Larger capital drives more off other aspects (e.g., safety, accidents and V/C), but also EJ when applicable.
- NA
- All areas of our County are Rural. We don't have a specific underserved community. We are all underserved here.
- Currently, no policy exists. Franklin county serves a primarily rural, agricultural population. However, increased urban growth is changing the landscape. Policy issues will need to be addressed.
- These terms may be subjective. In addition, an analytical rating system may not be feasible.
- we research for environmental justice criteria per our title VI plan. i am not aware of a policy on how to prioritize based on findings.
- King County True North Values and Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan.
- It's informally spread throughout our Comp Plan at the moment, but we're formulating the specific text right now and will have the final document adopted at the end of this year.
- Beyond Title VI, I am not aware of a written policy to consider equity and EJ.

We do the project that is most needed regardless of race or financial status of residents it serves. We treat everyone the same, which I believe should be the goal.

We have an equity index for the entire County which describes using census data and demographics where areas of poverty, elderly, disabled, etc. populations exist and in what percentages.

we have a significant emphasis on Salmon which affects us all, but it disproportionately affects the Tribes for both food and their livelihood. for that reason, we emphasize the need to consider salmon recovery whenever possible.

County does not have our own adopted policy but following state and fed laws.

We are primarily spending money on facilities that are failing or have failed. System enhancements aren't something that has been or will be part of our annual budget.

projects are data driven, but we have a robust T XI plan and use this to guide how we approach projects including public outreach.

Land use and demographics are a priority when selecting projects for consideration.

Projects are evaluated countywide with consideration of equity and environmental justice applied to the list of potential projects.

Title VI

We do not have a written policy, but do follow all Title VI and ADA requirements in implementing our projects.

Other Comments

N = 25 respondents

Survey question: "What else would you like to share about your county's transportation infrastructure funding needs, either as related to RAP or more broadly?"

These are critical funds to our capital program. However, our road system is degrading rapidly and the project cost escalation has not been met with additional funding. Our roads need a serious injection of funding.

Preserving our existing infrastructure is our highest need and priority but the projects required to accomplish this are not all eligible under CAPP. The direct funding distribution model used for the CAPP program though is the most flexible and most successful for our County applications.

Thank you for your support over the years! Your assistance with funding needs has been invaluable. We deeply appreciate your commitment and dedication.

The more we can get away from federal funding and the ever-changing guidelines, closer to a model that is consistent and adequately funds us, we will be able to reduce administration costs and efficiently deliver projects.

Sometimes it is difficult to get scoring high enough to secure funding for roads we determine may need a paving surface but are currently gravel. Many of these roads have paving on different ends but have gravel in between them. We then have to mobilize in order to maintain the gravel. It would be nice to have a consistent surface on our county roads.

We are unique because we have a ferry. Some of the road funds goes to the ferry.

The past would say that most, if not all, Programs require matching funds. Our County needs direct allocation of funds to cover maintenance and preservation to free up general road fund dollars to cover the matching funds required to commit to programs.

Adams County needs additional capital improvement and preservation funding for our existing infrastructure. Funding is not keeping up with the increased costs.

Being a smaller county on the east side of the state makes it more difficult to compete with some of the other counties when it comes to funding. Finding matching funds is always difficult.

Preservation of roads is always a challenge especially dealing with increased freight use of roads. Improving safety of roads and addressing multimodal requirements. ADA improvements and compliance with existing standards.

Operational funding is critical. Preservation and maintenance of the existing system will need to be prioritized over capital improvement until such time that capital improvement funding is sufficient to address system-wide issues.

bridges have become a big need in recent years. we currently have 6 structures reduced to one lane. 3 of which have funding though

My response to question 9 & 10 assumes that the additional programs (from question 7) would be incorporated into RAP (and it's associated percentage). Glad that you are considering adding versatility. The best funding is versatile/nimble. Local Access Roads need help too - as do non-fish passage culverts and inappropriately classified 'Urban' census area roads. Grant programs want to fund Fish Passage, Non-motorized, Bridges, Safety, and other larger capital projects - it is very difficult to find funding for those projects that fall between maintenance and large capital projects - yet these projects constitute a reasonable percentage of the work that needs to be done to support the safe and efficient movement of people and goods over county roads.

There is always a need for additional funding for maintenance and preservation programs.

We could get a little more road per taxpayer dollar if we could spend a little more on county forces work.

Please do not add more criteria or burden to the current process. We already find ourselves applying for projects that fit the funding criteria rather than what we know our residents need, which is frustrating. More requirements or criteria will make RAP less usable and flexible.

There are more priorities and unfunded mandates added to our unfunded needs each year. Examples include ADA, Fish Barrier, Active Transportation, etc. This all requires extensive funding, on top of the funding it takes to preserve the existing system. More funding is desperately needed for County roads.

We are concern with cost escalation as majority of the failing culverts and new crossing requirements are to be replaced with bridges which has a significant impact on the long term maintenance and operation costs.

Thank you for all that you do at CRAB! We would be in a world of hurt without you!

Need to streamline the environmental process. This is the #1 impediment to being able to compete and accept funding whether fed or state.

As MVFT revenue is dwindling, we are being faced with the realization that we are going to have to start falling further behind with preservation projects.

We do not support a set aside funding program for short span bridges. Instead, any additional funds should be allocated to existing programs like RAP if the eligibility criteria is expanded to include short span bridges.

If additional CRAB funding becomes available, we would like the additional funding to be put into RAP and CAPP with the ability to use RAP for short span bridges. If there were another program for short span bridges there would not be sufficient funding to support a project in both programs.

In general, we are able to do less preservation and maintenance and smaller capital projects due to increases in construction costs and flatlined revenues sources

The ability to fund 2R projects on our paved local access roads is the largest need that is currently unavailable to counties.

Appendix D: RAP Region Meeting Findings

In March 2024, CRAB and BERK facilitated a meeting in each Rural Arterial Program (RAP) region to discuss the findings from the RAP user survey. The primary objective of these meetings was to discuss and augment the survey results, taking time to explore why respondents may have answered as they did and talk about potential adjustments to RAP. BERK prepared a discussion guide intended to prompt conversation, which included key takeaways from the survey and associated discussion questions. The following themes reflect comments raised across regional meetings.

County staff expressed a need for increased RAP funding and funding for transportation projects generally. The cost of projects has increased significantly, which means counties are able to do less with the total funding they have. This increased cost also means RAP funding is no longer a meaningful amount on a per-project basis, or that projects are divided into smaller pieces. In some regions, County staff discussed borrowing RAP funding from one another as a way of concentrating sufficient funding when projects can go to construction. CRAB staff are not opposed to this practice, as it may help align funding to project readiness, but it would require significant administrative capacity. Some County staff would not want to participate in this practice as they are able to use the entire of their funding award each year.

Staff in some counties described the RAP match requirement as a barrier. The 10% RAP match requirement can be unaffordable to some counties. This may encourage the use of federal money as matching funds, which adds significant complexity to the delivery of a project. Meeting participants discussed the possibility of a sliding scale match, but not all regions supported this change.

Preservation and reconstruction projects are top priorities for RAP. County staff recommended maintaining the project types that are currently eligible for RAP funding. In the user survey, counties most highly prioritized 3R projects, 2R projects, and reconstruction projects for RAP funds. Counties assigned a lower priority to bridges, drainage structures, and intersections, stating that they are often eligible for funding from other sources. Some counties in Western Washington noted that they may have greater need for funding for bridges and drainage structures/fish passage barrier removal in the future.

County staff mostly want to maintain the current eligibility rules for RAP funding. Expanding RAP to other project types was generally not recommended because it could dilute the effectiveness of the current program. However, if RAP were to expand its list of eligible project types, counties would prioritize funding for local access roads and off-system bridges. Off-system bridges have a limited funding source (federal off-system grants) and there is no other grant to backfill. Counties must use locally generated revenues for these projects.

Satisfaction with the RAP process is generally high, with some opportunities for refinement. County staff noted that the RAP application and award process is easy and predictable, and they value the support they receive from CRAB staff. Meeting participants discussed the application and award timeline and potentially shortening it. When the timeline for a grant process is long, inflation can become a problem as the project cost estimate can quickly be subject to inflation. This was not identified as a priority area for improvement, as staff said they like the current timing and have incorporated it into their annual work cycle.

New funding could come from road-related taxes or fees or a redistribution of existing revenue. Meeting participants discussed potential funding sources for a new grant program. Ideas discussed include a fee on tire purchases, a dedicated statewide sales tax, and a road usage charge (RUC).

Participants also discussed reallocating the gas tax to distribute more of the existing revenue to roads. Participants raised concerns about a road usage charge, including privacy and whether it would be subject to the 18th Amendment requiring the funds be expended for “highway purposes.” Staff discussed if the state’s “cap and invest” program, which funds climate projects focused on improving clean transportation options, could be used for county transportation projects. These funds can perhaps best be targeted at projects with an environmental benefit, such as culvert projects or stormwater projects. These project types do not exist in every region, and they may not fully fulfill the intent of the program.

Counties need support in applying an equity lens to investments in rural areas. Most counties do not prioritize preservation or improvements based on equity or environmental justice, as prioritization is based on factors such as pavement condition, safety, and traffic volume. Staff noted that statewide data used to identify disparities show the areas with the highest impacts are in urban, dense areas. Additionally, county staff stated that data specific to rural areas may be limited. Equity-focused transportation investments in rural areas could focus on:

- Providing access to employment, services, and education for isolated communities.
- Providing access to employment and housing for itinerant agricultural workers.
- Improving access to Tribal lands.
- Prioritize state of good repair to and within communities with high social equity populations.

Appendix E: Interviewees

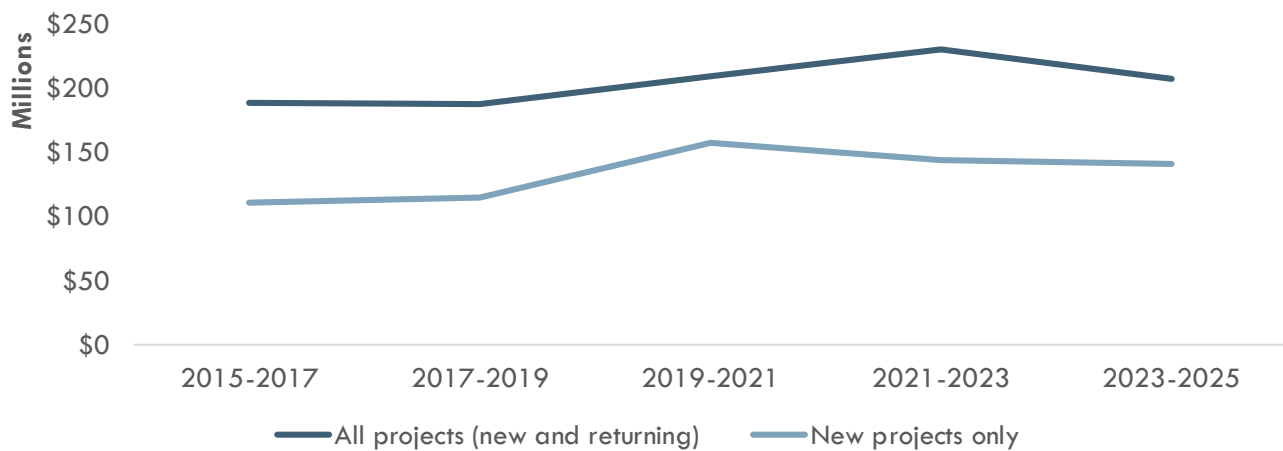
Name	Title	Organization
Tim Beachy, PE	Capital Improvements Project Manager	Kitsap County
Grace Kane, PE	Public Works Director/County Engineer	Skagit County
Letticia Neal, PE	Transportation Improvement Manager	Pierce County
Tina Nelson, PE	Senior Program Manager	Kitsap County
Todd O'Brien, PE	Director of Public Works	Adams County
Dave Orvis, PE	Director of Public Works	Lincoln County
Seth Scarola, PE	County Engineer	Klickitat County
Marcus Storvick, PE	County Engineer	Thurston County
Josh Thomson, PE	County Engineer	Okanogan County
Tom Weller, PE	Assistant County Engineer/Engineering Division Manager	Skagit County

Appendix F: Analysis of RAP Grant Applications and Awards

This appendix provides an analysis of RAP grant applications and awards for each biennium from the 2015-2017 biennium to the 2023-2025 biennium. The first several charts in this appendix show amounts for **all projects (new and returning)** alongside **new projects only**. RAP receives many applications for projects that have already received some amount of RAP funding. New projects are the subset of RAP-funded projects that have never previously received RAP funds.

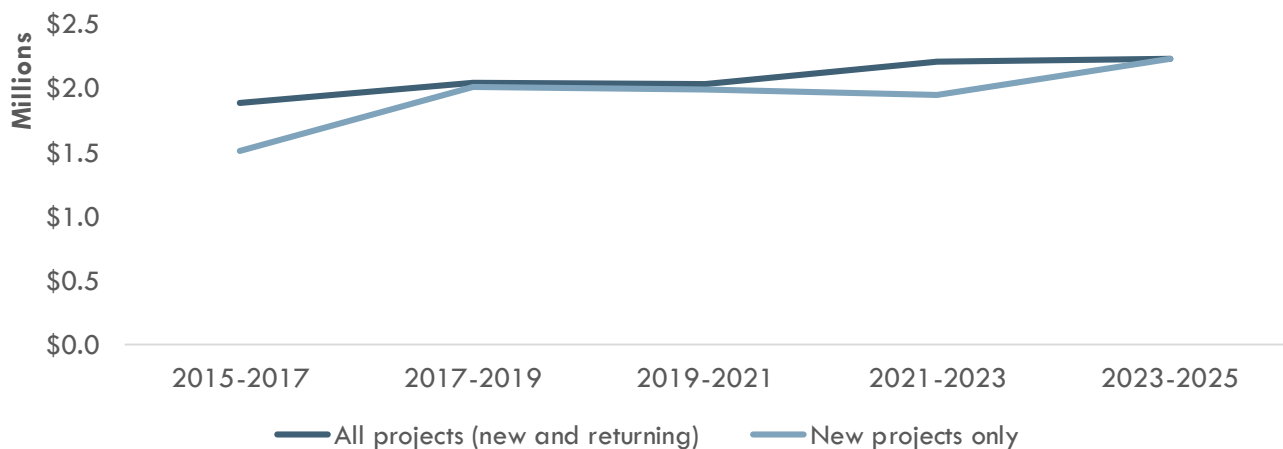
Exhibit 31 shows the total project cost for all applications and *Exhibit 32* shows the average project cost per application, both of which have increased over the past several biennia.

Exhibit 31. Total project cost for all applications, 2015-2025



Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

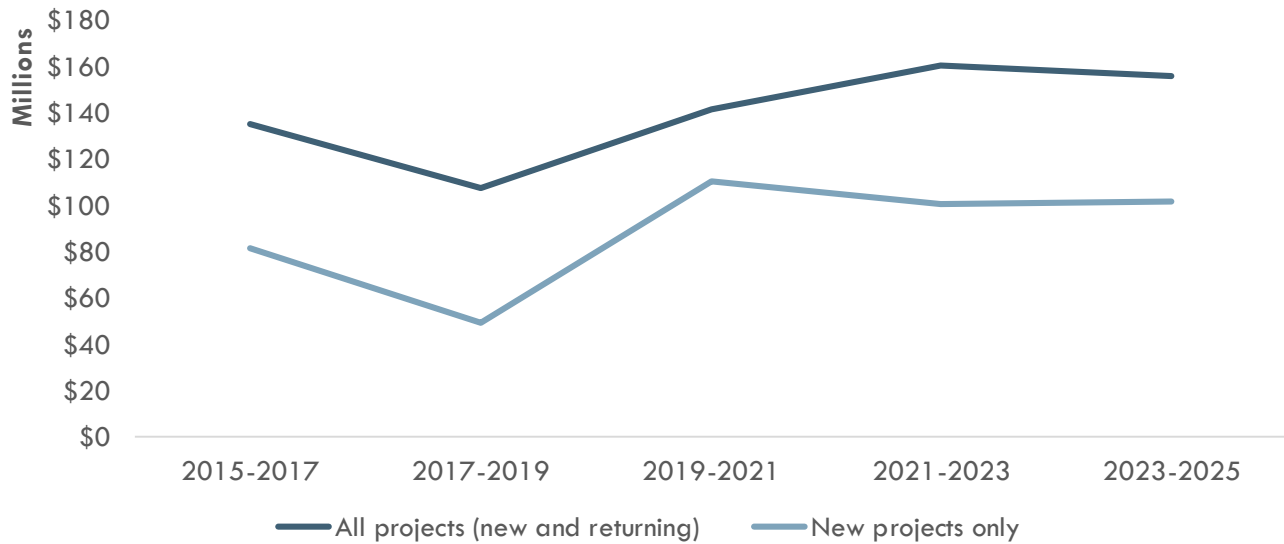
Exhibit 32. Average project cost per application, 2015-2025



Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

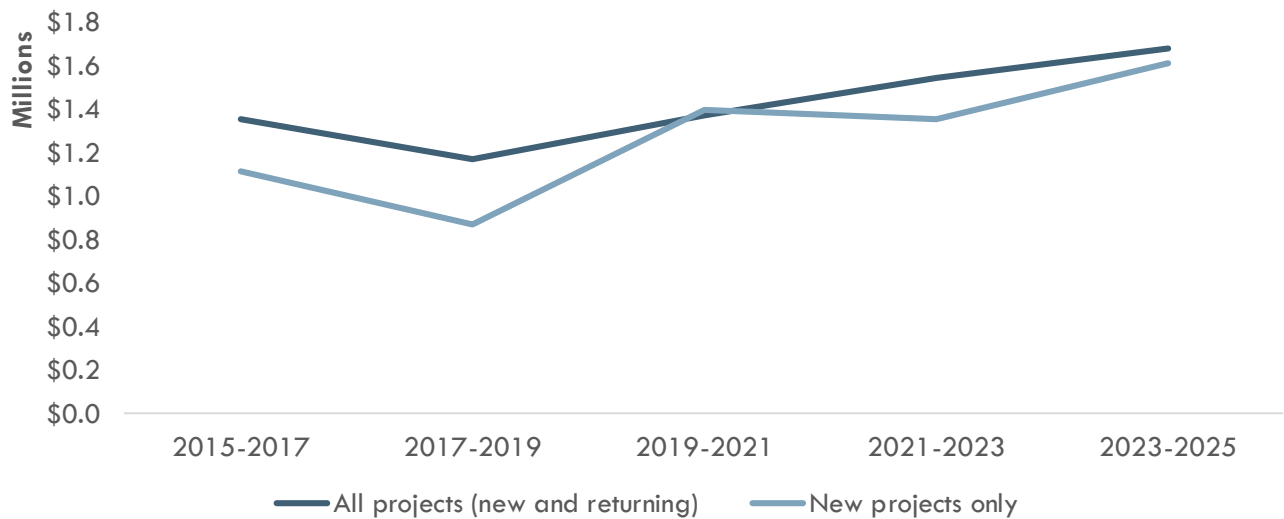
Exhibit 33 shows the total amount requested for all applications and Exhibit 34 shows the average amount requested per application, both of which have increased over the past several biennia.

Exhibit 33. Total amount requested for all applications, 2015-2025



Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

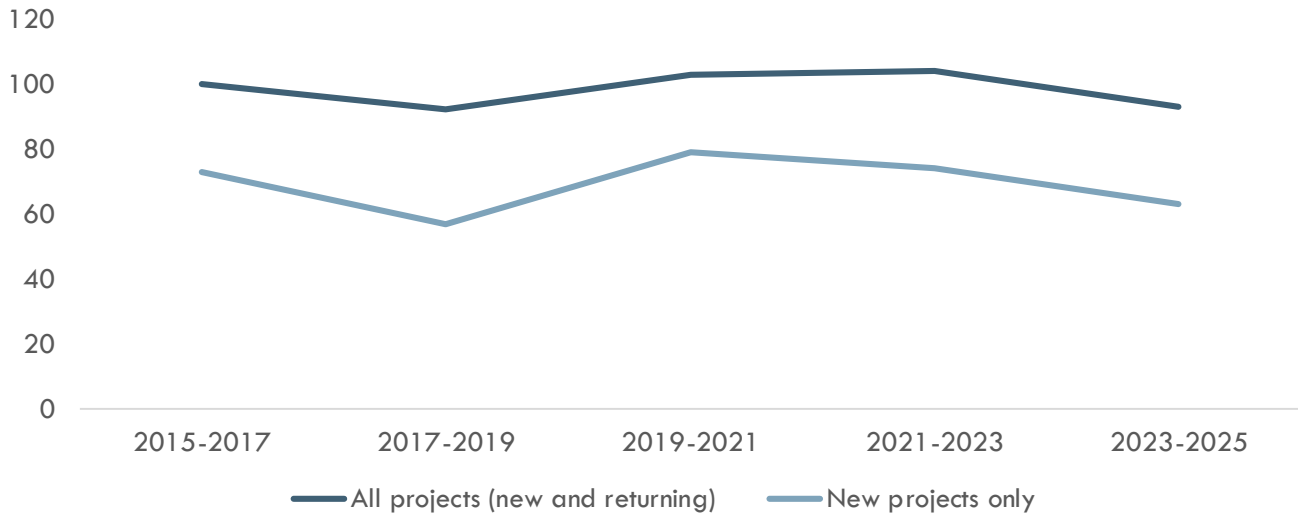
Exhibit 34. Average requested amount per application, 2015-2025



Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 35 shows the number of total applications and new applications, which decreased in 2023-2025 from a high in 2019-2021.

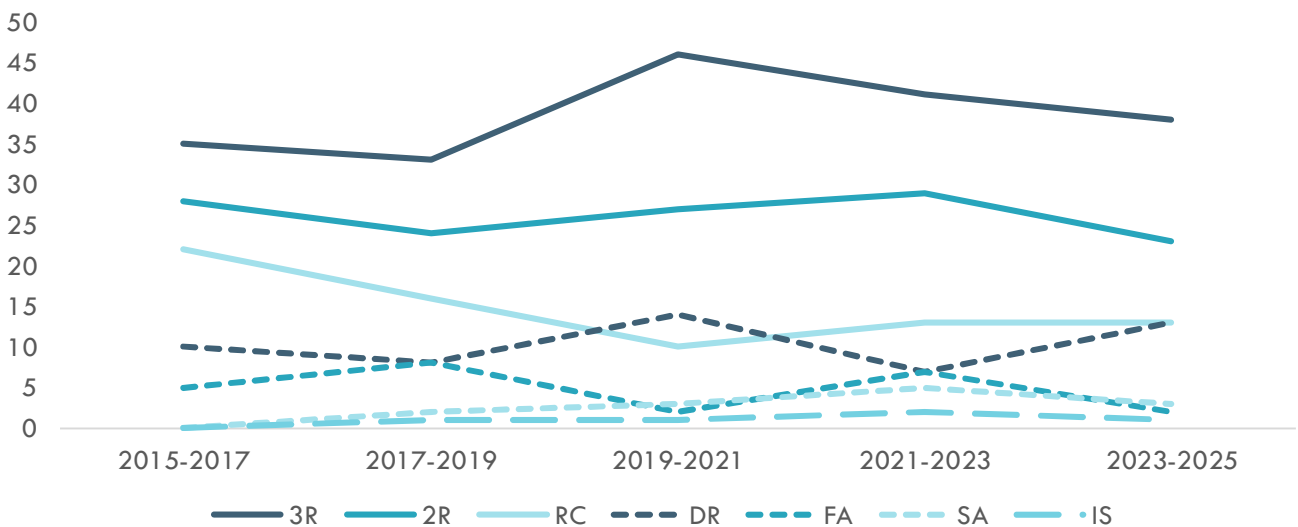
Exhibit 35. Number of applications, 2015-2025.



Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 36 shows the number of applications by project type and Exhibit 37 shows the percentage of applications by project type. Over the past several biennia, the greatest percentage of applications has been for 3R projects, followed by 2R projects. The percentage of applications for RC projects has decreased and the percentage of applications for DR projects has increased.

Exhibit 36. Number of applications by project type, 2015-2023



Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 37. Percent of applications by project type, 2015-2025

Project Type	2015-2017	2017-2019	2019-2021	2021-2023	2023-2025
3R	35%	36%	45%	39%	41%
2R	28%	26%	26%	28%	25%
RC	22%	17%	10%	13%	14%
DR	10%	9%	14%	7%	14%
FA	5%	9%	2%	7%	2%
SA	0%	2%	3%	5%	3%
IS	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 38 shows the project scores for funded projects. The scores given to funded projects remains high.

Exhibit 38. Project scores for funded projects, 2015-2025

Project Type	2015-2017	2017-2019	2019-2021	2021-2023	2023-2025
Average points for funded projects	74.12	70.43	72.67	75.84	76.09
Average points for new funded projects	72.38	63.30	73.42	70.93	72.62

Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.

Exhibit 39 shows the RATA account balance from January 2015 through December 2023. The RATA account balance is increasing. Some factors contributing to the increase are higher-than-anticipated electric vehicle registration renewal fees, investment interest from the fund balance, and a longer timeline for counties to complete projects and request reimbursement.

Exhibit 39. RATA Account Balance, 2015 to 2023



Sources: CRAB, 2024; BERK, 2024.