

Hidden in Plain Sight:

An Update on Our Agency and
Washington's Most Neglected Roads

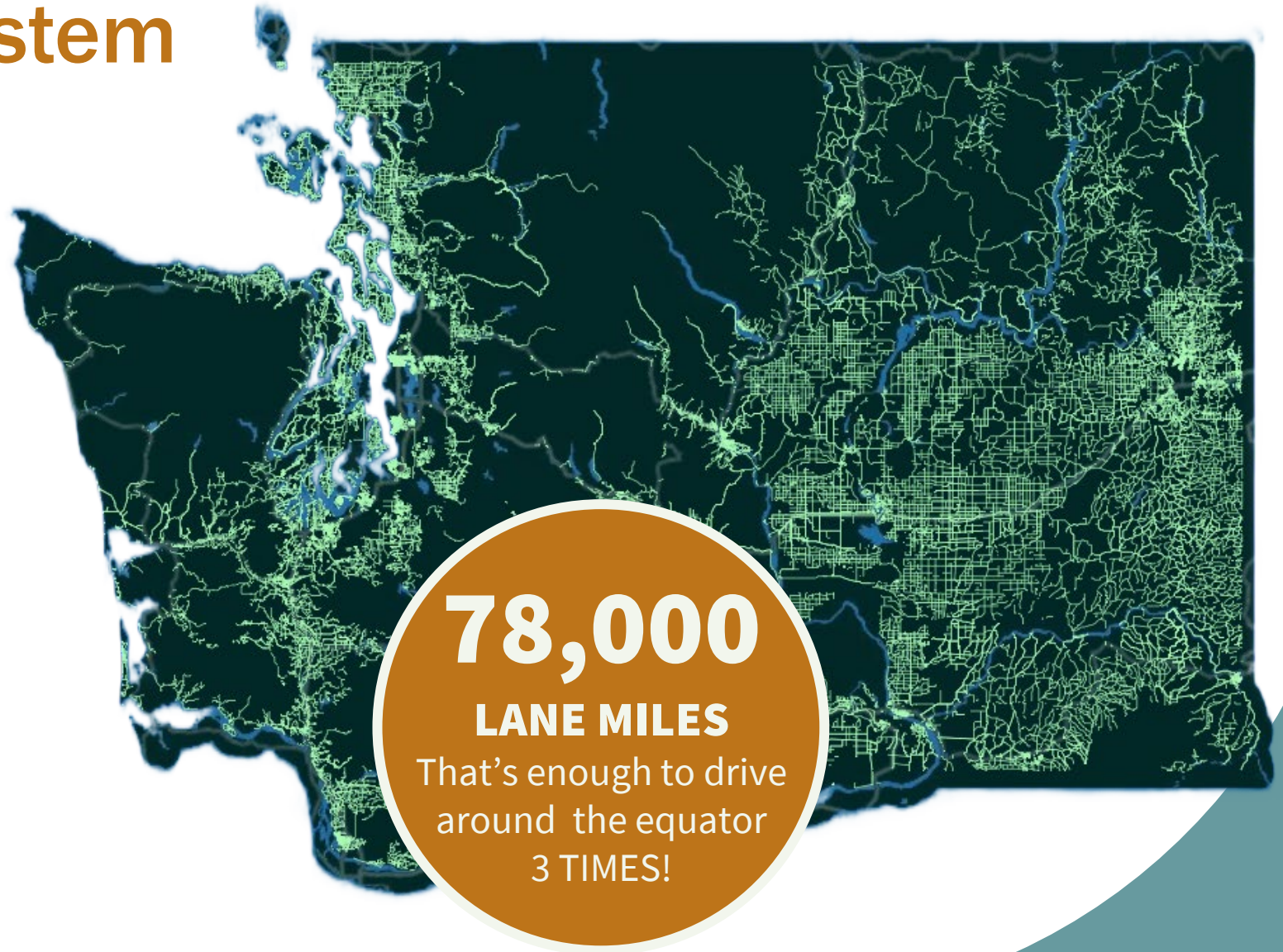
JANE WALL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



WASHINGTON STATE
COUNTY ROAD
ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Counties are an Integral Part of Washington's Transportation System

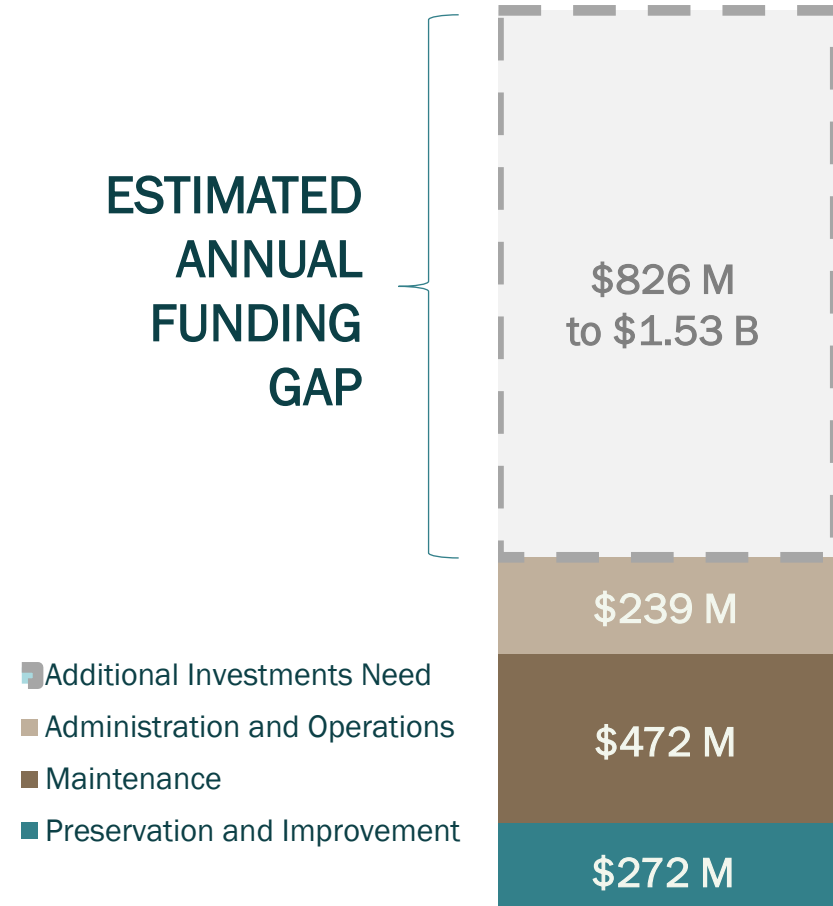
- County road departments are responsible for over **59%** of all public roads in WA
- It is a **multi-faceted network** including bridges, ferries, sidewalks, bike lanes, streetlights and other infrastructure in a diverse range of rural and urban environments



The State and Counties Have a Unique Relationship

Annual County Road Spending vs Funding Need

- Washington has always looked at counties as a partnership, even spelling out **counties' role as an "agent of the state"** in statute
- While mutually beneficial, it has shifted over time, placing **more of the burden on counties**, who have shouldered it for decades with increased road levies and reduced service levels.
- After decades of this trend away from the intended 50/50 responsibility, **counties now face a staggering funding gap**



CRAB is an Integral Part of Counties' Success

CRAB provides accountability through standards of good practice, fair administration of funding programs, and engineering and technology assistance to the 39 Washington State County Road Departments in accordance with (RCW 36.78.070).

CRAB ensures counties success and accountability, administers funding, collects and certifies statewide data and provides training to reach compliance requirements



CRAB is an Integral Part of Counties' Success

2024 was a big year for us.

We submitted a decision package for a **Bridge Load Rating Grant Program** to keep our entire state eligible for federal bridge aid.

We also worked with BERK to complete an **in-depth study of the efficiency and effectiveness of our grant programs**, including our **Rural Arterial Program (RAP)**.



What were the key findings of the study?



1. Counties face increasing costs and need additional transportation funding
2. RAP is a successful program with strong county support for maintaining it without significant changes
3. Potential sources for new funding include road-related taxes or fees, or a redistribution of existing revenue
4. **Counties face significant funding challenges not addressed by the RAP program**

An essential road and school route, Larch Lane of Pend Oreille County (District 7) may be reverted to gravel due to funding constraints.

What were the key recommendations of the study?



1. Update RAP to best meet county needs
2. Prioritize financial and grant portfolio management
3. Evaluate the desirability of establishing a design-only funding program
4. Address critical county funding gaps not covered by the Rural Arterial Program by establishing a new program that would fund local roads

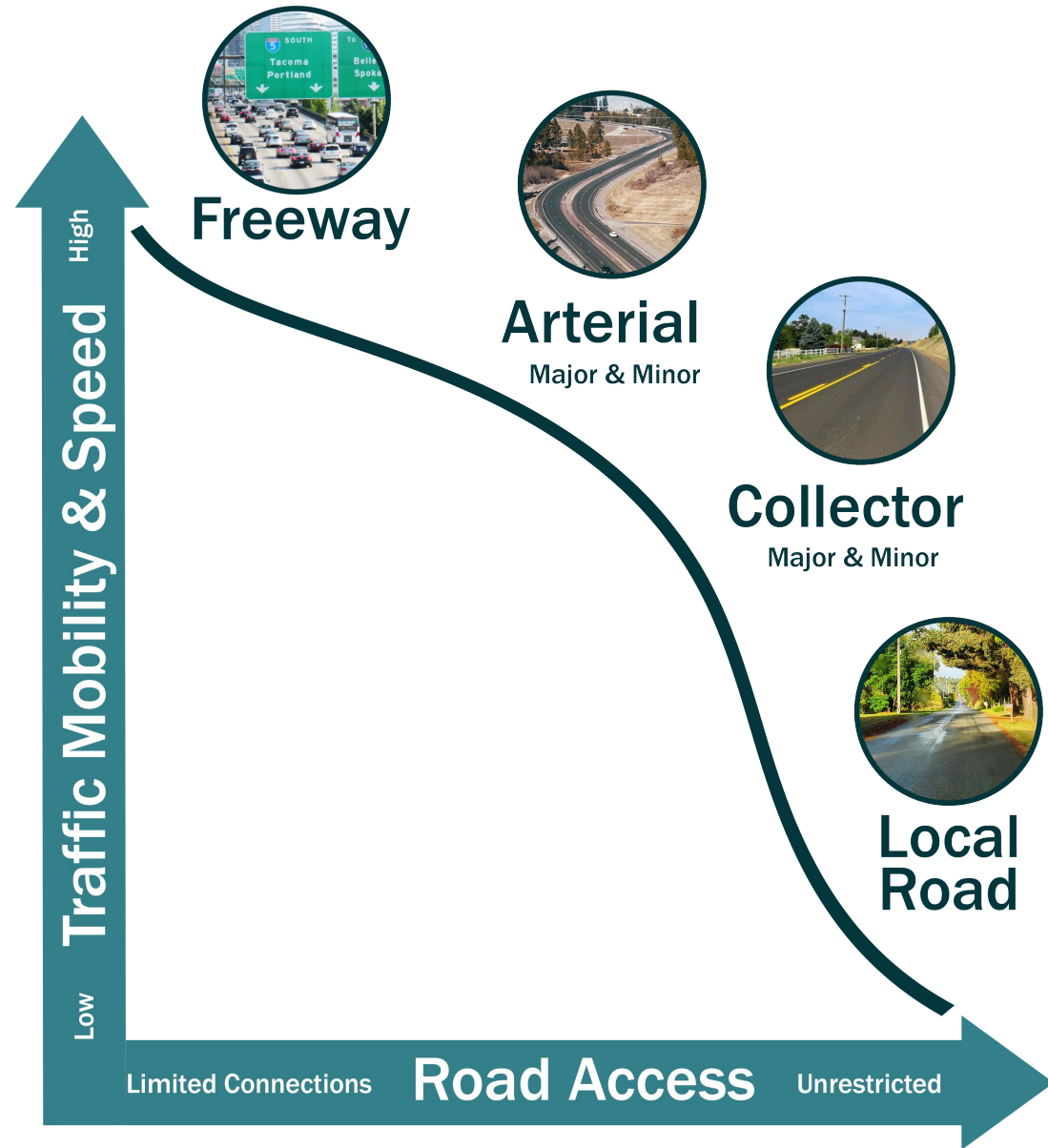
Shine Road of Jefferson County (District 24) is slowly eroding into the sea due to red tape and a lack of funding options.

Local Roads are...

...tertiary roads

...of limited mobility and high access that

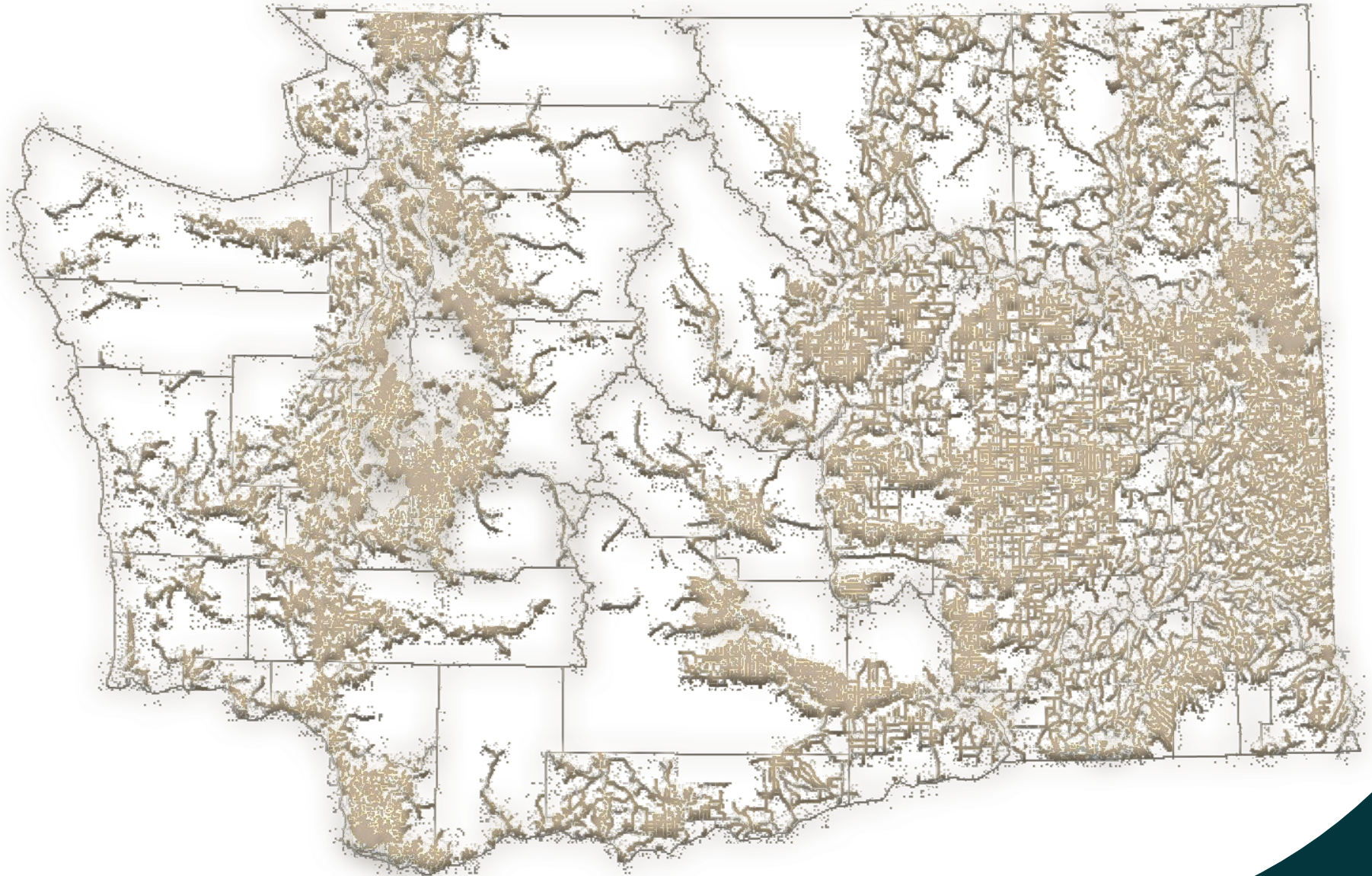
...provide primary access to residential, industrial, agricultural and commercial areas.



The County Road System

TOTAL SYSTEM
in lane miles

78,210



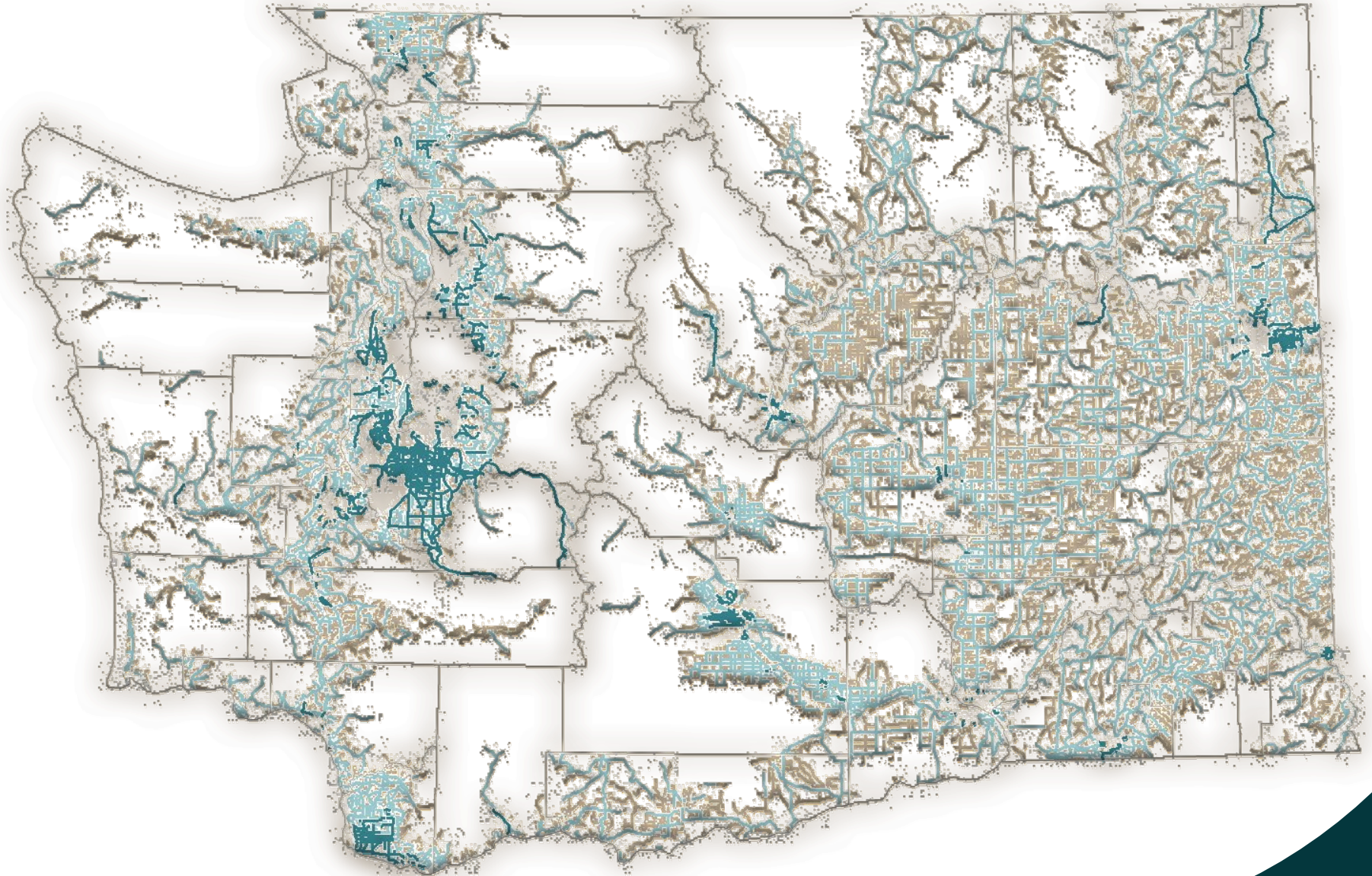
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ARTERIALS &
COLLECTORS

29,293



The County Road System

TOTAL SYSTEM
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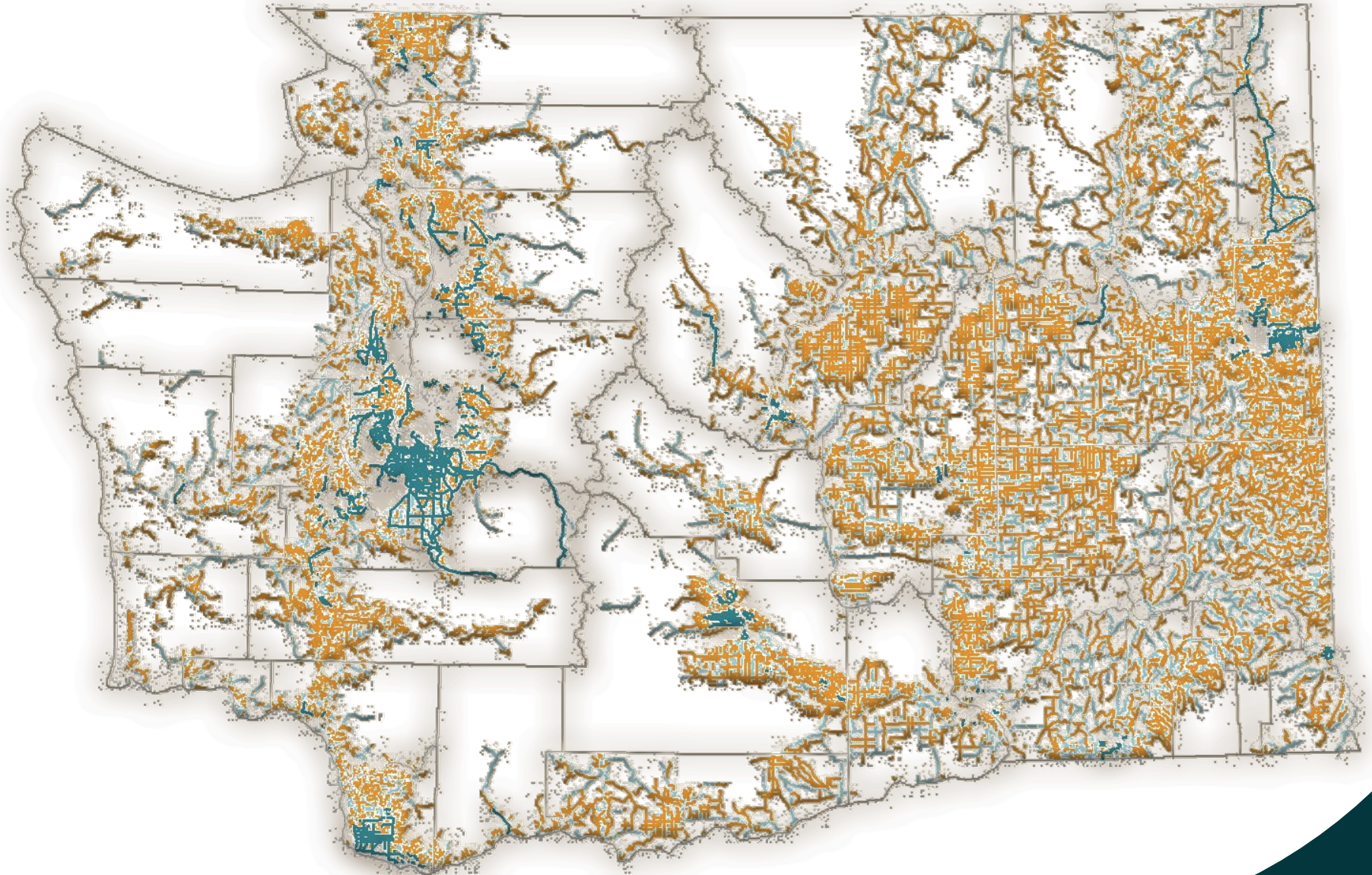
78,210

ARTERIALS &
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LOCAL ROADS

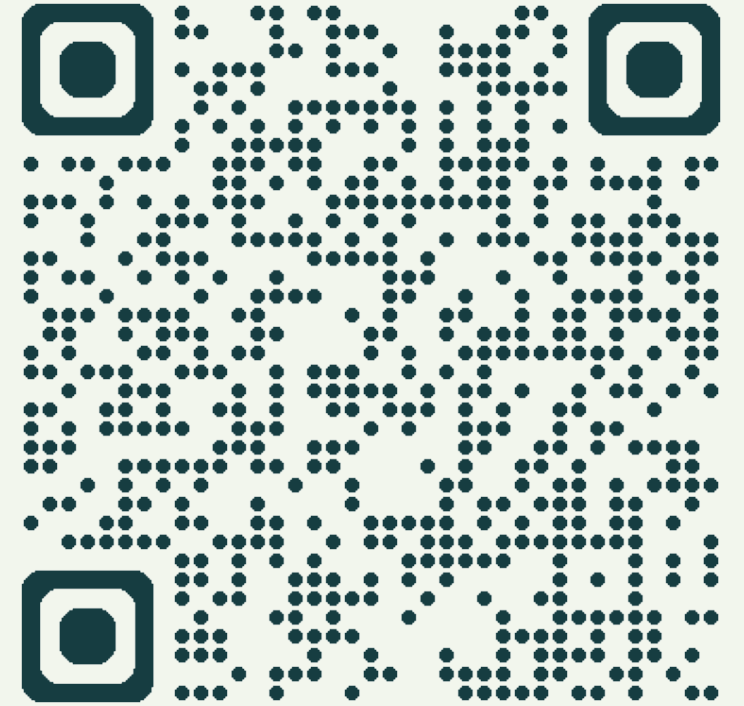
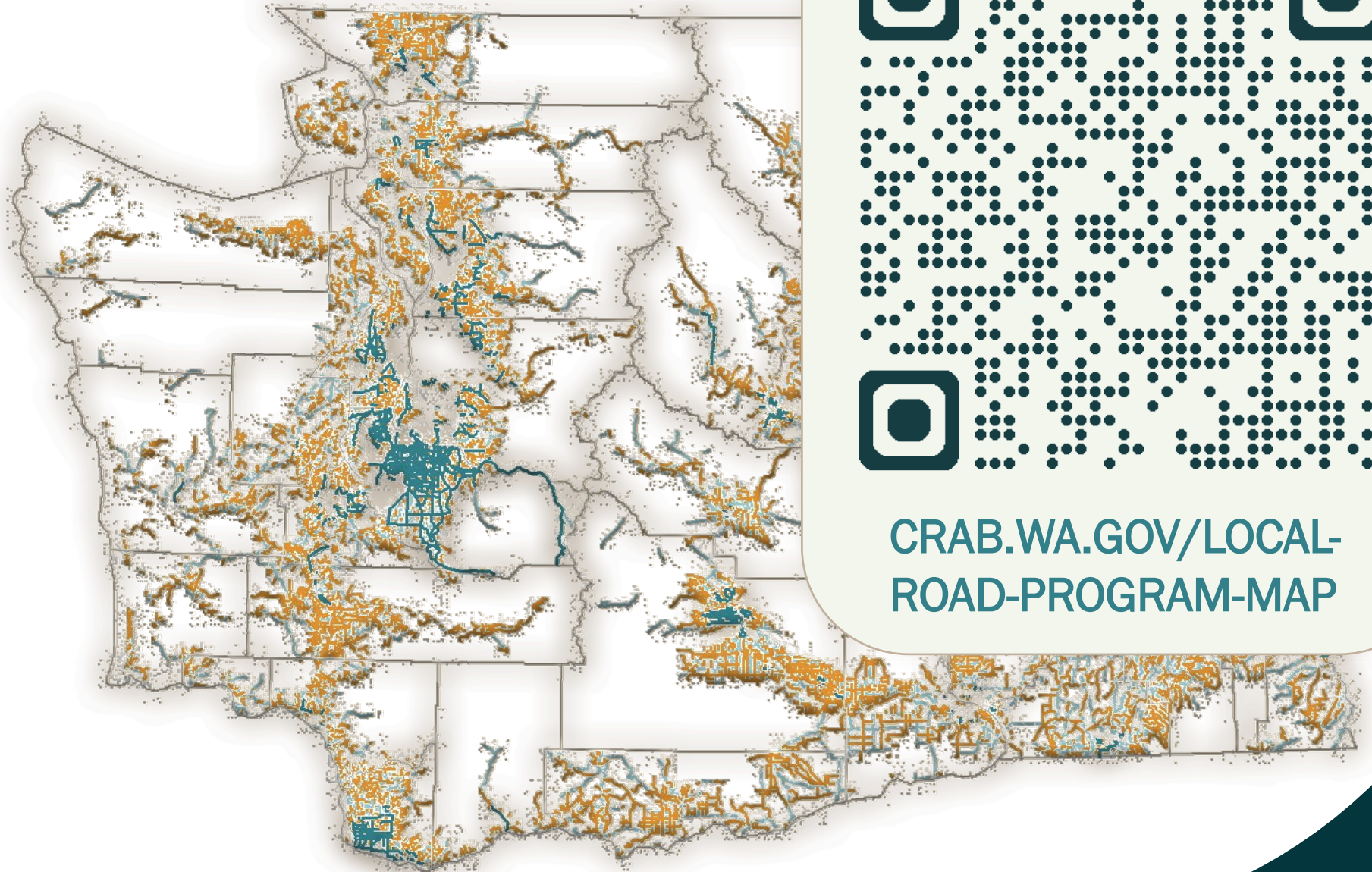
48,917



The County Road System

WHAT ABOUT
LOCAL ROADS
IN
YOUR
DISTRICT?

CHECK OUT
OUR
INTERACTIVE
MAP
TO TAKE A
LOOK!



CRAB.WA.GOV/LOCAL-ROAD-PROGRAM-MAP



LOCAL ROADS AREN'T WHERE YOU MIGHT THINK

SUNSET HIGHWAY | LINCOLN COUNTY | DISTRICT 9

At 100+ years old, *this former state highway made from concrete and rebar was forced on the county* and now serves as a farm to market route for local farmers, who complain about safety concerns and vehicle damage during freeze/thaw.



LOCAL ROADS DON'T **LOOK** THE WAY YOU MAY IMAGINE

15th AVENUE SW | KING COUNTY | DISTRICT 34

Rated at the highest WSDOT equity need and part of an Equity Priority Investment Area, this road serves critical community services and public transportation roles for low and non-income, BIPOC, immigrant, refugee, disabled and limited-English speaking populations.

LOCAL ROADS SERVE MANY ROLES



COMMERCIAL ROAD | COLUMBIA COUNTY | DISTRICT 9

Adjacent to Dayton's city lines, this narrow, urban road is heavily used by pedestrians and bicyclists. *Children from the overburdened surrounding community often walk the train tracks because it is the SAFER option.*

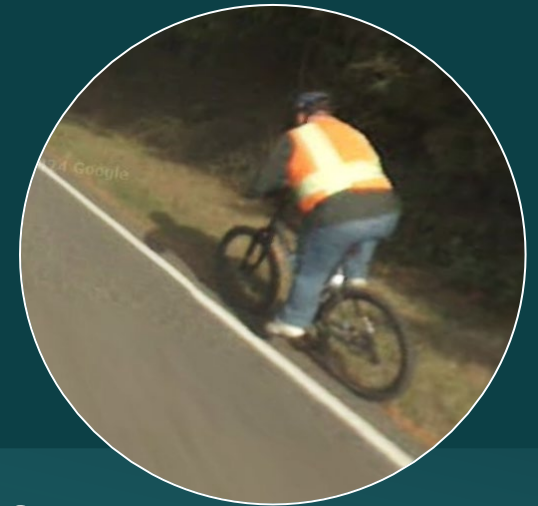


LOCAL ROADS HAVE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS

GARDEN OF EDEN ROAD | SKAGIT COUNTY | DISTRICT 39

- Garden of Eden Road *has been covered with a steel plate for 5 years* because of funding gaps in fish passage (wrong type of fish), location just outside growth area (zoned rural) and having a local road classification.

LOCAL ROADS HAVE SERIOUS SAFETY NEEDS



NOLTE ROAD | WHATCOM COUNTY | DISTRICT 42

Nolte Road is a key *access route to a large area of agriculture and dairy production, including access to the levy system to the Nooksack River and to the City of Everson during flooding events* but has a failing base, leading to severe sagging, humps, cracking and patching.



LOCAL ROADS ARE CRITICAL FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

SOUTH BEND PALIX ROAD | PACIFIC COUNTY | DISTRICT 19

The 8.7 mile long South Bend Palix Road is an *emergency flooding and tsunami route*, detour route for Hwy 101 and needs a bridge reconstruction.



LOCAL ROADS ARE A KEY PART OF OUR ECONOMY

STEELE STREET | PIERCE COUNTY | DISTRICT 28

Adjacent to the JBLM airfield, Steele Street serves as **the only access to multiple small businesses, manufacturers and an interstate trucking company**. It is severely cracked and damaged road with an average PCI score of 29 on a 1-100 scale.

What would a solution look like?



- A competitive grant program with investments being driven to the highest need projects.
- Available to **ALL 39 counties**.
- Eligible projects would include **2R, 3R, reconstruction, bridge replacement, fish passage barriers and pedestrian facilities**.
- Will be implemented using a **phased-in approach** to recognize the realities of establishing a new program.

With 100 year old broken concrete panels covered in broken asphalt patches, Dupont Road *is a former state highway given to Cowlitz County (District 20) to maintain without funding* when I-5 was constructed.

What would the benefits of the program be?



- **Critical funding** for otherwise cost-prohibitive projects
- Administered by CRAB, it would be **the most efficient and streamlined way to invest in local roads**
- **Freeing up stretched county funds** for other priorities
- Ensuring necessary **access for critical county services, first responders and utilities**
- **Reducing fatalities and serious injury collisions on county roads**

A primary escape route for Skokomish Valley during flooding and fire, Eells Hill Road in Mason County (District 35) needs significant repair.

Here's Where **YOU** Come In



- Acknowledge and invest in the unique relationship that exists between the state and counties, who are defined as “an agent of the state” in statute.
- **Fill the funding gap.** Support the creation of this critical program and provide funding that will invest in ONE THIRD of Washington’s road system.

While *sidewalk grants* are available for kids walking to school, they cannot **start** until Broody Street can be rebuilt to code in Chelan County (District 8).



WASHINGTON STATE
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