



Measuring Transportation Investments: The Road to Results

Washington is one of 13 states leading the way in having the essential tools—goals, performance measures and data—needed to help decision makers choose more cost-effective transportation funding and policy options.

The state is a leader in measuring its transportation system's progress in advancing five key policy goals, including jobs and commerce and mobility. For example, it produces meaningful data about congestion, and this has shown results: Between 2007 and 2009, Washington reduced the estimated statewide cost of traffic delay by 21 percent. In the early 2000s, the state began scoring potential transportation projects according to projected impact per dollar spent. This approach may have contributed to the legislature's willingness to allow the state to sell gas tax-backed bonds in 2003 and 2005. Washington also tries to assess its performance toward goals ranging from mobility to safety in terms of return on investment based on the social costs of accidents and delay.

\$2.71 BILLION The state spent an estimated \$2.71 billion on transportation in fiscal year 2010.*

HOW IS THE STATE DOING?

Does it have the tools to ensure transportation spending and policy decisions are advancing six key goals?

- Leading the Way
- Mixed Results
- Trailing Behind

- SAFETY
- JOBS & COMMERCE
- MOBILITY
- ACCESS
- ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
- INFRASTRUCTURE PRESERVATION
- OVERALL

*National Association of State Budget Officers State Expenditure Report 2010.

METHODOLOGY: States were given one of three ratings—leading the way, showing mixed results or trailing behind—based on whether they have the goals, performance measures and data needed to help decision makers ensure their surface transportation systems are advancing six key goals. The ratings are based on 10 criteria. Each state was rated for its performance in each of the six goal areas and given an overall rating.

SOURCES: Pew Center on the States interview with Pat Morin, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), December 20, 2010; WSDOT, The Gray Notebook, GNB 39, November 16, 2010, 8–9, <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/1A03E17D-697F-4FD9-B612-BC4360DC721C/0/GrayNotebookSep10.pdf>; Bremmer and Bryan, "Making the Case for Funding Using Performance Management," Transportation Research Record, No. 2079, 2008, 146-153; WSDOT GNB 38, August 25, 2010, 9–10, <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/A70E957B-8230-4934-9600-758B88DC0719/0/GrayNotebookJun10.pdf>; WSDOT, "Incident Response Strategic Initiatives," November 17, 2007. Sources accessed April 2011.