



**King County**  
**Department of Local Services**  
**Road Services Division**

June 2nd, 2025



**Leon Richardson**

Department of Local Services Director



**Tricia Davis**

Road Services Division Director



# Connecting Communities to a Broader Regional Road Network

## Unincorporated King County Roads

- County roads and bridges keep people, goods, and utilities moving.
- Connectivity depends on big highways and small, overlooked roads and infrastructure.
- **Unincorporated King County Network:**
  - ~1500 miles of county roads
  - 188 bridges
    - Co-located with 200+ regional utilities
  - 400+ employees
  - 6 regional maintenance facilities

If the road miles of unincorporated King County were laid end-to-end they would stretch from Mexico to the Canadian border and beyond.



Issaquah-Hobart Rd SE at SE 132 Way



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**"The only County fund  
in worse financial shape  
than the General Fund  
is the Roads Fund"**

Dwight Dively

Office of Performance Management and Budget Director



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# King County Road Funding Challenge

*Transportation needs continue to greatly out pace available resources for a road and bridge system in decline.*

## Impact of the Growth Management Act

- Small tax base relative to the size and age of our unincorporated road network system.
- GMA annexations disproportionately removed the tax base relative to road assets.
- Regional population growth increases traffic volume and congestion—the crumbling road infrastructure cannot meet demand.

## Washington's Tax Structure

- Washington's tax system limits County's ability to leverage revenue sources to resolve its funding crisis.
- Property tax growth is capped at 1%.
- Gas tax revenues are flat.



Crews prepare for the next phase of Redmond Ridge roundabout construction at NE Alder Crest Dr.



# King County Road Funding Challenge

*Transportation needs continue to greatly out pace available resources for a road and bridge system in decline.*



NE Tolt Hill Rd closed due to flooding

- Significantly **rising construction costs** due to supply chain issues, labor shortages, and materials costs.
- Infrastructure is well-past the end of its designed life, resulting in deteriorating asset conditions.
- Deferring maintenance leads to an **exponential increase in the cost to repair** roads in the future.
- Roads faces an **annual funding gap of more than \$200 million**.
- Nearly **\$2.5 billion in infrastructure needs** forecast for next 20 years (2024 Transportation Needs Report).
- Even with full use of the forecasted revenue generated by a 0.1% sales and use tax, the Roads Division would still face an annual funding shortfall to meet all infrastructure needs.

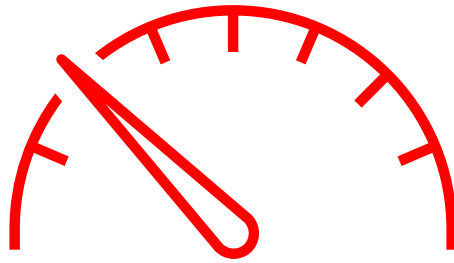


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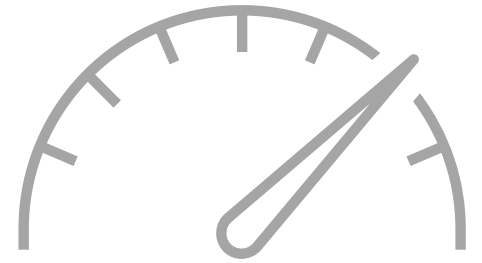
# Dramatic Program Cuts Are Imminent Without a New Funding Source



**Operational  
Adjustments**  
(2009-present)



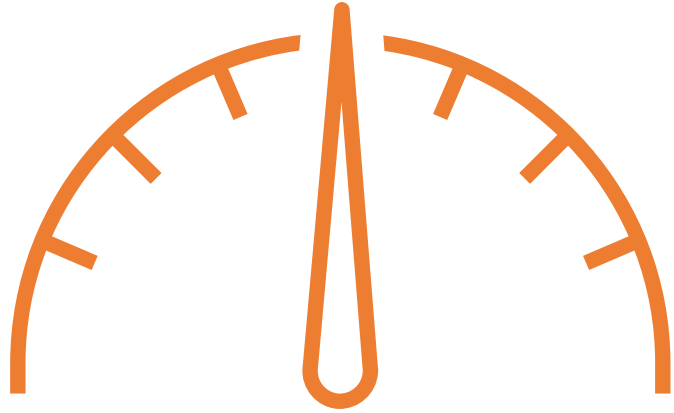
**Critical Cuts and Collapse of  
Capital Program without a  
New Funding Source**  
(2026-2029)



**Return to Stable  
Operations with a  
Sales and Use Tax**  
(future)



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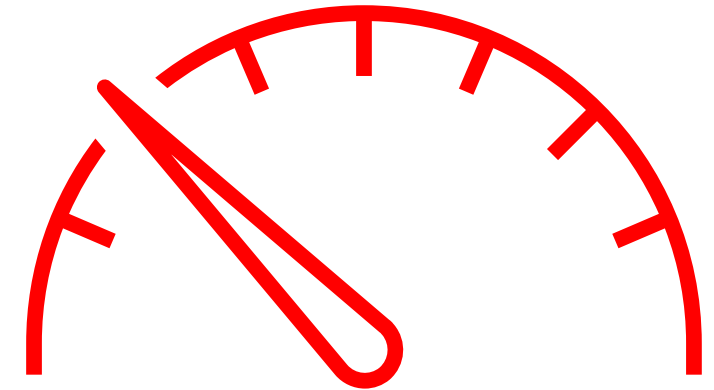
## Operational Adjustments (2009-present)

- 40% reduction in staff (2008-2016)
- Reduction in services (2008-2014)
- Aggressive pursuit of grant funding
  - Grant awards 2019 through present  
**\$120+ million; 54 grants**
  - **80% of grant** dollars are **federally funded**
- Over 70% of Roads capital funding is variable and permission based.
- Dependence on grants and local funds often carry regulatory and compliance obligations that drive up project costs and extend timelines.



## Eliminated or Reduced Programs in 2026-2027

- ✗ High Risk Paving Program: Leads to higher lifecycle costs, user delays, and load restrictions
- ✗ Chip Seal Construction Contract: Accelerates roadway decline, raises future reconstruction costs
- ✗ Bridge Rail Program: 49 bridges have outdated, non-compliant railings
- ✗ West Snoqualmie Valley/Woodinville Intersection Project: Delays safety, flood control, stormwater, and habitat benefits. Reduces competitiveness for future grant funding.
- ✗ High Collision Safety Program: Delay safety interventions at high collision locations.



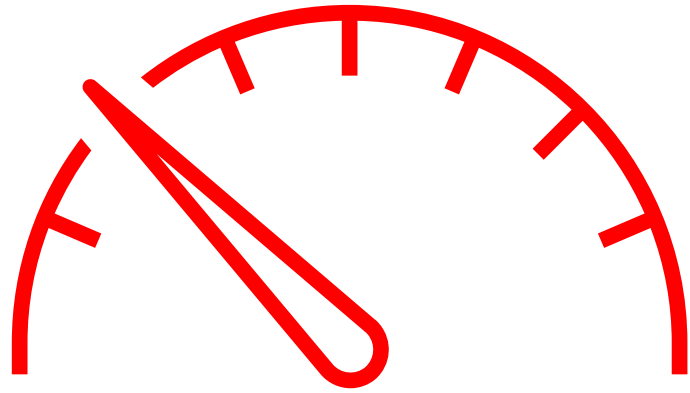
**Critical Cuts and Collapse of  
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**Critical Cuts and Collapse of  
Capital Program without a  
New Funding Source  
(2026-2029)**

## Roads Fund Outlook

2026-2027

- Downsizing fleet, gutting training programs, and delaying equipment replacement.
- Reducing capital project and program delivery.
- Draining reserve funds.

2028-2029

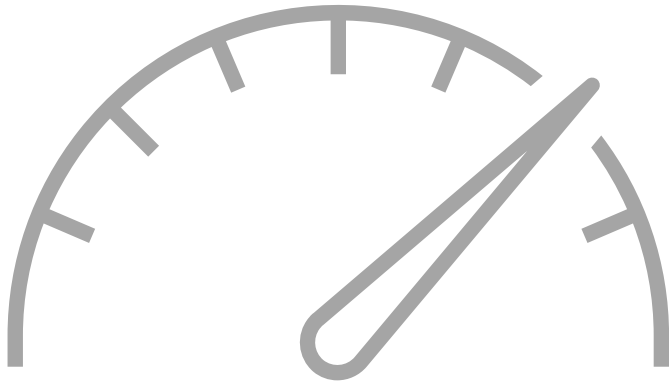
- Elimination of capital program.
- Further reduction in staff and maintenance services.

### Systemwide Impacts

- Lost opportunities to pursue grants due to lack of local match funding.
- Increased risk exposure across the road network.



# New Funding Would Help Keep Roads Open and Safe for All



Return to Stable  
Operations with a  
Sales and Use Tax  
(future)



Safety & Intersection Improvements



Bridge Replacements



Drainage & Flood Resilience



Pavement Preservation



ADA Barrier Removal



Facility Upgrades



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# Prioritizing Safety and Life-Saving Intersection Improvements

*Focus on enhancing intersection safety through traffic safety measures.*

## Proven Safety Measures

- Sightline improvements
- Traffic signals
- Re-channelization (striping)
- Roundabouts

## Rising Traffic Fatalities Demand Action

- Urgent need for safety upgrades.
- Inaction costs lives and impacts families through preventable accidents.
- Targeted funding can reduce human error risks and lower serious injury and fatality rates.

### Example Projects:

- NE Woodinville-Duvall Rd & West Snoqualmie Valley Rd
- Issaquah Hobart Rd SE & SE May Valley Rd
- SE Kent-Kangley Rd & Landsburg Rd SE



Roads installed 13 traffic calming “islands” on Renton Ave to calm traffic and prevent unsafe passing



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# Urgent Replacements for Aging Short Span Bridges

*Addressing the urgent need to replace timber bridges that pose risks of structural failure and environmental impact.*



Bear Creek Bridge (9333A) wingwall planks are rotten and failing.

- Some bridges provide sole access to rural communities.
- There is no current funding source for “short span” (less than 20’ long) bridge replacements.
- Average age of timber bridges is 69 years (50-year service life).
- Reduce toxic creosote-treated timber, improving environmental health in streams and waterways.

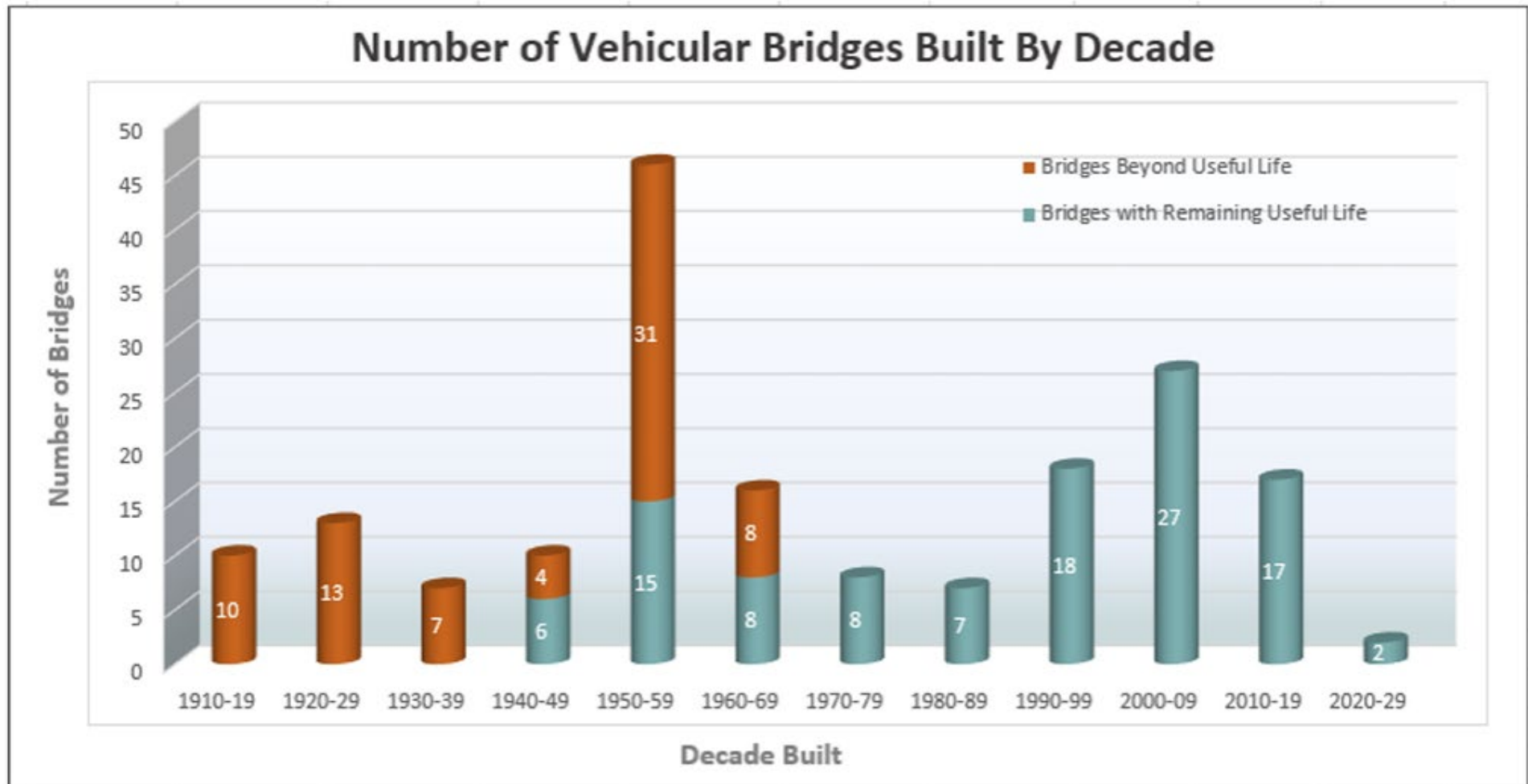
## **Example Projects:**

- Bear Creek Bridge (9333A)
- Green Valley Road Bridge (3020)
- West Snoqualmie River Road Bridge (916A)



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# We Are Driving on a System that was Built for the Last Century



# Advancing Accessibility by Removing ADA Barriers

Sidewalks



**335 miles**

Curb Ramps



**5,200+**

Crosswalks



**2,600+**

Pushbuttons



**436**

**Total Estimated Need: \$551 million**  
**Annual Funding Available<sup>1</sup>: \$150,000**

1. Roads typically completes \$100,000 - \$200,000 of ADA improvements annually as incidental elements of larger capital projects and maintenance programs. These improvements may address low, medium, or high priority barriers based on the location of the larger project or program and are not included in the Annual Funding amount above.



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# Preserve Pavement to Safeguard Our Roads from Deterioration

*Consistent funding for road overlay and chip seal programs to maintain the unincorporated road network and avoid more expensive reconstruction.*

- Prevent costly reconstruction
- Keeps roads smoother and reduces wear on vehicles
- Avoids speed restrictions and road closures due to degradation
- Arterial roads in good/excellent condition:
  - 79% in 2004 → 58% today
- Local access roads in good/excellent condition:
  - 77% in 2004 → 46% today
- At the current rate of investment, it would take **400+ years to resurface the full network.**

## Example Projects:

- Overlay of 12 miles/year on most critical routes and chip seal of 16 miles/year

15th Ave SW carries the RapidRide H Line through urban King County



15th Avenue SW has a pavement condition is rated as a 0/100. This transit route in urban UKC was last paved in 1996.



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# Safeguard Critical Infrastructure from the Growing Risk of Extreme Weather

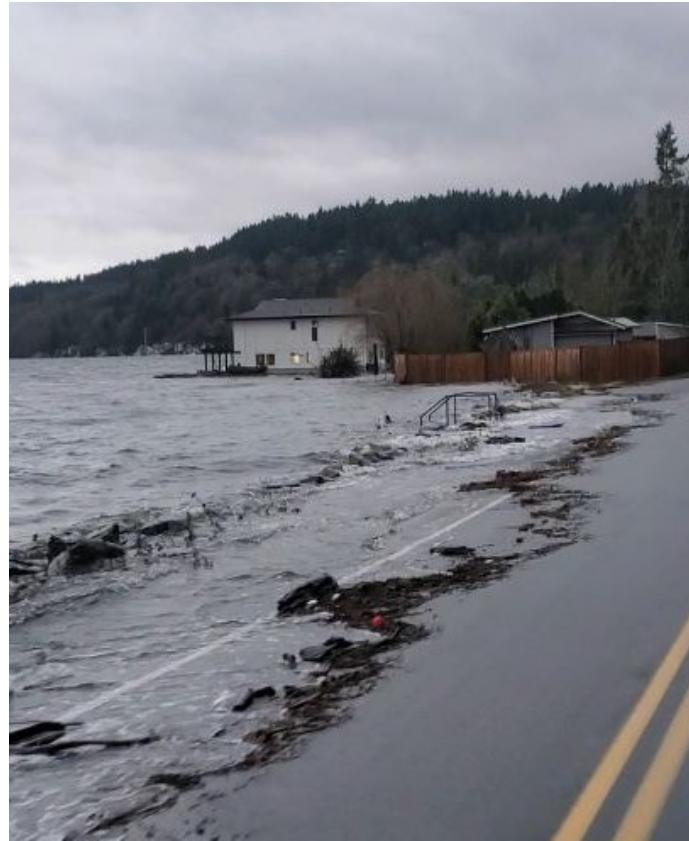
*Improving road resilience to climate change impacts such as flooding, landslides, and extreme weather events.*

## Increased Climate Threats

- Flooding, landslides, storms, and extreme heat are damaging roads more frequently.
- Vulnerable corridors require proactive investment to maintain safety and connectivity.
- Acting now prevents costly repairs and closures and promotes reliable access for residents, commuters, and emergency services.

## Example Projects:

- Vashon and Maury Islands connection study and construction.
- Snoqualmie Cross Valley Study and construction.

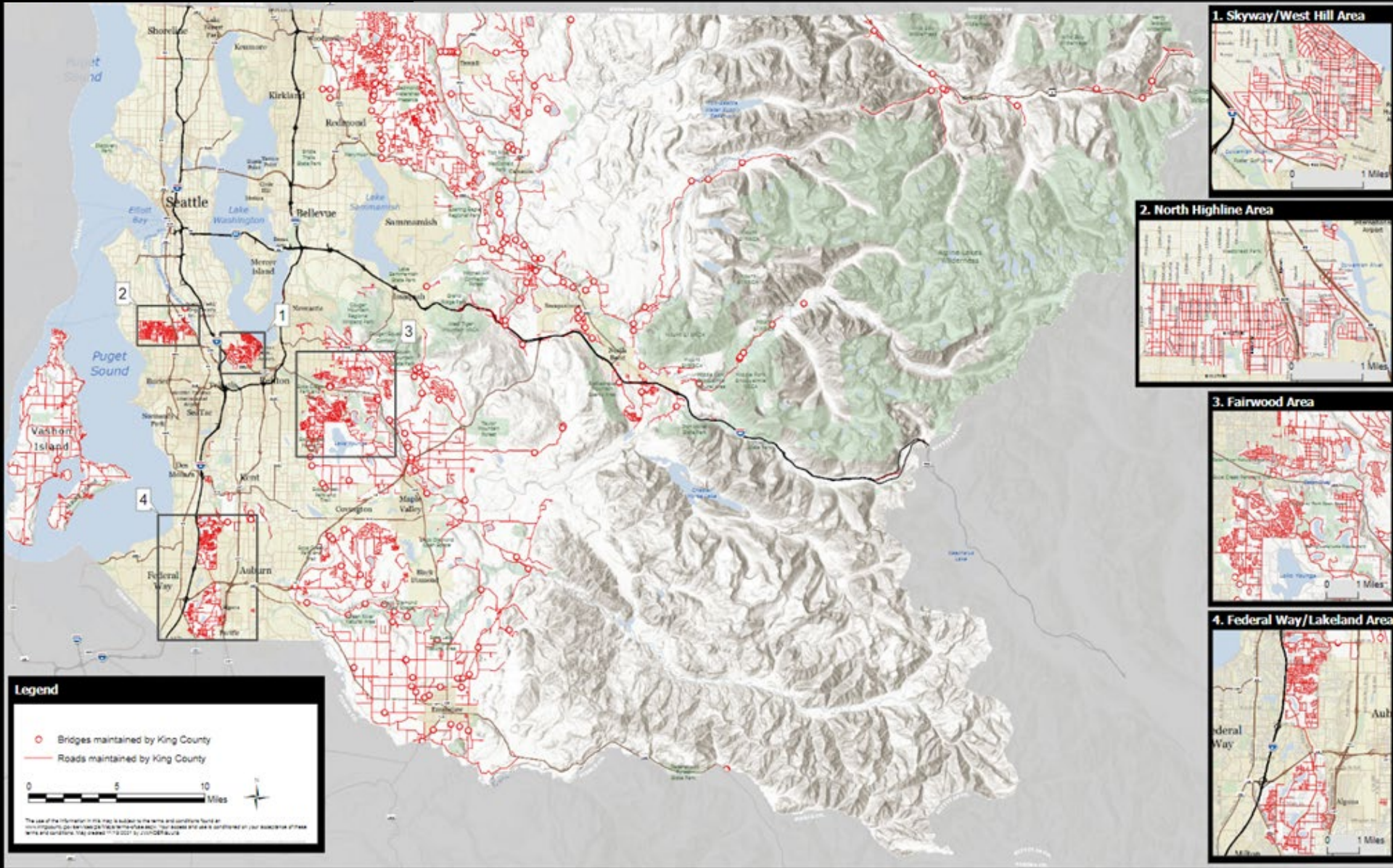


Flooding on Vashon Highway Near 115<sup>th</sup> Ave SW (left) and Portage Way SW and SW Quartermaster Drive (right)



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# King County Road Network



- ~1500 miles of county roads.
- Rebuilding after failure costs more than routine maintenance.
- Emergency access and public safety are increasingly at risk.
- Reliable transportation networks need unified regional support.
- Roads connect us all.

