

**King County**

Department of Local Services

*We're here for you.*

# Connecting Communities to a Broader Regional Road Network

## Unincorporated King County Roads

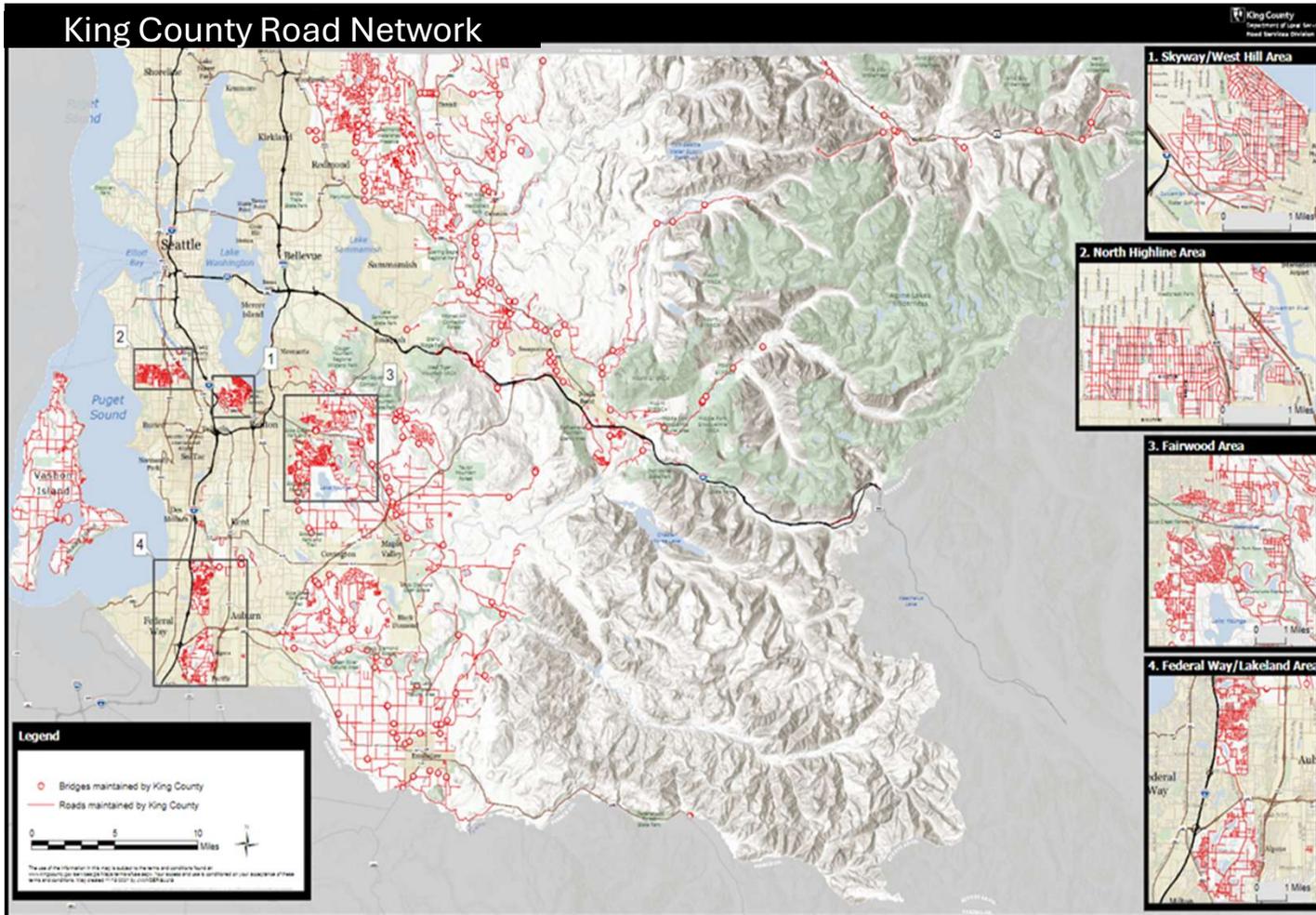
- County roads and bridges keep people, goods, and utilities moving.
- Connectivity depends on big highways and small, overlooked roads and infrastructure.
- **Unincorporated King County Network:**
  - ~1500 miles of county roads
  - 193 bridges
    - Co-located with 200+ regional utilities
  - 400+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

# 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.

# King County Road Funding Challenge

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



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

## 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.



# King County Road Funding Challenge

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



NE 80<sup>th</sup> Ave 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.

# The 2026–2027 Budget Required Deep Program Reductions and Eliminations

- Downsizing fleet, gutting training programs, and delaying equipment replacement, and draining reserve funds.
- Reducing capital project and program delivery. Eliminated or reduced programs:
  - ✗ 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.

December 2025 \$10+ million for 20+ storm recovery capital projects; damage assessments are ongoing and expected to increase.

## No New Major Road and Bridge Projects after 2028-2029 Without New Funding

- Fewer first responder crews: slower, less reliable response to storms, flooding, landslides, and safety hazards.
- Bridge repairs and replacements delayed or canceled: more closures, weight limits, and detours. Disrupted emergency response, school routes, and local businesses.
- No new intersection or traffic safety projects: higher risk of crashes and injuries for drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and other roadway users.
- Missed grant funding: no local match means we forfeit state and federal dollars.



NE Tolt Hill Rd closed due to flooding

# Chronic Underfunding Erodes Operational Readiness and Increases Emergency Response Risks



King County Road Services Special Operations crews filled and loaded Hescos and Super Sacks with sand to combat flooding in Pacific, Wash.

- 2025 storm event **severed access, isolated residents, and drove emergency repairs**, straining an already overextended Roads Fund.
- **\$10+ million** for **20+ storm recovery capital projects**; damage assessments are ongoing and expected to increase.
- **Quick Response funding totals \$6 million**, leaving at least **\$4 million** in known storm recovery needs unfunded.
- FEMA reimbursement is **uncertain**.
- Roads maintenance **crews are essential** during storms and floods. Staffing cuts over the past two decades force heavy reliance on overtime and risks worker fatigue during emergency response.
- Without additional funding, the County remains **vulnerable to future storm, snow, or seismic events**.

# SE Middle Fork Road



Landslide threatens sole access and recreational corridor. Roadway has dropped ~1 foot. Permanent repair cost still under assessment. The road is currently restricted to one lane only.

# Baring Bridge (NE Index Creek Rd)



Severely load limited; sole access for ~170 properties. Temporary bridge estimated at \$5M.

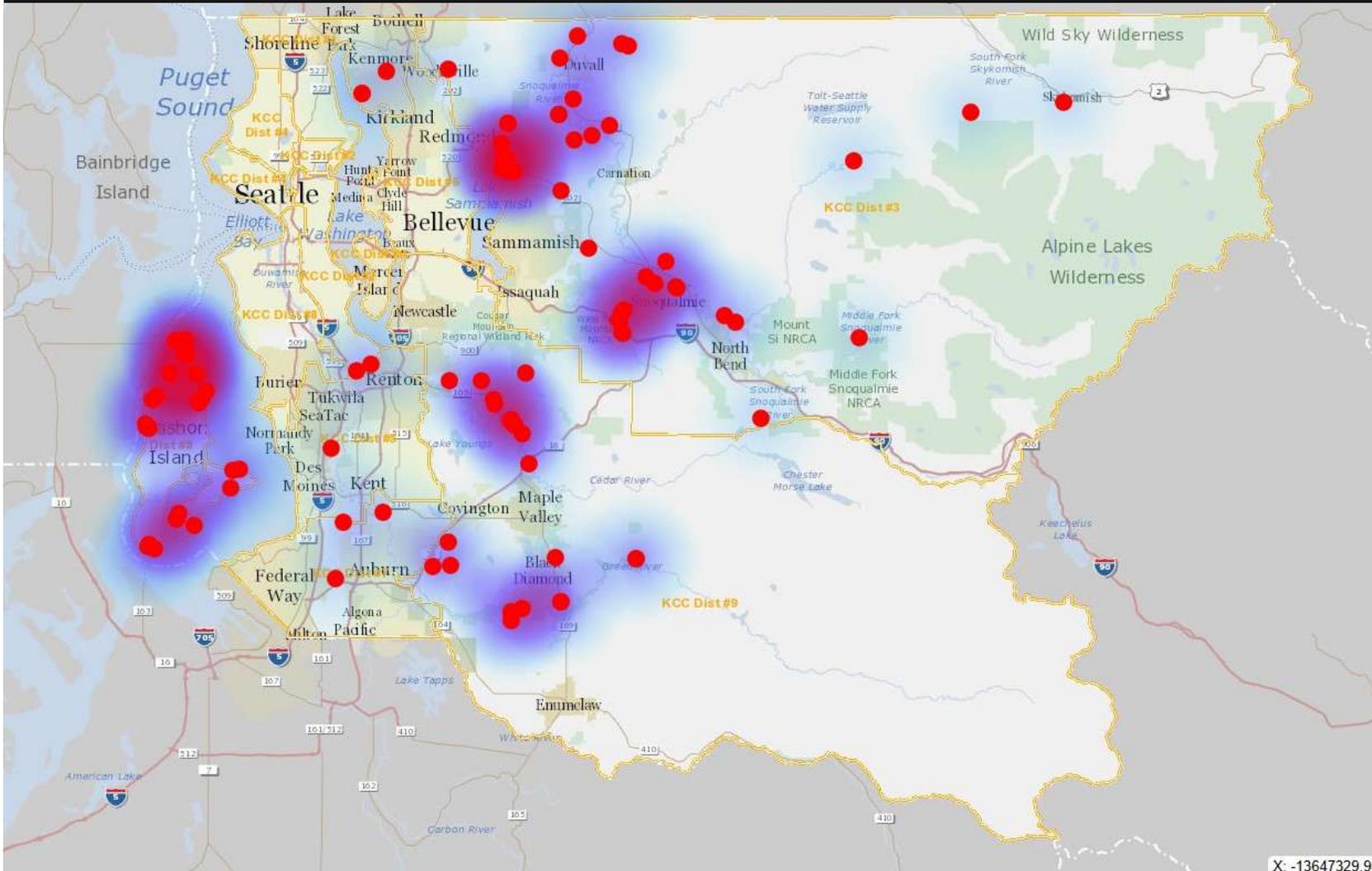
# SE Edgewick Road



Road failure cut off access to 15 properties. Full reconstruction and drainage replacement estimated at ~\$1M.

# Map of King County Road Services Division Landslide Project Sites

Map Updated February 2026



# 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

# 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.

# Urgent Replacements for Aging Short Span Bridges

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



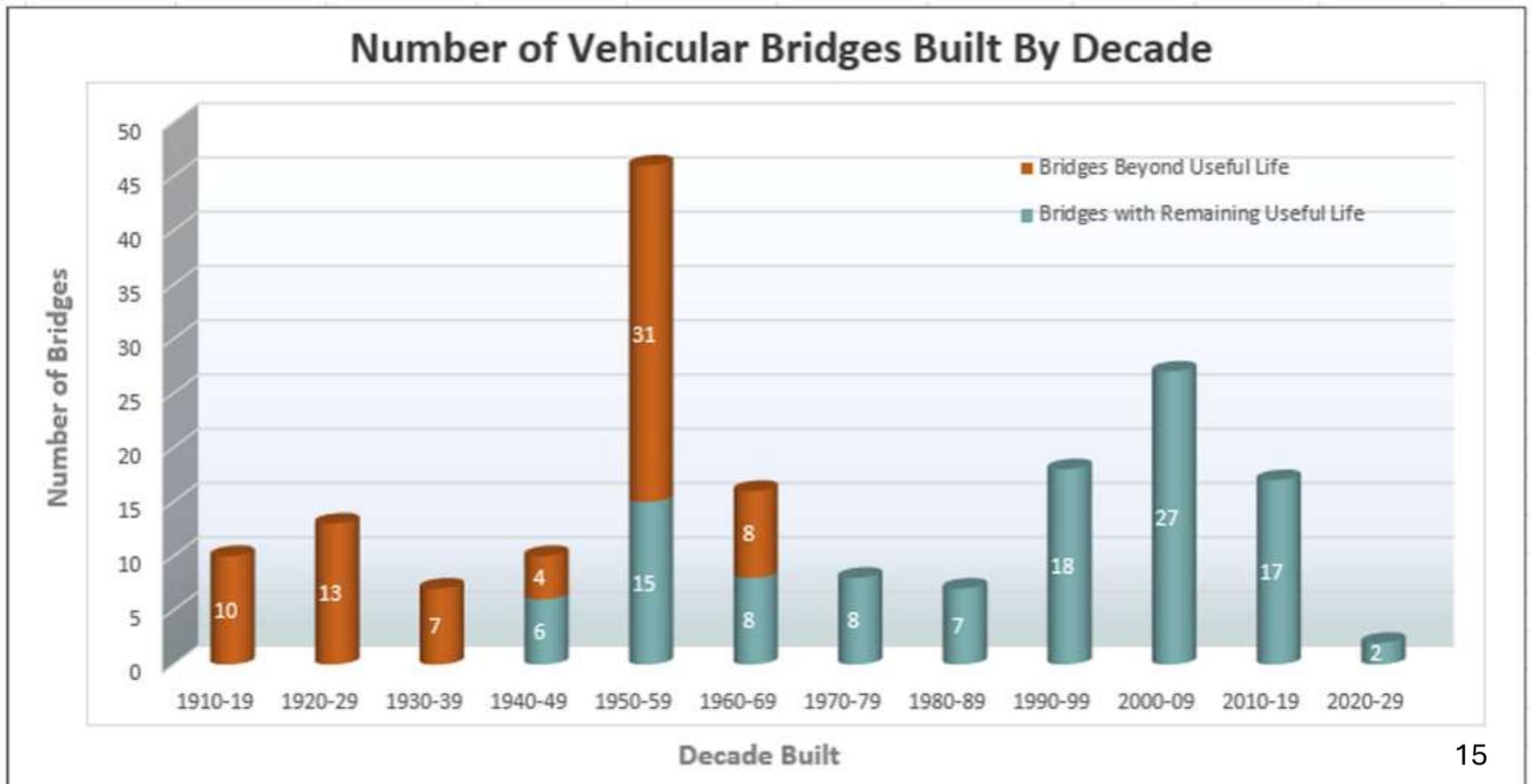
Bear Creek Bridge (9333A) wingwall planks are rotten and failing.

- 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)

# 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.

# 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)