West Virginia Counties

State Summary of Transportation Funding and Finance

## **Transportation and Financial Authority:**

Counties have authority to:

• Issue bonds following a bond election to pay for any public transportation terminal or county parking facility.

Counties do not have authority to:

• Levy sales or use taxes.

• Levy franchise taxes or fees.

• Levy any noteworthy license taxes not already listed.

Mandated/Authorized Transportation Services:

• County commissioners are charged with control of all roads, bridges, ferries, and other rights-of-way within the jurisdiction of the county. This includes construction and maintenance, as well as promulgating rules and regulations about using county roads.

**•** The county also has the authority to construct, maintain, and operate county parking facilities and transportation terminals for public transportation.

## **Funding Sources for County Transportation Projects:**

Counties Receive:

• Local property tax.

## **Challenges in Funding and Financing Transportation Projects:**

• The primary problem facing highways is revenue that has been stagnant at about $1 billion since 1999, while needs and construction costs have increased.

• Highways are funded through gasoline taxes and, as cars become more fuel efficient, gas tax revenue has declined.

• Adding to the decline is the loss of federal earmarks for projects.

• Without substantial increases in federal, state or local highway funding, West Virginia will not be able to improve the condition, safety and efficiency of the highway system, potentially reducing the ability of the transportation system to service economic development initiatives in the state.

## **Innovative Solutions to Funding and Financing Challenges:**

• In 2006, Local Powers Act was enacted to permits counties the authority to impose, administer, collect and enforce payment of voter‐approved service fees for the purpose of providing special infrastructure projects such as highway construction and maintenance within the county.

• This act was used by the County Commission of Monongalia County to design a countywide service fee to finance construction of certain infrastructure projects that had been identified by the Greater Morgantown Metropolitan Planning Organization, but failed finally.