



MARCH 25, 2019

VEHICLE REGISTRATION FACT SHEET
(WHEEL TAX)

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
RICHLAND COUNTY



This information is intended to assist local officials who are considering the adoption of a municipal or county vehicle registration fee.

The State legislature authorizes counties to impose a vehicle registration fee for vehicles under 8,000 pounds as one of three(3) Local Government Revenue options(sales tax, room tax, and registration fees). Registration fees are authorized within SS.341.35 of Wisconsin State Statutes.

A \$20.00 county vehicle registration fee would bring in an estimated \$302,920.00. This projected revenue could be used towards Local Road Improvement Projects (LRIP) and Surface Transportation Program (STP-Bridge or STP-Rural) as well as State and Federal Funding mechanisms.

Since 2000 Richland County has seen a drastic reduction in the overall preventative maintenance and highway construction efforts. Due to cost increases and funding decreases within the highway department, the lack of effort is showing in road and bridge ratings. Richland Counties Infrastructure continues to erode while the available funding from the State and County dollars continues to decline. As a result of a lack of local dollars being invested our General Transportation Aid (GTA) has decreased as well. The GTA formulation is taken from a six year average, thus to increase our maintenance funding it would take six years of investments to result in an increase in our GTA.

Currently Richland County is the lowest in the State for GTA and dollars spent per mile. GTA in 2000 was \$756,858.23 compared to our GTA in 2019 was \$589,122.44. That is a decrease of about \$167,735.79. Our current cost per lane mile is \$1,735.83 per year. This is the lowest cost investment per mile in the State including Townships!

Richland County currently is on a “no paving schedule” for 2019, as we are in the process of finishing up County Highway Y and will need to match State funding to complete the paving portion of this project. Currently the cost will exceed the revenue which means the County will be borrowing or bonding for the funds. The County Y project, along with other bridge projects, and the County Highway O project (STP-Rural) warrants actions to be taken in some form now or these projects will end up falling to the wayside along with the funding.

Next year proposed road improvement cost:

2020	County Highway Y Mutch Ln. to State Highway 80 CHIP-D	4.25 mi	\$260,000.00	\$260,000.00
2020	County Highway Y Mutch Ln. to Crow Hill School Rd.	1.97 mi	\$111,000.00	\$229,000.00 Estimated
2020	County Highway Y Crow Hill School Rd. to County Highway Q	.93 mi	\$42,831.54	\$157,170.00 Estimated
		7.15 mi	\$413,831.54	\$528,170.00 Estimated

Additional Ho Chunk funding \$500,000.00

\$1,750,000 project estimation with only a little over \$900,000 worth of funding.

Richland County Highway Department is applying for County Highway O (STP-Rural) again for 2020. This project has been under way for over 15 years. With investments totaling \$302,367.00 and real estate estimated costs at about \$113,367.00 in 2020, this would be close to a two million dollar project, if awarded the project would be 80% State funded. If the application is denied, the County will need to find an alternative to justify this investment.

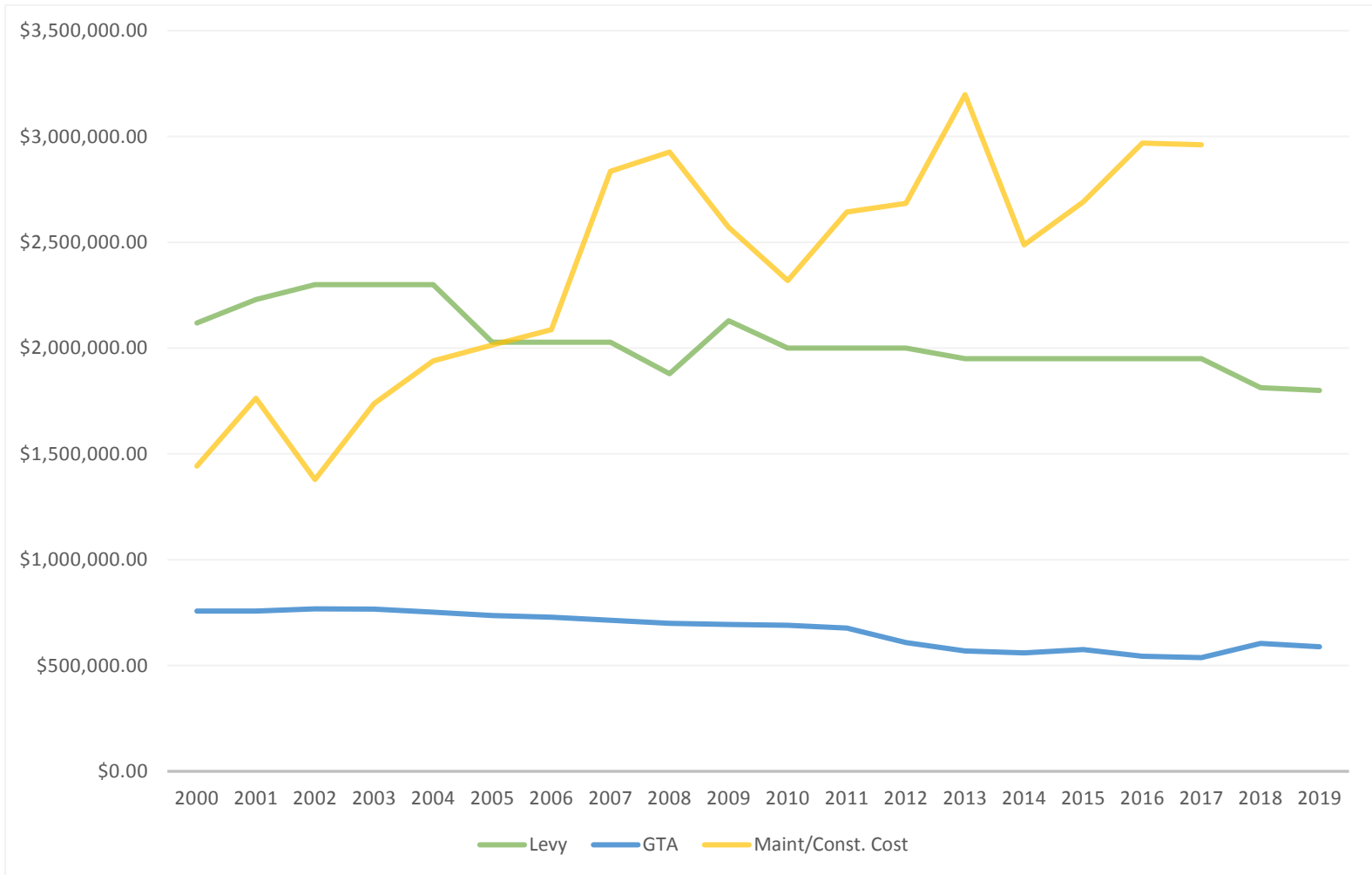
The next round of State TRIP funding will be next year, 2020, and Richland County will be in the position to have to refuse any CHIP, CHIP-D, and any TRIP funding. This, in turn, will go to the surrounding Southwest Counties that can support the funding requirements; thus increasing their GTA's as well as improving their infrastructures.

Richland County needs to be able to fund these projects as well as future projects to help improve and strengthen our infrastructure and attract and keep businesses. This would help create a thriving community that supports their local County Government and helps advertise our "little gem" in Southwest Wisconsin.

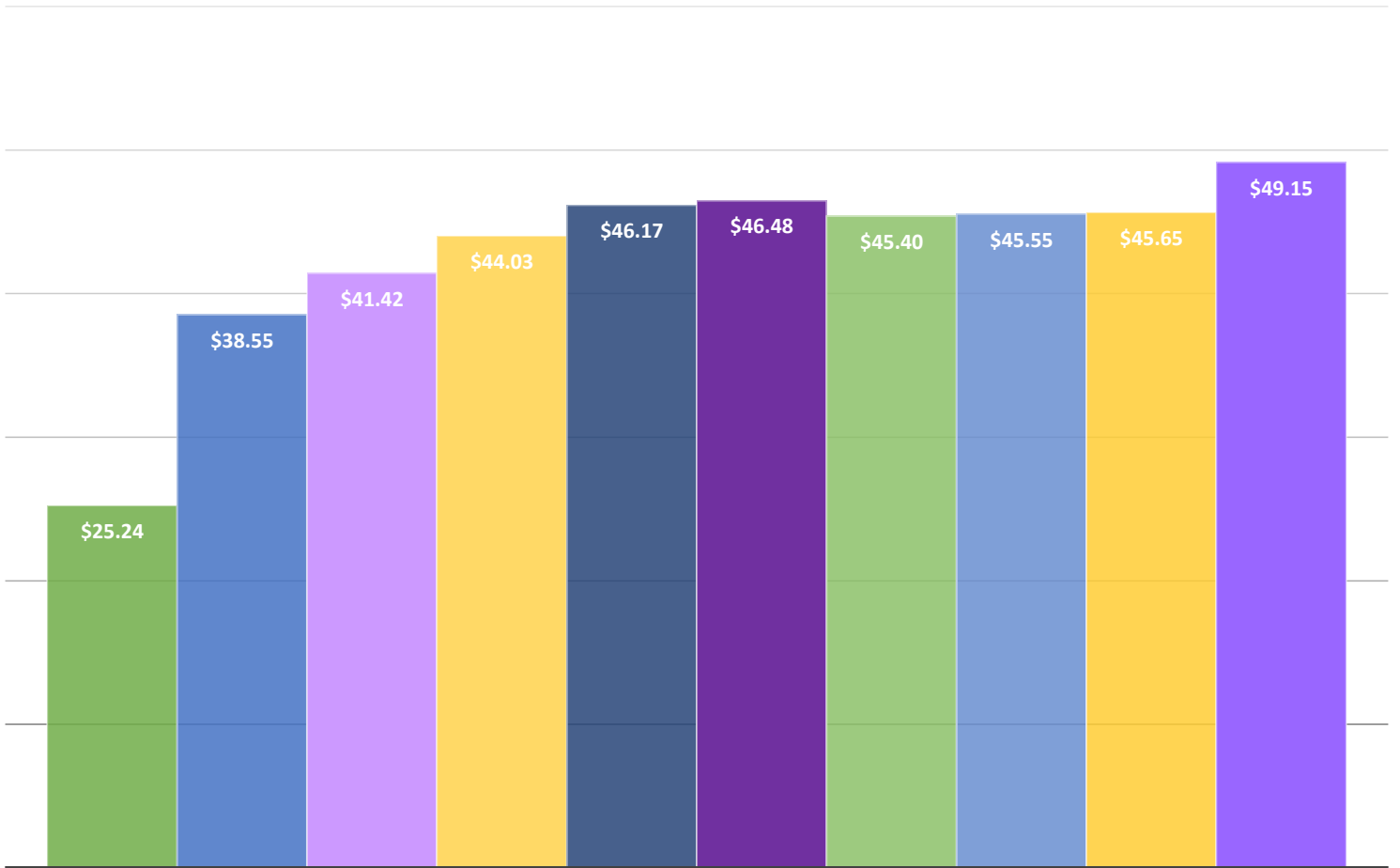
Richland County Highway Department

120 Bowen Circle, Richland Center, WI 53581 Phone: [608] 647-4707

Vehicle Registration Fee (Wheel Tax) Fact Sheet



Asphalt

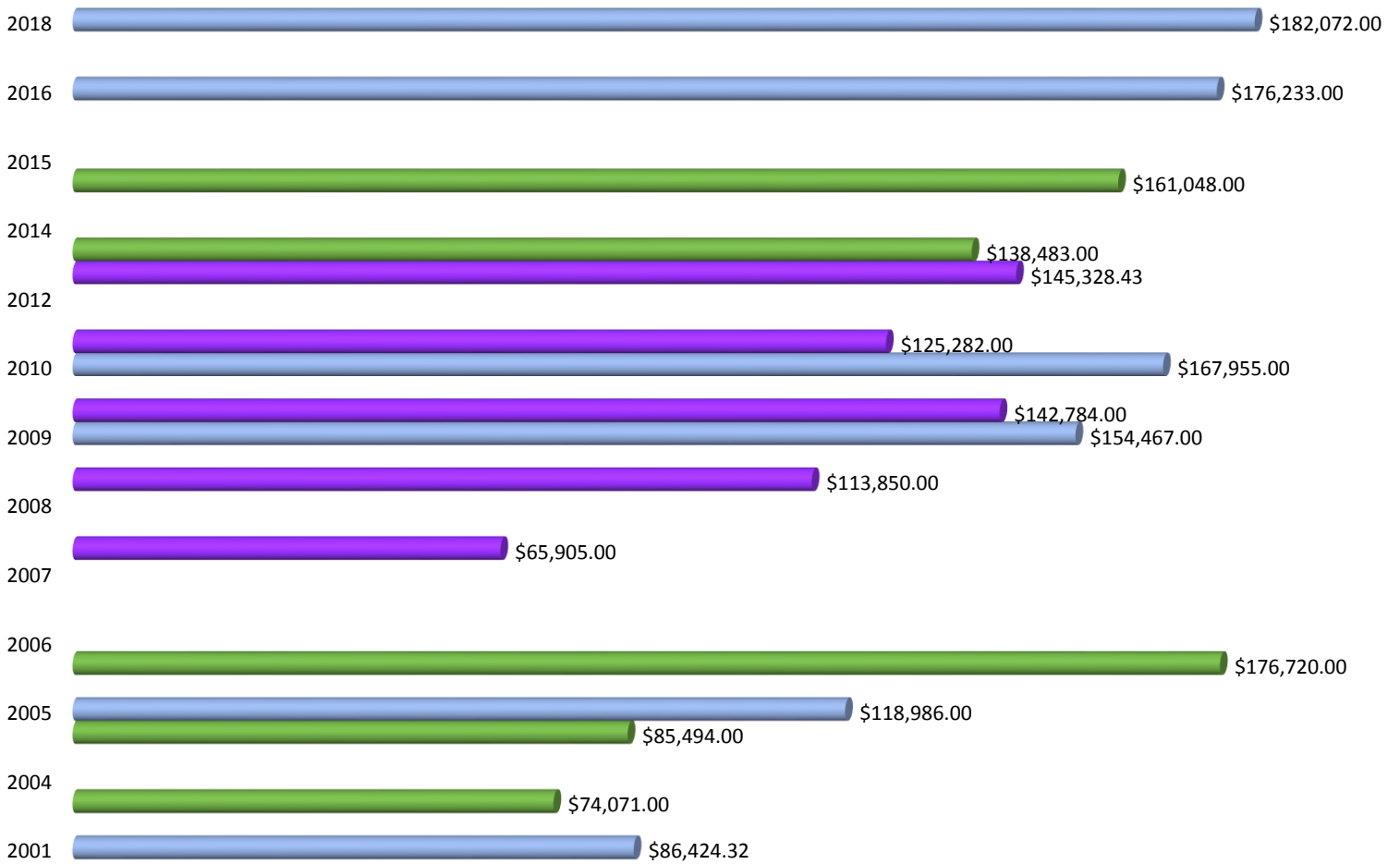


COST PER TON

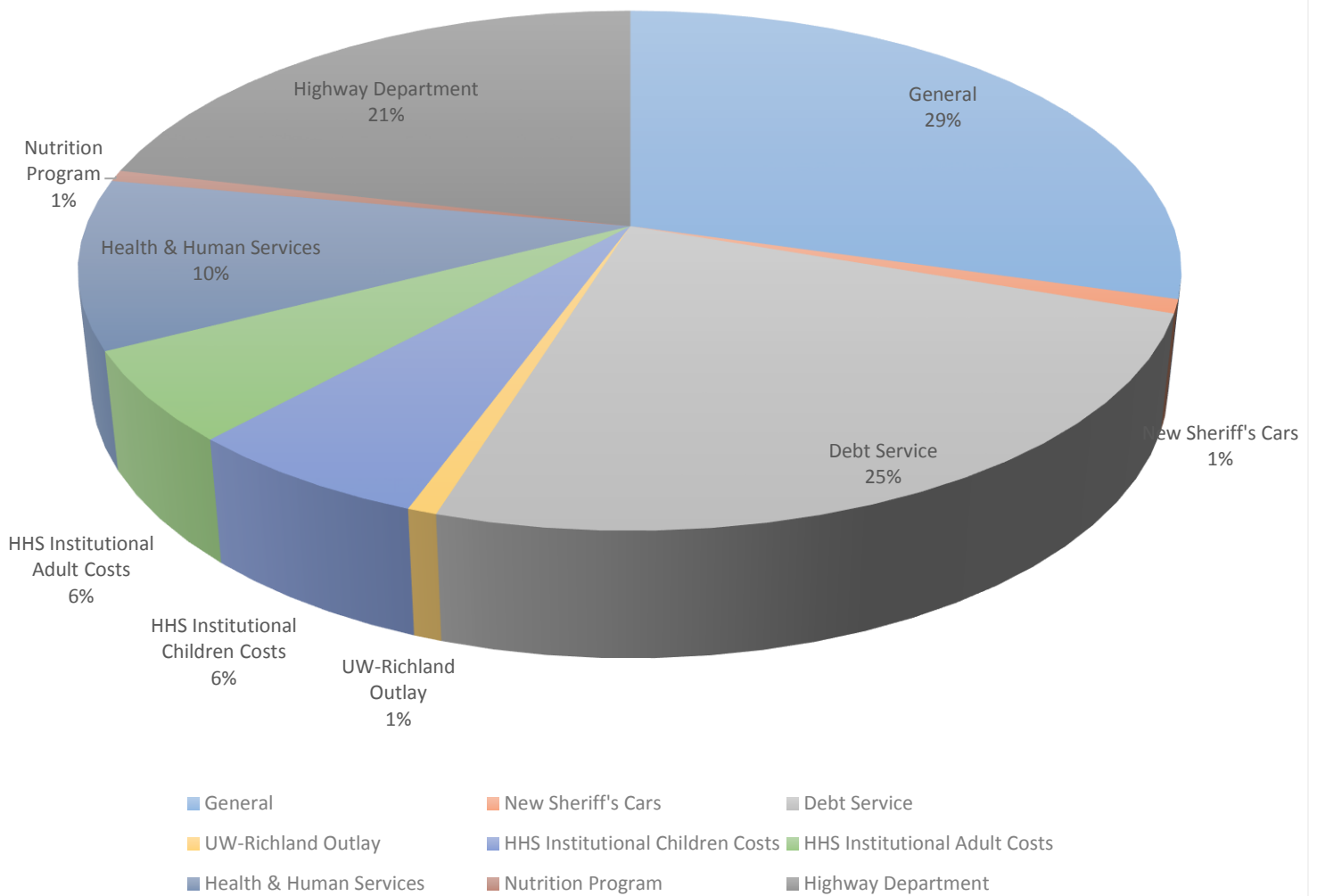
■ 2003 ■ 2009 ■ 2010 ■ 2011 ■ 2013 ■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ 2019

**Purchase Comparison - Snow Plow Truck
 (Cab & Chassis only)**

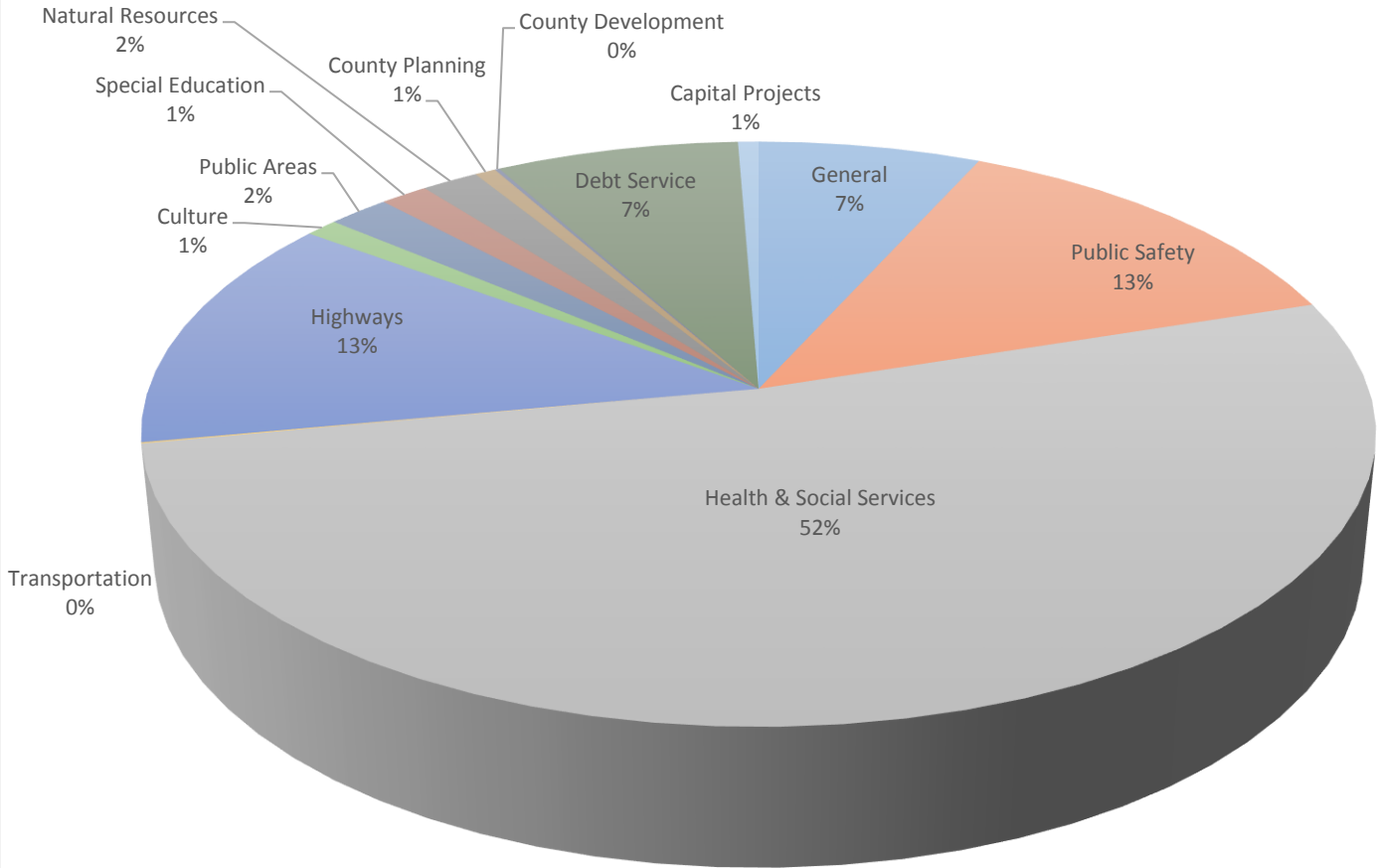
■ Tandem ■ Tri-Axle ■ Single Axle



Tax Levy Distribution 2019

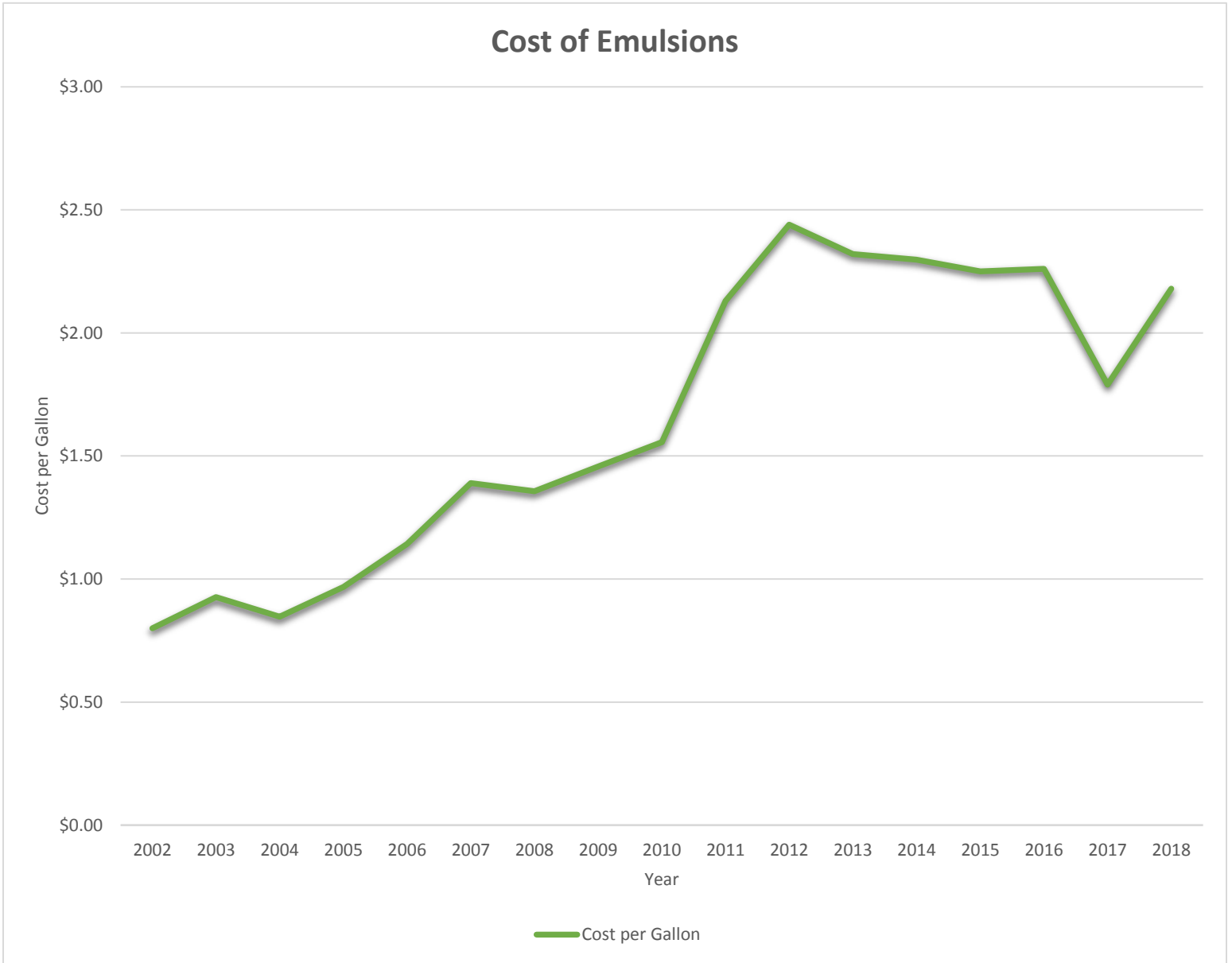


Adopted Budget 2019



- General
- Public Safety
- Health & Social Services
- Transportation
- Highways
- Culture
- Public Areas
- Special Education
- Natural Resources
- County Planning
- County Development
- Debt Service
- Capital Projects





Frequently Asked Questions

- **What vehicles are subject to a wheel tax?**

An automobile or motor truck registered under 8,000 pounds gross weight and customarily kept in the Municipality or County that enacted the tax.

This Includes:

- Automobiles
- Vans
- Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) that qualify as a passenger vehicle
- Motor Trucks
- Dual Purpose Motorhomes (trucks equipped with a slide-in camper unit)

Vehicles with the following license plate types are subject to a wheel tax, except noted.

AUT – Automobile and passenger vehicle: issued for automobiles, vans, and SUVs that qualify as a passenger vehicle including those operated for hire. Drivers Ed vehicles are exempt from the wheel tax and are not included in WisDOT registration reports of vehicles subject to a wheel tax.

LTK – Light truck: issued for motor trucks operated up to 8,000 pounds gross weight including vehicles operated for hire. Dual purpose farm trucks are exempt from the wheel tax.

Special plate types are also subject to the wheel tax.

- **What vehicles are exempt from this fee?**

Vehicles exempt from the wheel tax are:

- Buses
- Motorcycles
- Registered as Antique
- Mopeds
- Motorhomes
- Registered Collector
- Low Speed Vehicles
- Trailers
- Human Service
- Trucks registered at more than 8,000 pounds
- Farm or Dual Purpose Trucks
- Drivers Ed Vehicle
- Historic Military
- Municipal
- State Owned
- Special X
- Medal of Honor
- Ex-Prisoner of War Registration
- Hobbyist
- Any vehicle with registration issued by a Wisconsin Indian tribe or band
- Vehicles displaying Dealer, Distributor, Finance Company or Manufacturer Plates

- **What determines whether a vehicle is customarily kept in a Municipality of County?**

Applicants for original title and registration request the County, City, Village, or Township where a vehicle is “customarily kept” or domiciled. This information also prints on the registration renewal notice. Renewal Notices instruct the customer to change their address, or where the vehicle is customarily kept, if incorrectly shown on the notice.

In the absence of an indicated municipality or county domicile, the owner or lessee’s post office address is used to determine municipality or county domicile, per administrative rule Trans 126.01(c).

Per s. 341.60 Wis. Stats., any person who gives false address or location where a vehicle is customarily kept in an application for registration may be fined not more than \$200 or imprisoned not more than six month or both.

- **Are estimates of numbers of vehicles subject to a wheel tax within a County or Municipality available?**

Yes. Current vehicle data is available at the end of each fiscal and calendar year. The vehicles eligible for wheel tax report is available on the WisDOT website at Lis of Vehicle Information.

- **What are the administrative costs associated with a wheel tax?**

Currently WisDOT charges a per vehicle fee application of 17 cents. The administrative fee is for all municipalities regardless of the amount of fee imposed by the municipality or the number of vehicles for which the fee is collected.

- **How long after enactment can this fee be collected by WisDOT?**

WisDOT requires notification of at least 90 days prior to the first day of the month in which the amendment is effective. WisDOT also requires notification at least 90 days prior to the first day of the month in which an amended or the repeal of a wheel tax is effective.

When a wheel tax ordinance is implemented, collection for vehicles subject to the fee will begin on these dates:

- Renewal of current registrations expiring the first day of the month or later.
- Issuance of new registration with a date of operation or delivery date on the second day of the month or later.

When a wheel tax ordinance is repealed, collection will terminate on these dates

- Renewal of current registrations expiring the first day of the month or later
- Issuance of new registrations with a date of operation or dealer delivery date on the second day of the month or later.

- **Can the revenues received from wheel tax payments be used for any purpose?**

Counties and Municipalities must use the moneys from wheel tax payments for transportation related purposes only (s. 341.56(6r), Wis. Stats.). "Highway" is defined by state law to mean "all public ways and thoroughfares and bridges on the same." Courts have interpreted "highways" to include trails because they are "public ways and thoroughfares and bridges on the same." "Sidewalk" means that a "portion of a highway between the curb lines, or the lateral lines of the roadway, and the adjacent property lines, constructed for use of pedestrians."

- **If a county has a wheel tax in effect, can a municipality within that county also enact a wheel tax ordinance?**

According to s.341.35(3m), Wis. Stats: "If a municipality and the county in which the municipality is located enact ordinances under this section, a motor vehicle customarily kept in the municipality shall be subject to a municipal fee and a county registration fee." Therefore,

both the municipality and the county would collect a wheel tax simultaneously for the vehicles subject to the fee in the municipality, if each chose to enact an ordinance.

- Why don't large trucks have to pay the wheel tax?**
 Large trucks such as dump trucks and logging trucks pay a much higher registration and user fee. An average dump truck pays approximately \$1,900-\$2,000 in fees plus the cost of the fuel tax. A logging truck pays around an average of \$2,400-\$2,500 in registration fees plus the fuel tax.
- Which other counties or municipalities have enacted a wheel tax and what is/was the amount of the fee?**

City, Village or Township			
Appleton (City)	\$20	Arena(Township)	\$20
Beloit (City)	\$20	Bellevue (Village)	\$20
Eden (Village)	\$20	Evansville (City)	\$20
Fort Atkinson (City)	\$20	Gillett (City)	\$20
Green Bay (City)	\$20	Iron Ridge (Village)	\$10
Janesville (City)	\$20	Kaukauna (City)	\$10
Lodi (City)	\$20	Manitowoc (City)	\$20
Milwaukee (City)	\$20	Montello (City)	\$20
New London (City)	\$20	Platteville (City)	\$20
Portage (City)	\$20	Prairie du Sac (Village)	\$20
Rice Lake (City)	\$20	Sheboygan (City)	\$20
Tigerton (Village)	\$20	Waterloo (City)	\$15
Counties			
Chippewa County	\$10	Dane County	\$28
Eau Claire County	\$30	Green County	\$20
Iowa County	\$20	Lincoln County	\$20
Marathon County	\$25	Milwaukee County	\$30
Portage County	\$25	St. Croix County	\$10
Information available on WisDOT – List of Vehicle Information			

- How much money will this wheel tax generate for Richland County?**
 Based on the latest statistics from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, in 2018 there was 15,146 registered vehicles in Richland County that would be affected by the implementation of this wheel tax. That would generate approximately \$302,920.00 in revenue. The State would retain their 17 cents per vehicle which would be about \$2,271.90 leaving the County with an estimated \$300,648.10.

- **Can Richland County share this revenue with other municipalities?**

Wisconsin follows the principal that the unit of government that imposes a tax must also be the unit of government that spends the tax proceeds. See *Authority to tax Wisconsin 44 Marq.L. Rev.457, 1994.*

Therefore, the legislature has provided no authority for the county to exempt vehicles from particular municipalities and no authority to distribute proceeds from the taxes collected to other municipalities.

- **If the wheel tax is implemented could the County Highway levy be reduced with the added revenue generated?**

This would be up to the County Board ultimately, unless protective actions are set forth in the County wheel tax ordinance.

Related Information:

341.35, Wis. Stats., Municipal or County Vehicle Registration Fee

Trans 126 –Municipal or County Vehicle Registration Fee