



County Landscape Project:

Infrastructure

Vision

Healthy, safe and vibrant counties across America.

Mission

Strengthen America's Counties.

About

The National Association of Counties (NACo) strengthens America's counties, serving nearly 38,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Founded in 1935, NACo unites county officials to:

- **Advocate** county priorities in federal policymaking
- **Promote** exemplary county policies and practices
- **Nurture** leadership skills and expand knowledge networks
- **Optimize** county and taxpayer resources and cost savings, and
- **Enrich** the public understanding of county government.

Contacts

Stacy Nakintu

Senior Analyst, Research & Data Analytics
National Association of Counties
Research@NACo.org

Ricardo Aguilar

Director, Data Analytics
National Association of Counties
Research@NACo.org

The County Landscape Project

Counties are vital to the foundation of our communities, helping shape the places where we live, work and thrive. From maintaining critical infrastructure and delivering essential public services to fostering economic growth and ensuring public safety, county governments play a pivotal role in the daily lives of millions of Americans. Notwithstanding our significance, the complexity and diversity of county governments often go unnoticed. The County Landscape Project brings the nuts and bolts of county governance to the forefront, providing a clear and comprehensive guide to how counties function, govern and serve our residents.

As NACo continues its commitment to strengthen America's counties, we recognize the need for a unified, accessible and authoritative resource that provides a comprehensive guide to our nation's county government system. By developing key insights, data and best practices under a single, cohesive project, we aim to enhance the way county officials, policymakers, federal and philanthropic partners and the public engage with

and utilize these valuable resources. Whether examining the organizational structures, financial frameworks, essential services or intergovernmental roles of counties, the project serves as a critical reference for understanding county government at its core.

This initiative reflects NACo's dedication to providing clarity in county governance, empowering leaders with actionable insights and fostering collaboration across all levels of government. Whether you are an elected official shaping policy, a researcher exploring county data or a resident seeking to understand the impact of local government, these resources serve as a guide to the essential functions of counties nationwide.

As we move forward, we invite you to explore, engage and utilize the resources from the Project in your work. Counties are the backbone of our nation's governance, and together, we can ensure that our impact is recognized, strengthened and sustained for generations to come.



Matthew D. Chase, CEO/Executive Director

Key Takeaways: Counties Lead our Nation's Infrastructure Network



40%

OF PUBLIC TRANSIT AGENCIES AND

34%

OF AIRPORTS ARE SUPPORTED BY COUNTIES.

44%

OF PUBLIC ROAD MILES ARE OWNED AND MAINTAINED BY COUNTIES.



38%

OF BRIDGES ARE OWNED AND MAINTAINED BY COUNTIES.

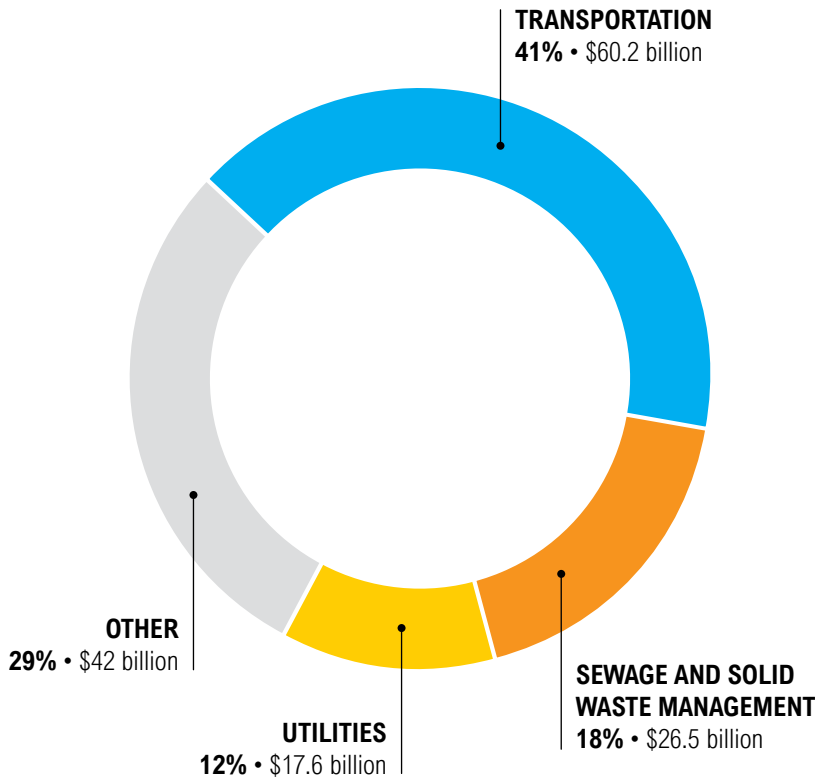
\$146 billion

IN BUILDING, MAINTAINING AND OPERATING PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC WORKS IS INVESTED BY COUNTIES.



Counties Invest \$146 billion in Building, Maintaining and Operating Physical Infrastructure and Public Works

Share of Total County Infrastructure Spending, by Category, 2022



Counties lead our nation's infrastructure network, investing in roads, bridges, airports, public transit and ports to keep America moving and our economy growing.

ANNUALLY, COUNTIES INVEST:



More than **\$60 billion** in transportation infrastructure, such as roads and bridges.



More than **\$67 billion** in the construction of public facilities, such as hospitals, schools, jails and other local institutions.



More than **\$26 billion** in sewage and solid waste management.



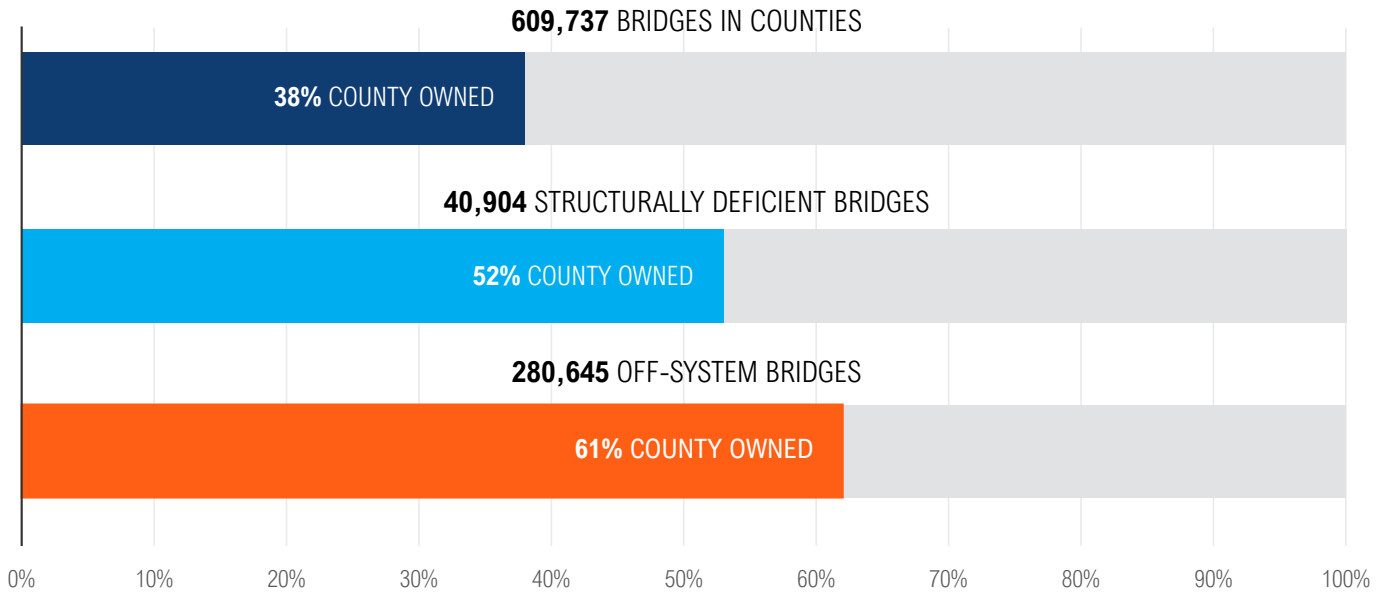
More than **\$130 billion** in community health and hospitals.



More than **\$12 billion** in building and maintaining parks and recreational facilities.

Counties Own and Maintain 38 Percent of Bridges

Breakdown of County Owned Bridges, 2024



Counties own and maintain **38 percent** of the more than **600,000 bridges** that comprise the national bridge inventory.



According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, **6.8 percent** of the nation's bridges are in poor condition, and more than **168 million** trips are taken across these bridges every day.¹



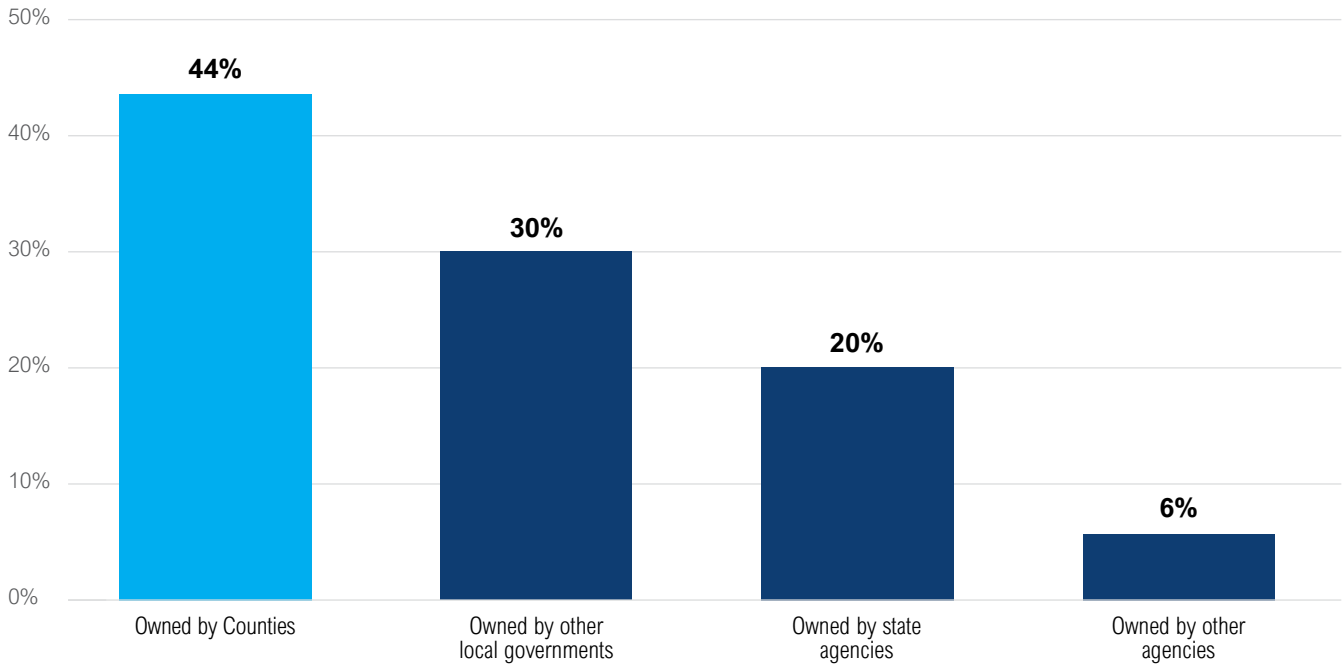
Off-system bridges comprise **46 percent** (over 280,000 bridges) of the nation's bridges.

In 2024, more than **40,000 bridges** were classified as structurally deficient and considered to be in poor condition, of which **52 percent** are county owned.

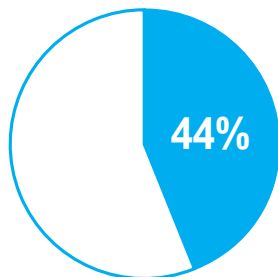


Counties Own and Maintain 44 Percent of Public Road Miles

Breakdown of Ownership of Public Roads by Highway Agency, 2023



There are more than **4.1 million public road miles** within counties across the nation where the majority of trips both start and end.

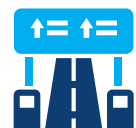


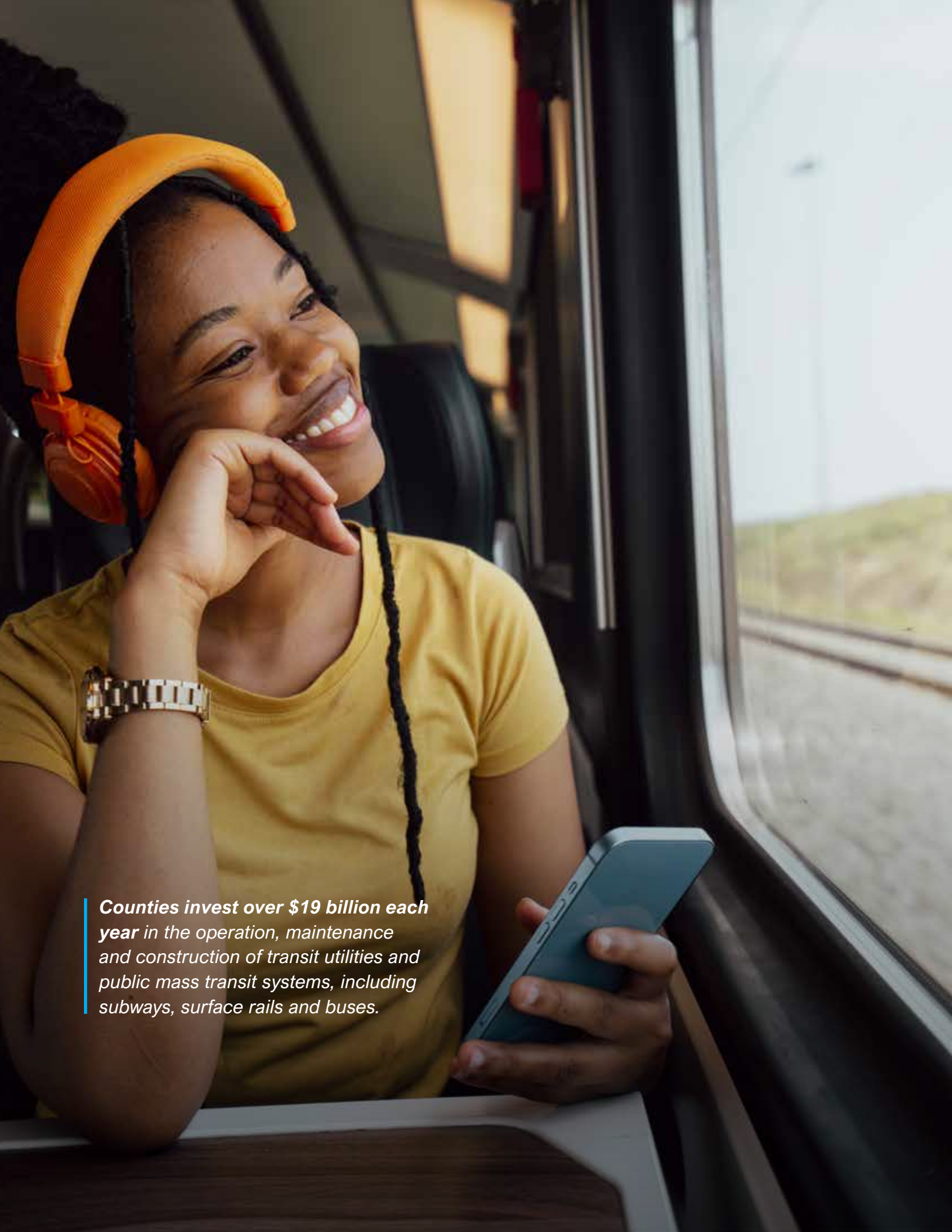
Counties own and maintain **nearly half (44 percent)** of these road miles.



In total, local highway agencies including, cities, counties and municipalities, own and maintain **3.1 million road miles**.

Each year, counties invest over **\$32 billion** in the maintenance, operation, repair and construction of toll and non-toll highways.

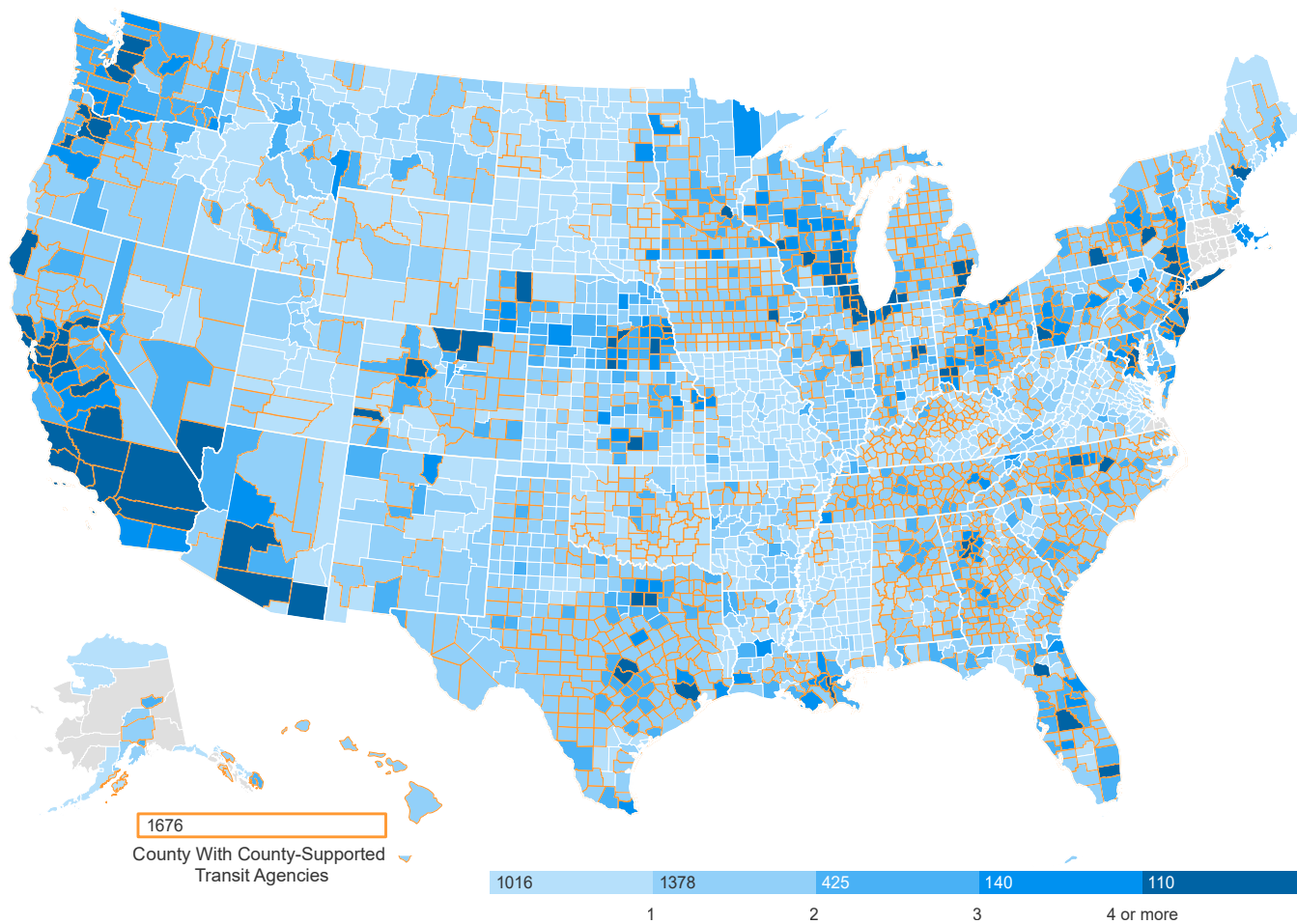




Counties invest over \$19 billion each year in the operation, maintenance and construction of transit utilities and public mass transit systems, including subways, surface rails and buses.

Counties Support 40% of Transit Agencies and 34% of Airports

COUNTY-SUPPORTED TRANSIT AGENCIES 2015-2019



Over **\$7 billion** in air transportation for the provision, operation, construction and support of airport facilities.



Over **\$730 million** in the operation, maintenance and support of sea and inland port facilities.



More than **\$430 million** to operate, maintain and support parking facilities.

NACo Resources:

Learn More About Counties

THE COUNTY LANDSCAPE PROJECT

Whether examining the organizational structures, financial frameworks, essential services or intergovernmental roles of counties, the project serves as a critical reference for understanding county government at its core.



Scan the QR Code to learn more about
The County Landscape Project

COUNTY EXPLORER DATA

An interactive mapping tool featuring the latest available data for all 3,069 U.S. counties across 14 categories, more than 100 datasets, over 1,000 indicators and more than 10 types of county and state profiles.



Scan the QR Code to learn more about
County Explorer Data



DATA SOURCE AND NOTES

Sources:

- NACo Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau - 2022 Census of Individual Governments: Finance
- NACo Analysis of National Bridge Inventory Data - Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), 2024
- NACo Analysis of Federal Aviation Administration and Office of Aviation Analysis, 2017
- NACo Analysis of U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Highway Administration, Highway Performance Monitoring System, 2023
- NACo Analysis of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) National Transit Database (NTD) data, 2015-2019

Notes:

- The county expenditure analysis is based on estimates published by the U.S. Census Bureau in October 2024.
- All analysis is based on 3,069 counties with active county governments. Thus, Connecticut, Rhode Island and portions of Alaska, Massachusetts are excluded since they do not have active county governments. Independent cities in Virginia are also excluded from the analysis.
- For the county bridge data, effective Jan. 1, 2018, the Federal Highway Administration changed the definition of structurally-deficient bridges which limits the classification to bridges where one of the key structural elements — the deck, superstructure, substructure or culverts — are rated in poor or worse condition.

¹ American Society of Civil Engineers. (2025). Report Card for America's Infrastructure: Bridges. <https://infrastructurereportcard.org/cat-item/bridges-infrastructure/>



From building and maintaining roads and bridges to providing efficient transit systems, counties are a driving force connecting communities and strengthening our economy.



660 North Capitol Street NW
Suite 400 | Washington, D.C. 20001
202-393-6226 | www.NACo.org

June 2026

