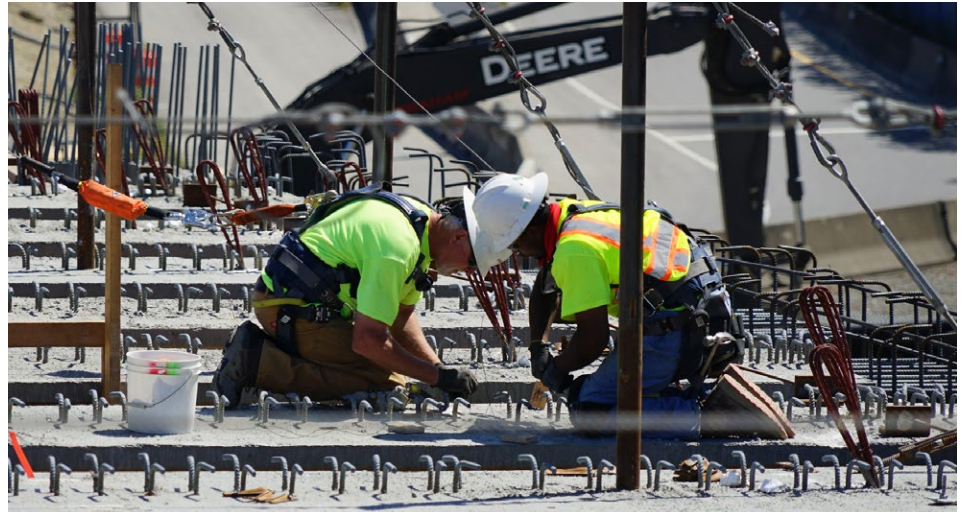


Biennial Progress Report



Plan overview

As required by Second Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5997 passed in 2015, the Washington State Department of Transportation issued the Construction Program Business Plan (the Plan) in October 2017 to guide how the agency will continue to improve delivery of transportation projects in a changing construction landscape.

WSDOT convened an advisory group in January 2017 and collaborated over six meetings to develop the Plan. The committee's charge was to define key elements of WSDOT's strong owner strategy related to recruitment, training, retention and competitive compensation; outline sustainable staffing levels and report on how WSDOT is addressing the Joint Transportation Committee's (JTC) 2016 study on the agency's implementation of design-build project delivery. Since 2017, the advisory group has continued to meet with WSDOT staff to advise on Plan implementation.



As required in RCW 47.01.495 (4), WSDOT will issue progress reports every two years until September 30, 2030.

Plan goals

The advisory group proposed the following goals for WSDOT's future construction program and strategies to adopt them:

Goal 1: *Strong owner and stewardship*

WSDOT continues to be a good steward of the state transportation infrastructure by strengthening the agency's role as a strong owner.

Goal 2: *Sustainable staffing levels*

WSDOT will ensure the agency has the right balance of staff and consultants it needs to deliver a successful and efficient capital improvement and preservation program by addressing staffing needs in a productive, sustainable and predictable way.

Goal 3: *Project delivery*

WSDOT will enact and accomplish the majority of recommendations of the Joint Transportation Committee's design-build study.

Message from advisory group

Over the last two years, WSDOT ramped up to deliver the peak of the design program, an investment of \$6.3 billion in the 23-25 biennium toward building a safer, more sustainable and integrated multimodal transportation system. Our partnership with industry and efforts to recruit and develop a strong and capable workforce were central to reaching this milestone.

As WSDOT's partners representing industry and labor groups, we remain committed to our collective work to ensure WSDOT remains a strong, capable steward of the transportation system.

Together, our work toward the goals outlined in this plan helped us achieve the following successes:

- WSDOT continued working towards the goal of being a strong owner. The agency successfully filled over 1,000 positions, retirements are under 3% and resignations (3.75%) are lower than the overall state service average. The rate of resignations for engineers with 6-10 years of experience is notably down to below 1%.
- We are encouraged by the agency's work to build a culture of engagement through trainings, programs and initiatives to help employees feel valued and appreciated.
- We're partnering with industry professionals to address challenges in program delivery. We've made positive progress collaborating with industry on updating WSDOT's conflict-of-interest policy.

We now face new challenges as revenue declines and WSDOT encounters significant issues in delivering the construction program.

Financial outlook: Over the next biennium, preliminary engineering work and revenue will decrease as WSDOT and industry partners focus on constructing the program.

Given our challenging financial outlook for the next biennium, WSDOT is focused on essential unfunded needs required to fulfill our mission to provide a safe, reliable and sustainable multimodal transportation system. These five priorities are the bare minimum necessary to keep Washingtonians safe, our infrastructure from further degrading and to meet our state's legal obligations: operations and maintenance, safety, preservation, ferries, and the fish barrier removal program. Lack of consistent and predictable funding levels in these five areas is disrupting delivery of the construction program.

We're already experiencing real impacts within the fish passage program as funding levels decline. WSDOT assembled highly specialized teams to fix barriers to fish passages and these teams are at risk of being undone, due to funding challenges. WSDOT needs consistent, long-term funding to continue restoring blocked fish habitats as mandated by federal order and the U.S. Supreme Court's permanent injunction. Without consistent and predictable funding, we anticipate similar setbacks and challenges across all five priority areas.

Construction costs are rising rapidly. WSDOT's construction program, like many agencies around the country, has seen significant impacts from rising construction costs. In 2023 and 2024, bid prices for design-build projects exceeded WSDOT engineer's estimate by 40% or more, a sharp increase compared to past years. There are a number of factors that contribute to this issue, including the size and number of projects procured; the multi-year duration of many projects; inflationary costs of materials, commodities, and labor; staff expertise levels; and project risk profiles. Construction costs have not stabilized since the global COVID-19 pandemic disrupted market conditions. As a result, we expect wider differences between engineer's estimates and design-build bid prices. This is due to the amount of financial risk transferred to design and construction firms and that risk representing itself in the form of higher bids.

These recent unstable price conditions contribute to misunderstanding of engineer's estimates. These estimates are just one part of the overall project estimate, which includes preliminary engineering and design; permitting; purchasing right-of-way; utility impacts; construction contingencies; and construction administration. The engineer's estimate is a tool to help WSDOT validate contractor bids and provides a point of reference for WSDOT to assess whether to award a project.

Advisory group



Van Collins
American Council of
Engineering Companies (ACEC)
of Washington



Tyler Kimberley
Associated General Contractors
(AGC) of Washington



Sarah Lorenzini
PROTEC17



Todd Trepanier
Assistant Secretary-Regions/
Principal Engineer

Due to individual project circumstances, complexities in budgeting and industry bidding approaches, individual project bids are rarely close to the engineer's estimate. However, the sum of the engineer's estimates across projects are close to the sum of bid prices paid. This is shown consistently in historical WSDOT data for design-bid-build projects. While costs may vary greatly between an individual engineer's estimate and the contract bid amount, the overall program comparison shows minimal difference. In 2024 design-bid-build bids ranged from 63% below estimates to 357% over estimates, but over the entire program, total bids only exceeded estimates by 2.6%.

For design-build projects, we have additional concerns about comparing engineer's estimates to bid price. Design-build cost estimates are developed when design is less than 30% complete, requiring estimating practices that will be within a range of -30% to +50%. In 2023 and 2024 design-build bids ranged from 0% below estimates to 77% over estimates, but over the entire program, total bids exceeded estimates by 32.7%. It is unrealistic to expect that estimates completed at that point in the design-build procurement process will align with future construction costs, especially in rapidly changing market conditions. We continue to see value in WSDOT estimating costs for budgeting programs, not as a comparison to actual project cost.

WSDOT recently surveyed industry partners and learned more about cost estimating challenges and factors that lead to hesitation in pursuing WSDOT work. These factors include stipend size, project size, proposal effort and fixed price commitment risk. Others mentioned concern about possible bias towards certain submitters or a lack of firm capacity to submit. WSDOT convened an internal working group to review the current process and is working to increase stipends and reduce project size where possible to help address these concerns.

Legislation passed during the 2024 session (ESHB 2134) requires the Capital Projects Advisory Review Board to review planned procurement methods for specific projects and pause award and project execution if the bid amount exceeds the engineer's estimate by more than 5% or \$10,000,000, whichever is less. While we appreciate the Legislature's attention on these important issues, the ambiguity in the language creates significant challenges. If the Legislature considers expanding this proviso to more projects, the exceedance limitations and award pause requirements must be reconsidered. In our experience ambiguity leads to increased risk, which may delay work and increase bid amounts to protect against cost escalation during the pause period. This recommendation is consistent with the Capital Projects Advisory Review Board Review of WSDOT Projects Pursuant to ESHB 2134, Part 1: SR 18 Widening Issaquah/Hobart Rd. to Raging River Phase 1 (L10000199), dated July 1, 2024

WSDOT has gained experience and expertise successfully leading progressive design-build projects. We support WSDOT's request to change RCW 47.20.780 to allow WSDOT to use progressive design build as a delivery method without CPARB review and approval.

Recruitment and retention: Despite our successes recruiting and retaining staff, we have faced difficulty recruiting civil engineers, and we have tracked failed recruitments to help understand these challenges. In fiscal years 2023-2024 WSDOT filled 545 positions across the Transportation Engineer 1, 2, and 3 categories, with 74 failed recruitments over that same timeframe. The majority of failed recruitments occurred in the Transportation Engineer 2 category. Within this timeframe, the highest rate of failure occurred in the Transportation Engineer 1 category, with 12 failed recruitments for 19 filled positions.

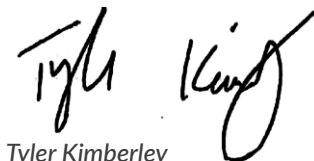
Salary gap: WSDOT's engineering compensation continued to fall further behind industry rates, making it difficult to attract and retain skilled engineers. According to the Office of Financial Management 2024 salary survey,* WSDOT Civil Engineers are paid more than 25% below market rates. Now more than ever we need to recruit and retain highly qualified civil engineers. While state service is appealing for many reasons, including work-life balance and benefits, a salary gap of this magnitude severely limits WSDOT's ability to attract and sustain the talent needed to deliver this program.

We urge the Legislature to prioritize closing this salary gap to support WSDOT's efforts to keep qualified engineers and avoid hiring consultants to fill unnecessary staffing gaps at a higher cost to Washington taxpayers. We also encourage the Legislature to work with the Governor's office and labor groups to revise or reinterpret RCW 41.06.152, which poses the largest obstacle in increasing engineering and other state employee wages. The Office of Financial Management relies almost exclusively on recruitment and retention data to justify targeted wage increases, which overlooks other causes of pay inequity.

As WSDOT's partners in delivering the program, we urge the Legislature to prioritize stable revenue to sustain our workforce. We are committed to continuing our work with WSDOT to manage these challenges and need predictable funding to maintain the role of a strong owner, sustain staff levels, and successfully deliver the construction program.



Van Collins



Tyler Kimberley



Sarah Lorenzini

*This survey compares public and private employers within Washington. The survey also compares the state's market status to peer state governments; peer states having similar (+/- 1 Standard Deviation) demographic and economic measures to Washington (such as similar state population, size of state government, and similar price of goods and services).

Progress on implementation of the 2017 plan

The tables below show WSDOT’s progress on the Plan recommendations, with additional detail for select strategies later in this report.

Goal 1: Strong owner and stewardship

Strategies	Actions
Maintain the importance of the strong owner approach from staff, industry, and the Legislature and continue to take opportunities to communicate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide ongoing high-level updates to executive leadership team. • Develop a staffing management plan with regional administrators.
Provide a strong, capable and high-quality engineering workforce by developing and managing a workforce development plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish workforce development as one of three goals for WSDOT’s strategic plan. • Maintaining a Workforce Development Toolkit. • Conducting and reporting ongoing evaluation of recruitment, training, retention and salary levels.
Maintain the trust of the taxpayers, traveling public and Legislature by continuing to sustain partnerships with industry to plan and deliver the capital improvement and preservation program, and communicate with the Legislature and public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted 118 meetings with construction industry stakeholders. • Worked with industry partners to create a better plan for claims notice to make the process easier to follow. • Held 53 meetings with ACEC.

Goal 2: Sustainable staffing levels

Strategies	Actions
Develop a staffing forecast through 2023 that avoids significant increases or reductions in staffing levels, communicate projections with staff, and update every biennium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update FTE and expenditure actuals through June 2023. • Maintain a 10-year staffing forecast.
Provide information about what WSDOT needs to respond to a competitive job market and sustain required staffing levels for program and project delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing coordination between WSDOT Human Resources and Stakeholder Advisory Committee with PROTEC17. • Sharing updates through biennial progress report.
Identify and proactively communicate opportunities for the consultant workforce to support program delivery by offering WSDOT flexible staffing and expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct industry outreach as outlined in Goal 1. • Continued engaging industry partners in joint training sessions on topics such as fish passage, partnering and conflict resolution, joint asphalt pavement, civil rights and design-build.

Goal 3: Project delivery

Strategies	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand on JTC Study to explore additional project delivery methods. • Focus on items WSDOT and industry leaders identified as important to future success of the Design-Build Program. 	Share updates on additional project delivery methods and items important to future success

2017 PLAN STATUS UPDATE

Goal 1: Strong owner and stewardship

2017 plan status update

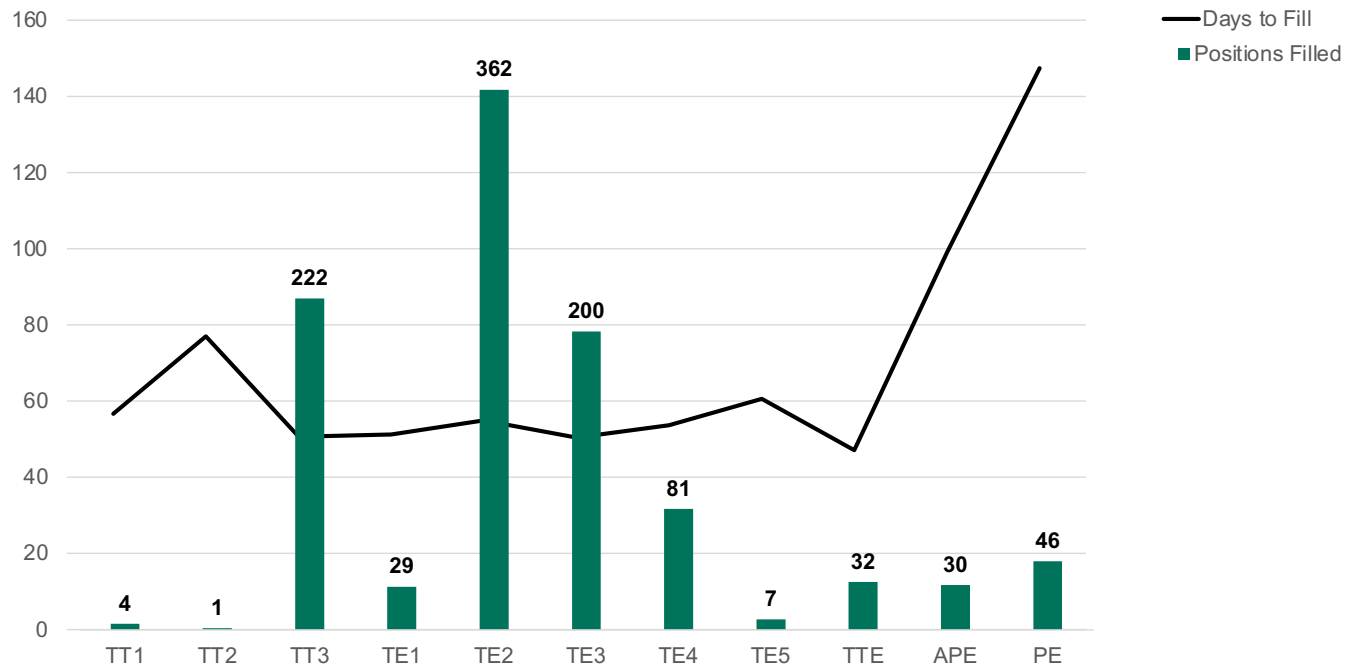
Contractors, consultants and taxpayers expect WSDOT to provide quality staff who are capable and knowledgeable about building, preserving and operating the state’s multimodal transportation system. The focus of the plan included developing a strong owner strategy as it relates to recruitment, staff development, retention and compensation for engineering group positions. In addition, WSDOT is reinforcing its role as a strong owner by engaging and partnering with industry leaders.

How is WSDOT doing?

Recruitment

WSDOT’s office of Human Resources continues to focus on recruiting and retaining qualified staff. The HR team is taking proactive steps to advertise open positions and attend outreach events to fill open positions quickly with diverse and high-performing candidates. On average, WSDOT’s recruiting timeline was approximately 53 days between fiscal years 2023 and 2024. WSDOT made 1,086 new hire appointments in fiscal years 2023 and 2024.

Average days to fill and number of positions filled



WSDOT used a variety of recruitment channels, including posting jobs on the WSDOT and Washington State career portals; amplifying posts on Indeed.com; and email marketing to reach college students and recent graduates. WSDOT recruiters maintain a list of more than 50 industry-specific diversity outreach venues to enhance the talent search.

Recruiters also represented WSDOT at over 60 recruiting fairs and outreach events in 2023. Including:

- College and University career fairs across Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Texas, Idaho and Montana.
- Recruitment at Maritime schools and events in Washington, California, Massachusetts, Maine, Texas and New York.
- Field-specific recruitment events for engineering, general STEM, sustainability and technical careers.
- Recruitment events for career and technical students, tribal communities, Latinx workers, veterans and more.

Training and staff development

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) training enrollments
 - 2023 – 67 attendees
 - 2024 – 70 registered attendees

Culture of engagement

- **Culture of belonging** – WSDOT has embarked on an agency-wide effort to transform culture through information sharing, discussion and collaboration. The culture of belonging initiative aims to develop all WSDOT employees' capacity to create cultural change. We're striving to build inclusion mindsets, psychological safety, co-creation, cultural humility, equity and access.
- **DEI workplan** - As a result of the Executive Order 1119.00, an anti-racism policy and diversity, equity and inclusion planning, we formed an agency-wide workgroup of employee volunteers from all disciplines. Through their efforts and collaboration with internal and external partners, DEI planning efforts are focused on: internal workforce; learning and growing; diversity advisory groups; data informed decisions; community engagement; Healthy Environment for All Act; and external workforce and contracting
- **Qualtrics survey** – WSDOT is surveying employees to learn more about how we can better engage teams, improve manager effectiveness, and help leaders make informed people and business decisions.

Employee engagement

WSDOT continues to prioritize growing and developing our engineering workforce through employee engagement programs and initiatives. To build a strong, capable and high-quality engineering workforce we're engaging employees through mentorship; professional development; education and training; and wellness programs.

Mentorship program

WSDOT sees value in investing in our workforce through mentorship programs. In 2024, over 350 employees participate in the mentorship program developing career skills and leadership, collaborating across divisions and transferring institutional knowledge.

Early career enrichment program

In 2023-2024, the Northwest Region team hosted an educational program to enrich early career employees roots into WSDOT. This effort connected staff with opportunities to dive deeper into long term projects and specialized programs, develop more specific career paths and create deeper understanding of WSDOT work.

Professional development

To encourage more engineers to seek their professional engineering license, we developed work study groups and dedicated study time. As a result, 41 employees are eligible for the PE incentive program.

Fun committees

Several WSDOT regions created committees to plan events and activities for team bonding and connection beyond the workplace.

In 2024, WSDOT hired 79 Interns and hosted virtual events and field visits to worksites and program office across the state:

- Vantage Bridge
- I-90 Wildlife Crossing
- Olympic Region Fish Passage
- Tacoma Narrows Bridge Tour
- Headquarters material lab tour
- Washington State Ferries tour
- Virtual events
- Hydraulics presentation
- 2013 Skagit River Bridge Collapse and WSDOT's response
- Tolling Department
- Avalanche Program
- Resume and interview tips and tricks
- Interstate Bridge Replacement Program
- Design-build 101



Programs for students pursuing civil engineering education

WSDOT continues to provide funding for five students to pursue Master’s degrees in Civil Engineering through the University of Washington Fellowship Program. Through this program, students are able to maintain WSDOT salaries and benefits, while attending school full-time. In 2023, WSDOT also started a Civil Engineering Technician certificate pilot program with Bellingham Tech and Eastern Washington University. Three students are currently participating, and we aim to add 6-10 new participants next year.

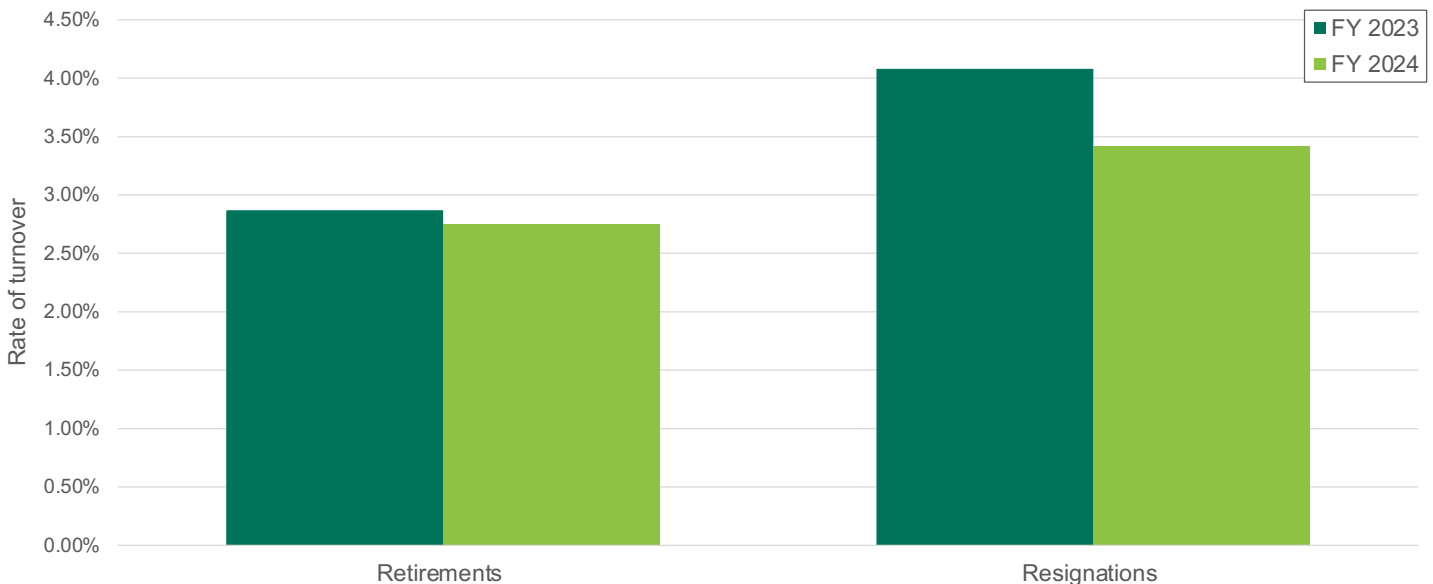
In 2023, WSDOT also started a Civil Engineering Technician certificate pilot program with Bellingham Tech and Eastern Washington University. This fall Yakima Valley Community College joined the program. We have five new participants this academic year, increasing our total number of CET program participants to eight.

WSDOT has invested in the behavioral health of all employees. This effort began during the pandemic and we continue seeing benefits for our employees working in high stress, dynamic environments. In 2023-24 WSDOT hosted three, virtual all staff presentations from Dr. Mauseth focused on the following three models.

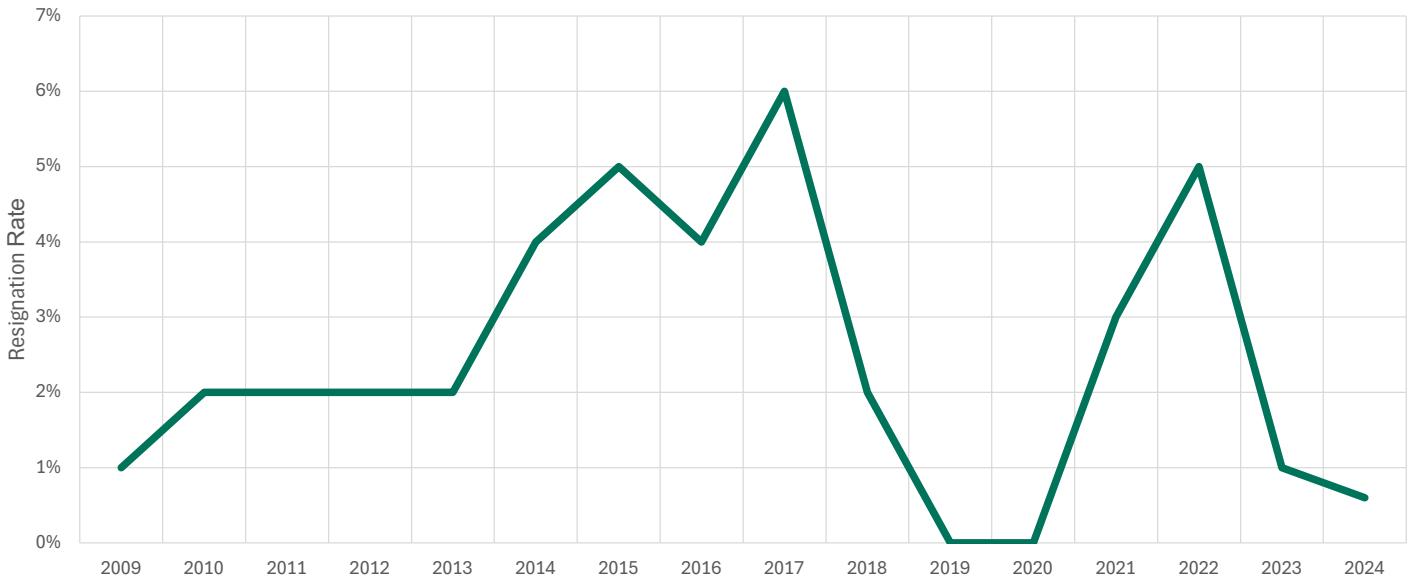
- **COPE** – The COPE model focuses on “thinking skills” associated with cognitive therapy and critical evaluation of our patterns, choices and behaviors. It provides tools on how to handle difficult situations.
- **CALM** – The CALM model teaches “feeling skills” associated with biofeedback, behavioral activation and other physiological strategies for maintaining a healthy limbic system balance. It provides tools on how to control and regulate our body’s response to stress.
- **CARE** – The CARE model teaches “being skills” associated with active resilience building, social interest, connection with others and being part of something greater than ourselves.

Retention

Rate of retirement and resignations for Transportation Engineers, Transportation Technicians, and Transportation Technical Engineers



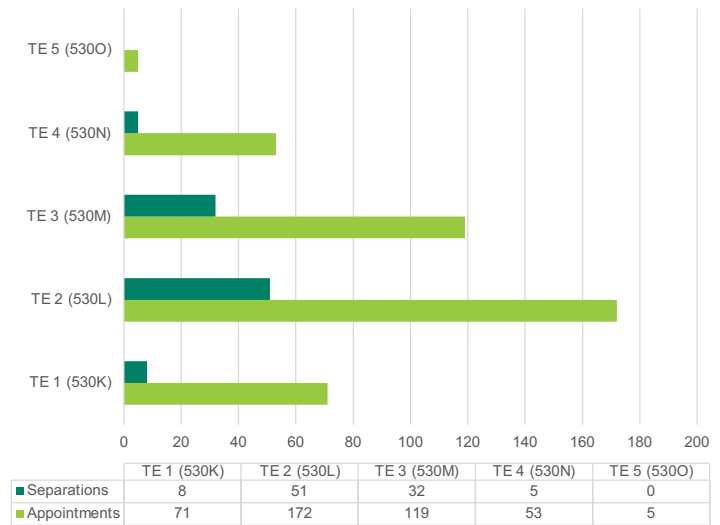
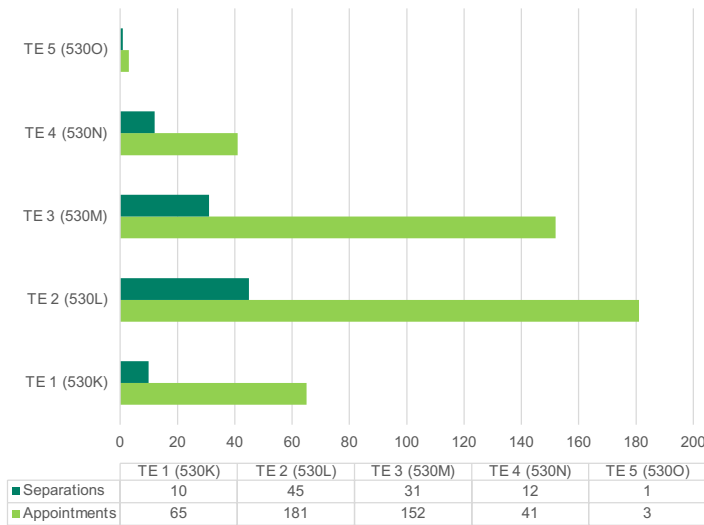
Resignation rate for engineering group employees with six to 10 years of service by fiscal year



Appointments to separations

Fiscal year 2023

Fiscal year 2024



Statewide employee engagement survey data shows:

- Overall employee engagement is **68%** favorable.
- **81%** are satisfied with telework and remote work opportunities.
- **85%** said their immediate supervisor treats them with respect.
- **76%** said they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them at work.
- **75%** said they access to the resources needed to do their job effectively.

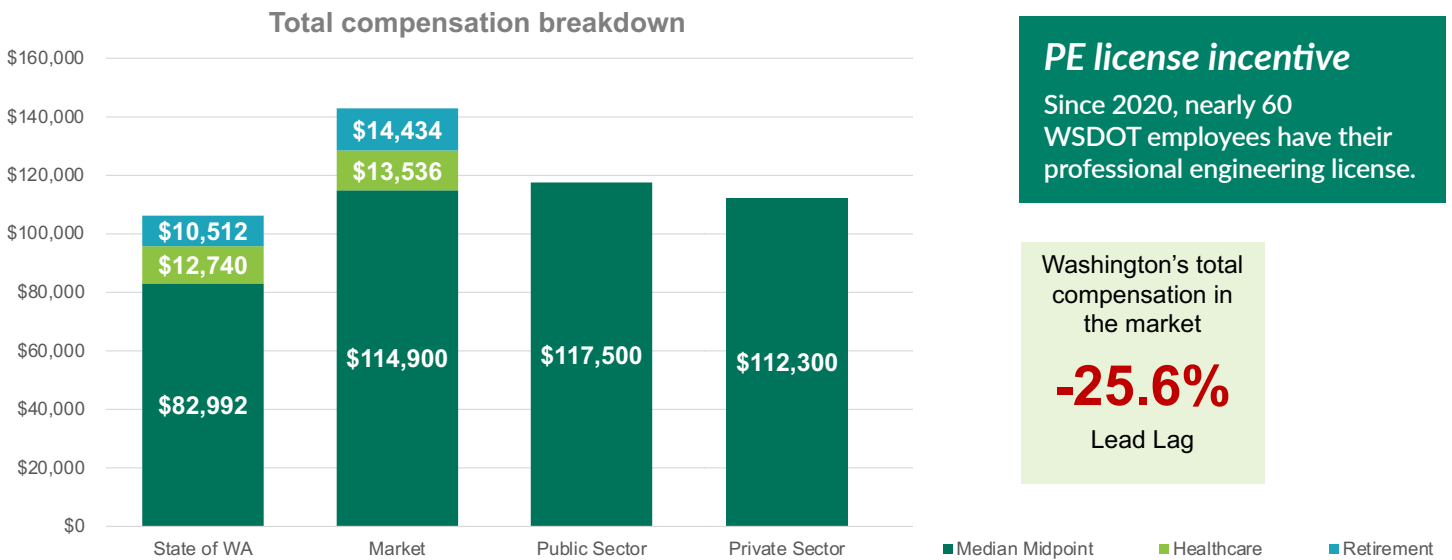
The top two key drivers of positive engagement for the agency are *feelings of belonging* and *feeling valued*. These findings support WSDOT’s work to prioritize a culture of engagement to continue building a strong and capable engineering workforce.

Competitive compensation

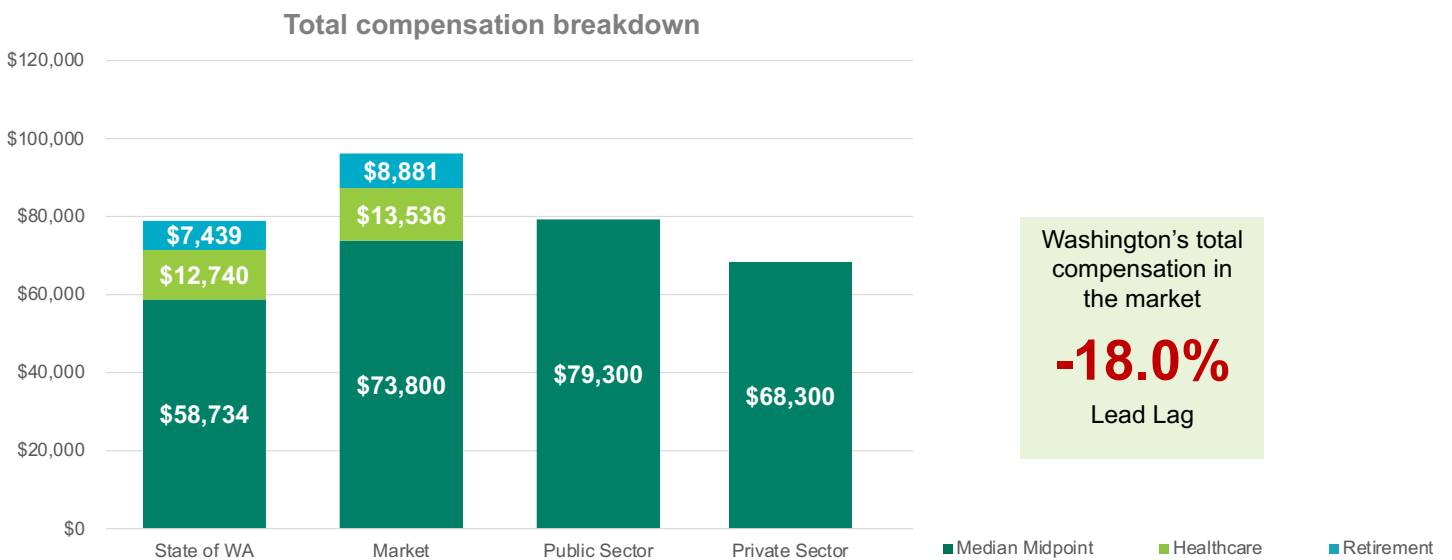
According to the 2024 Washington State Employee Compensation Survey of 53 in-state employers, WSDOT continues to offer below-market rates for engineering job classes.

Job series	Percent behind market 2016	Percent behind market 2018	Percent behind market 2020	Percent behind market 2022	Percent behind market 2024
Transportation Technical Engineer	38.5	44.8	18.1	26.2	25.6
Transportation Engineer 1	38.5	44.7	18.1	26.2	25.6
Transportation Technician 1	29.6	24.5	14.8	16.8	18.0
Transportation Planning Technician 1	26.3	18.5	15.7	15.0	17.7

Salary survey data Civil Engineer 3



Salary survey data Engineering Technician 3



Industry outreach

From July 2020 to July 2022, WSDOT conducted the following outreach with industry professionals.

- 118 meetings with Washington Asphalt Paving Association (WAPA), Washington Aggregates & Concrete Association (WACA), AGC, and Protec-17 including negotiations, check-ins with executive leadership, annual meetings, WAPA/WSDOT Work Zone Safety Committee meetings, and AGC/WSDOT Roadway, Structures, and Administration subcommittees.
- At least 53 meetings with ACEC, including an annual meeting, meetings with the Executive Liaison Committee, and Business Administration, Project Delivery, Structures and Geotechnical, and Design-Build Subcommittees.

WSDOT's outreach to WAPA and the Washington Aggregates & Concrete Association (WACA) resulted in the following key outcomes:

WAPA

- Developed methods to increase pavement life through modifying material specifications, increased testing measures and incentive/disincentive contract language.

WACA

- Discussed methods to improve concrete quality including review of aggregate approval process and modifying gravel specifications.

Additionally, ACEC outreach resulted in the following outcomes:

WSDOT/ACEC-WA Business Administration Subcommittee

- Improvements to the consultant rates review and approval process, including details associated with PPP Loan forgiveness and Safe Harbor Program incentives.

WSDOT/ACEC-WA Project Delivery Subcommittee

- Helped establish clearer guidance on the use of Bluebeam at WSDOT.
- Helped steer guidance on digital files to provide to contractors.
- Coordinated annual design manual update reviews.
- Updated design parameters worksheet tool.
- Reviewed and discussed Project Delivery Memorandum Policy.
- Reviewed PFA process and consistency assessment across the state.

WSDOT/ACEC-WA Structures Geotechnical Sub-Committee

- Shared information about successes with various WSDOT and private sector bridge design production groups with technical training, ChatGPT, and the use of new design technologies.
- Drove inter-disciplinary collaboration among bridge/structural, geotechnical and hydraulic focused on the state fish passage program through lessons learned and knowledge sharing.
- Identified risks in consultant designed projects and the possible mitigations to prepare for future preservation work.

WSDOT/AGC/ACEC-WA Design-Build Committee

- Gained better understanding of the factors that influence proposals on design-build projects including project size, stipend amount, statement of qualification / proposal effort and fixed price commitment through surveys.
- Updated Organizational Conflict of Interest Manual.
- Adjusted WSDOT's cost estimating process.
- Supported WSDOT to obtain statutory authority to use progressive design build project delivery without approval from the Capital Projects Advisory Review Board

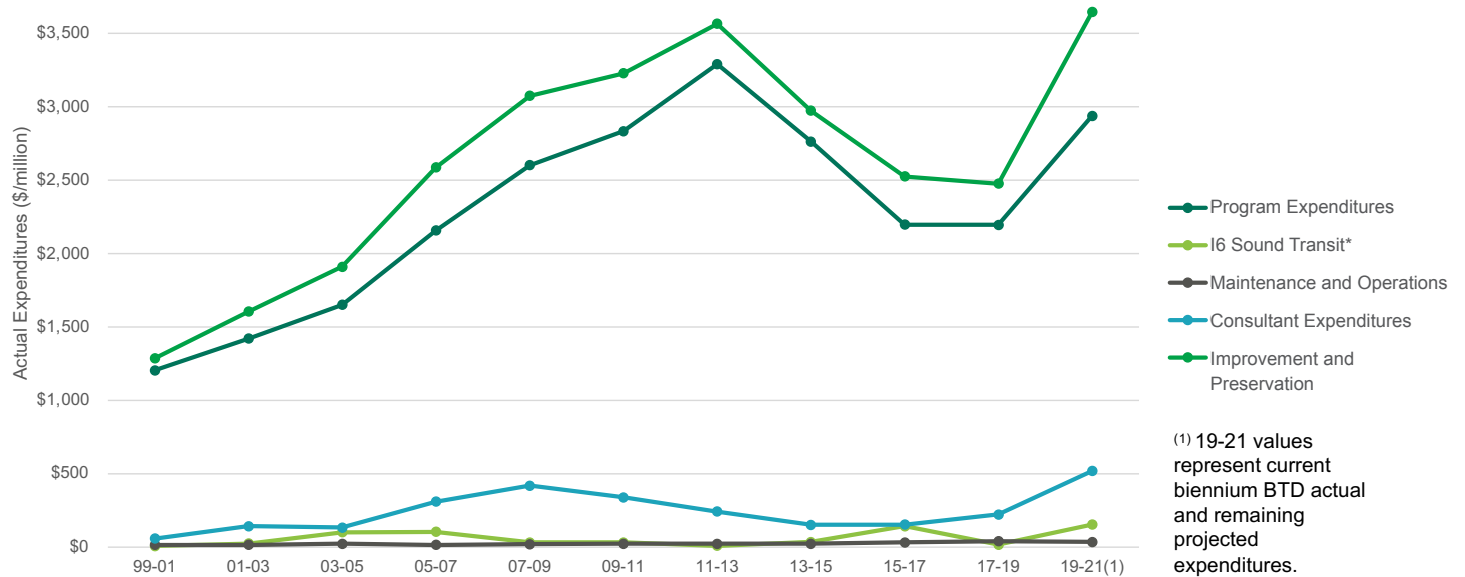
Goal 2: Sustainable staffing levels

WSDOT’s Construction Program Business Plan identified a Workforce Projection model to help forecast staffing levels and consultant needs. WSDOT staff and industry professionals need reliable projections for agency staffing levels and contracted work.

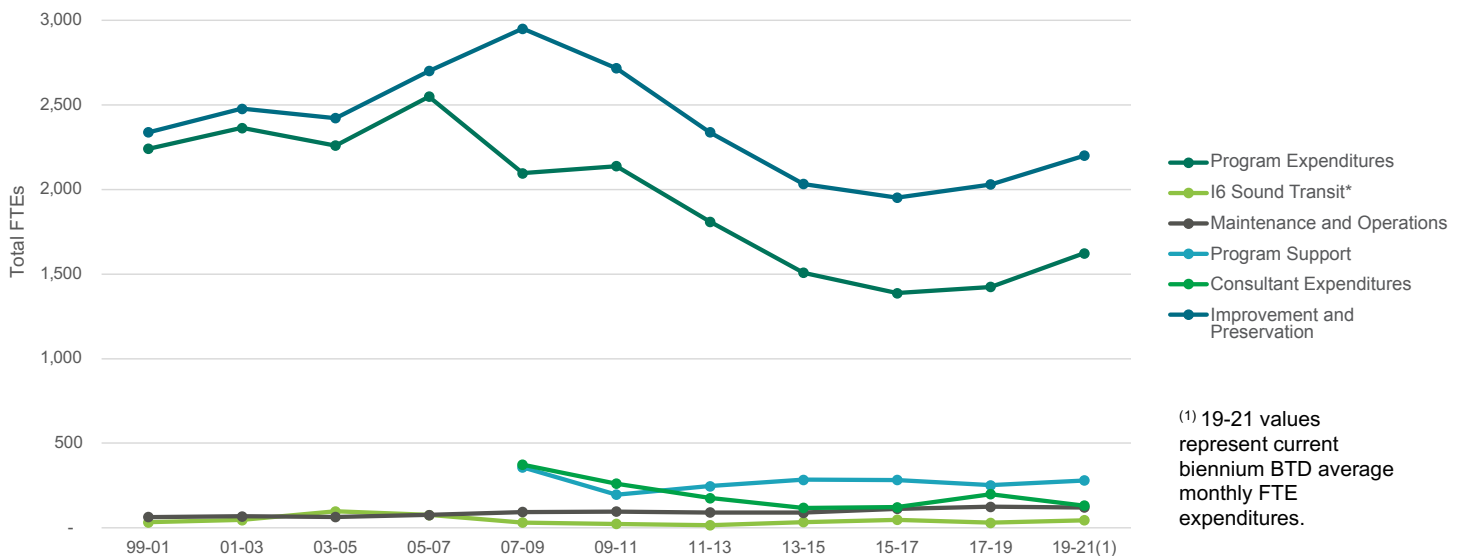
How is WSDOT doing?

WSDOT staff have updated historical full-time equivalent (FTE) employees and expenditures to show actual levels through the current biennium. WSDOT also updated the workforce projections to align with the current Legislative approved budget. As outlined under Goal 1, WSDOT shares these projections regularly with the Construction Program Business Plan Advisory group and agency leaders.

Historic expenditures



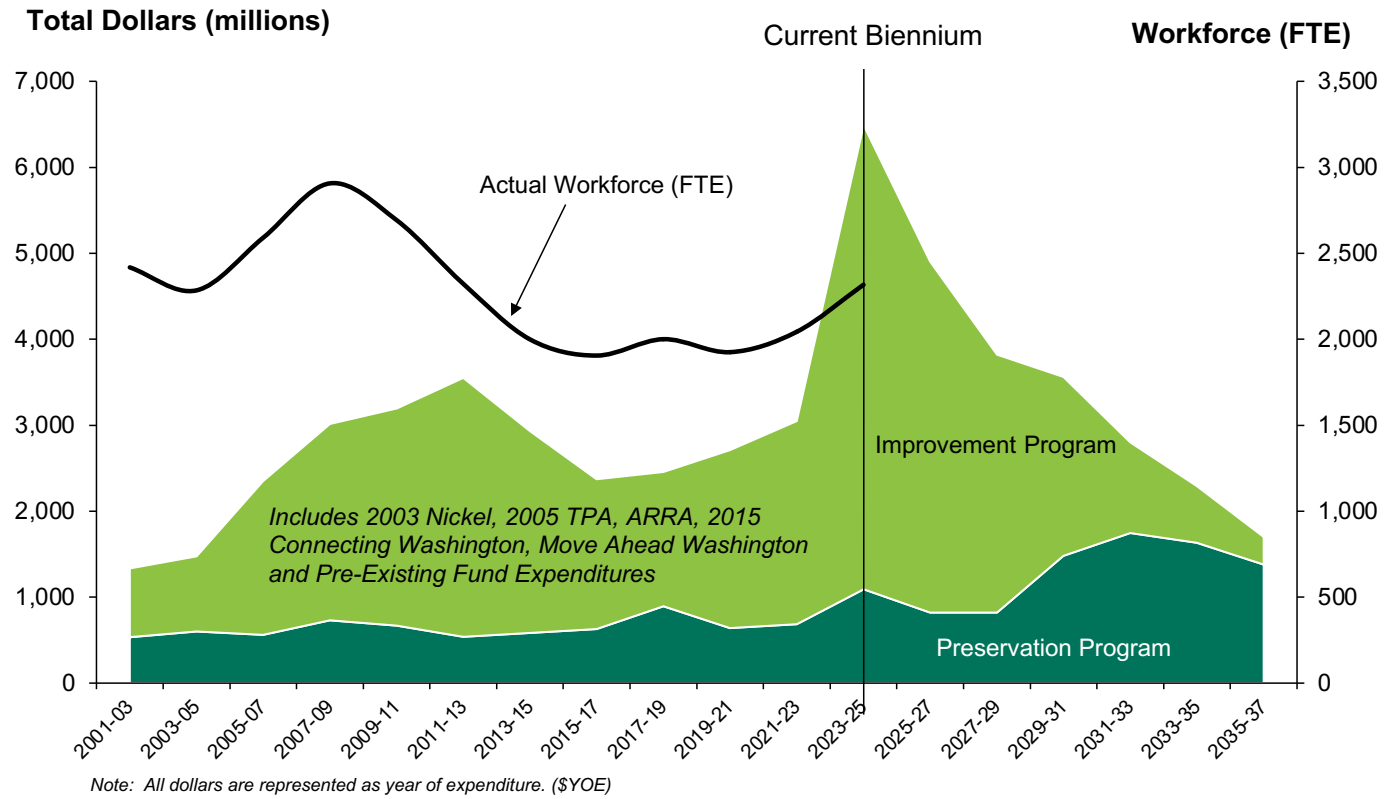
Historic FTEs



Note: Current FTE staffing levels are similar to pre-pandemic 2019 staffing levels.

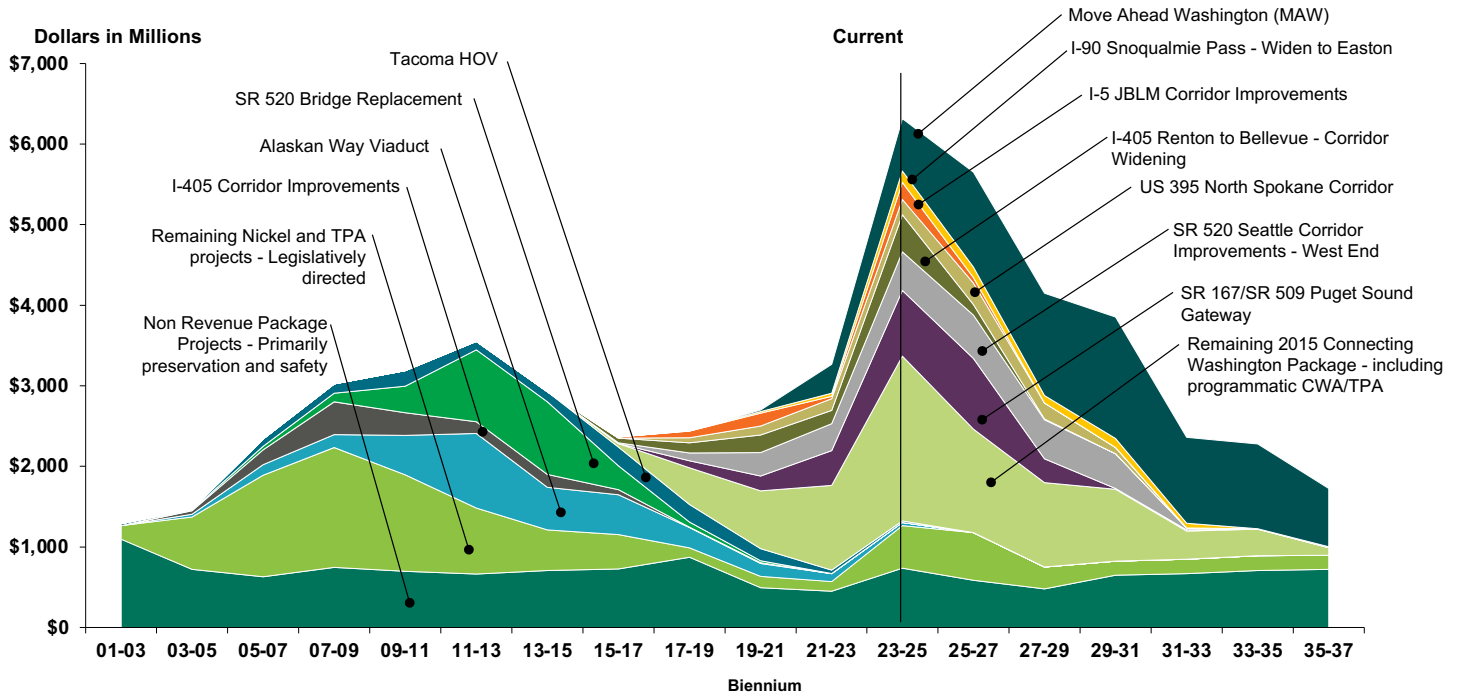
*WSDOT staff time spent on reimbursable work for Sound Transit projects.

Historic and future program expenditures and FTEs



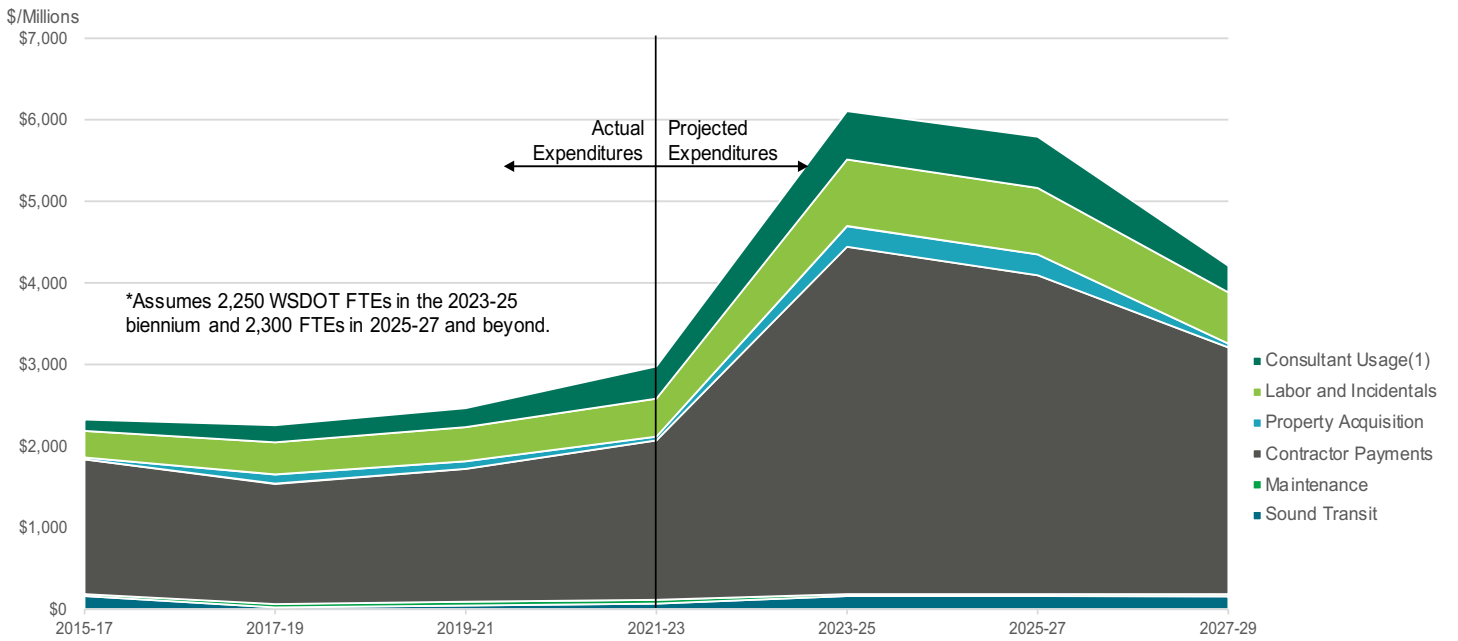
WSDOT Highway Construction Program with revenue packages

24LEGFIN (Excludes sub-programs I6 and I7, no error corrections)



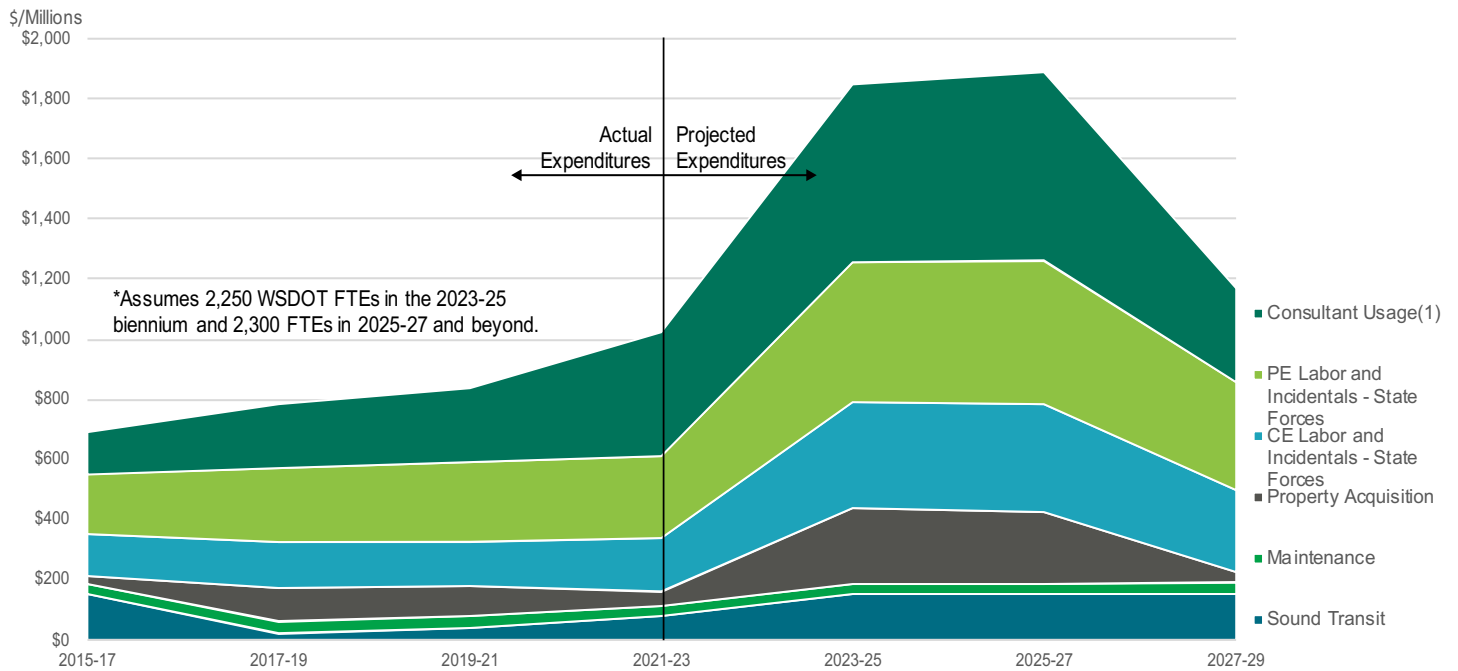
FTE workforce targets

Expenditure type estimate - 2,200 FTE workforce target



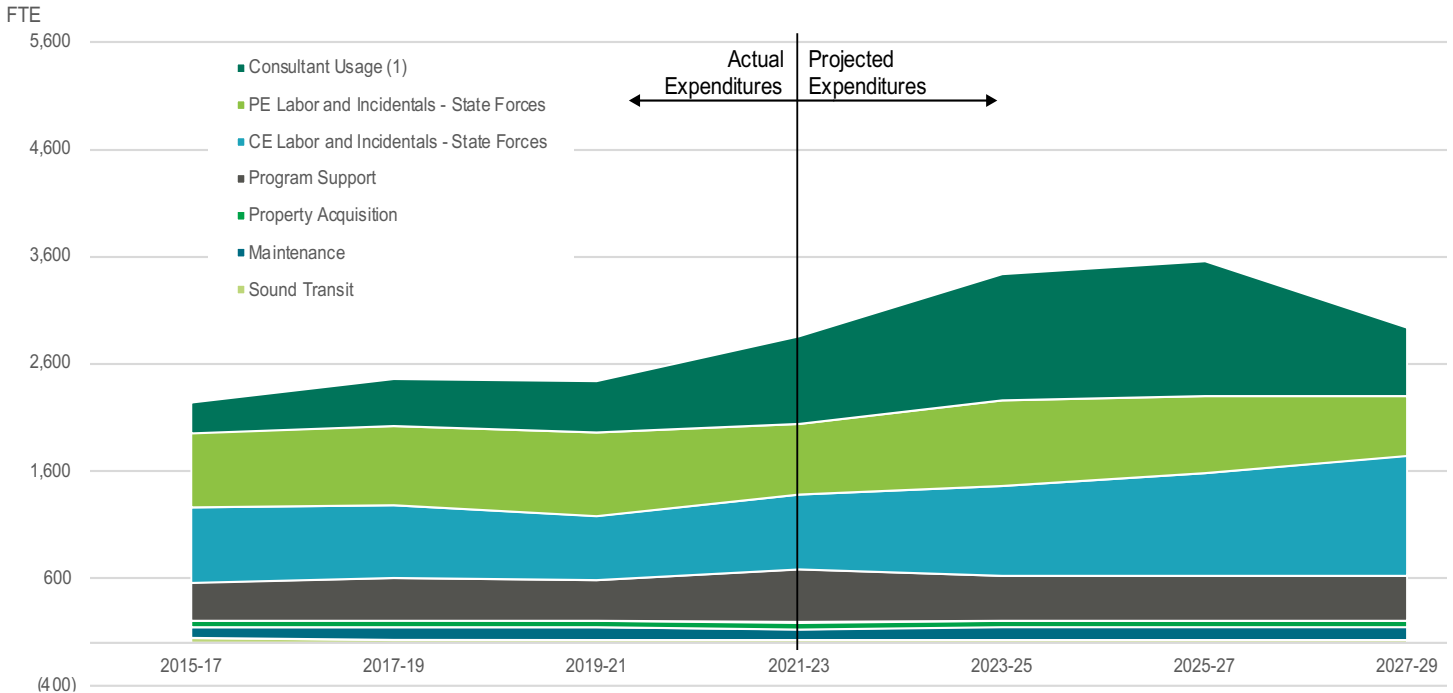
¹ Consultant usage does not include consultant support on design-build projects.

Expenditure type estimate - 2,200 FTE workforce target



¹ Consultant usage does not include consultant support on design-build projects.

FTE by expenditure type estimate -2,200 FTE workforce target



¹ Consultant usage does not include consultant support on design-build projects.

Trainings

- From August 2022 to July 2024, WSDOT offered one training on the Organizational Conflict of Interest Manual in partnership with industry

Five critical funding needs

Given our challenging financial outlook for the next biennium, WSDOT is focused on essential unfunded needs required to fulfill our mission to provide a safe, reliable and sustainable multimodal transportation system. The following summarizes the bare minimum necessary to keep Washingtonians safe, our infrastructure from further degrading and to meet our state's legal obligations.

Operations and maintenance (\$315-350 additional million per biennia)

This is the day-to-day work that keeps our system open, operating and functional. Operations and maintenance is integral to managing over 20,000 lane miles, 3,000 bridges and 1,100 traffic signal systems across the state. This program includes safety rest areas, mountain passes, and emergency response for disasters and traffic incidents. We have significant unfunded needs due to damaged assets, changing regulations and increased responsibilities without more funding.

For example, field operations suffer from building closures due to asbestos and outdated equipment, impacting employee efficiency, safety, morale and ability to recruit staff. These conditions pose safety risks and legal liabilities. Outdated equipment leads to longer response and recovery times during weather events, further disrupting roadways. Providing consistent funding would enhance efficiency and service to maintain our aging transportation system.



Safety (10-year need \$2.375 billion; 2025-27 need \$475 million)

Crashes on Washington roadways have escalated to the highest levels since 1990, with 810 fatalities and 2,875 serious injuries in 2023. Without significant intervention, fatal and serious crashes will continue to rise. Washington can mitigate this crisis by directing more resources for safety to state highways in population centers, rural areas and in work zones. We need an additional \$475 million in the 2025-27 biennium, including:

- \$300 million for regional safety to help cities and WSDOT partner to transform outdated state highways running through population centers where fatal crashes are more than double the state average. Funding would provide for reduced vehicle speeds, safer access to and along roads, and enhance intermodal connections around public transportation and schools.
- \$150 million to help rural counties and WSDOT implement proven safety countermeasures like installing new guardrail/barriers, speed management, enhanced striping and delineation and intersection improvements.
- \$25 million to enhance work zone safety through technological innovation and enhanced enforcement efforts.

These investments not only align with Washington's Target Zero safety priorities but also bolster efforts to modernize and transform highways into safer, more inclusive spaces for all road users.



Preservation (10-year need three billion dollars; 2025-27 need \$500-600 million)

Preservation provides the longer-lasting work that extends the overall life of a roadway. This includes repaving roads; painting and rehabilitating bridges; replacing bridges; rehabilitating safety rest areas and replacing deteriorated culverts. The state's transportation infrastructure is the backbone of our economy and way of life. Decades of underfunding preservation have put the health of our system, and safety to communities we serve, in jeopardy.

Pavement and bridges across the state are showing signs of underfunding for the last 20 years. Current investment is 40 percent of what is needed to preserve our roads, bridges and other facilities to a state of good repair. As a result, people are experiencing system deterioration with unplanned emergency roadway closures and reduced speed limits on highways. It will take time to address the preservation backlog for the significant parts of the system have deteriorated.

Addressing our vast preservation needs requires a steady approach. We need to build investment over 30 years toward a fully funded state of good repair. The first step in this investment strategy requires an additional \$500-600 million in the 25-27 budget, steadily increasing investment in future years. The first 10-year investment would be an additional two to three billion dollars in preservation funding.



Fish barrier removal (five billion dollars)

In March 2013, a federal court mandated WSDOT fix barriers to fish passage, upheld by a U.S. Supreme Court decision in June 2018 leading to a permanent injunction. About 1,000 culverts under state highways are affected. By June 2024, WSDOT has improved 146 barriers, improving access to 50% of blocked fish habitat. To comply with the injunction deadline of 2030, we need to fix around 300 more barriers to restore access to 90% blocked habitat which requires \$3.5 billion, along with addressing 75 newly identified barriers needing an additional estimated \$500 million. Additionally, one billion dollars is needed for structurally failing culverts. There's a long-term need for more funding to address deferred culverts to open the remaining 10 percent of blocked habitat and newly identified barriers, including those at the end of their useful life.



Restoring ferry service (\$5.25-\$5.5 billion; 2025-27 need an additional \$315 million)

Washington's ferry system is vital for maintaining a reliable and resilient transportation network, particularly for communities who depend on ferry service. The focus is on sustaining and operating the system efficiently rather than expanding it. This includes transitioning to hybrid-electric power by 2040, which is essential for emission reduction, resiliency, and cost savings. As WSF rebuilds its fleet, the vast majority of costs associated with building new ferries are related to shipbuilding, not transitioning to a hybrid-electric propulsion system. Funding is required for new hybrid electric ferries, converting existing ferries to hybrid-electric, and terminal electrification.

Terminal and vessel preservation needs steadily increase posing risks to service. This includes replacing aging terminal buildings and infrastructure and maintaining ferries to extend their service life.

Modernizing fleet operations technology is a priority, moving towards a more digital environment with mobile equipment for crew members and electronic updates for consistent fleetwide usage. Despite a 40 percent increase in funding over the past four years, additional staffing is needed to support new programs and resources, particularly in operations, vessels, finance, administration and planning.

Goal 3: Project delivery

WSDOT completed Goal 3: enacting and accomplishing the majority of recommendations of the Joint Transportation Committee's design-build study. The agency continues to embrace innovative project delivery methods, including design-build and progressive design-build to maximize efficiencies in cost and schedule as our state invests billions of dollars into critical infrastructure improvements. Currently, WSDOT is delivering 4 progressive design-build projects, 38 design-build projects and about 200 design-bid-build projects.

In 2023-2024 WSDOT continued exploring additional project delivery methods. The following table summarizes WSDOT's current focus areas and status updates

Strategy	Strategy status
WSDOT/design-builder evaluation	Work in progress (Pilot use, WAC change development)
Small business capacity building project goal	Complete Q4 2023
Worker safety project goal	Complete Q4 2023
Capital Projects Advisory Review Board (CPARB) three year progressive design-build certification	Cancelled – Pursuing RCW change
RCW 47.20.780 change for progressive-design build	Work in progress (Agency request legislation)
CPARB approval of additional progressive design-build project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract 9567 (fish barrier), Q1 2020 Contract 9874 (fish barrier), Q3 2022 Contract XE3480, (fish barrier) Q3, 2023 Contract XL5105, Q1, 2024 	Complete Q1 2024
Organizational conflict of interest policy	New update to address preliminary hydraulic design conflict, Q4 2024 anticipated
WSDOT-specific prevailing wage effective date change ruling for design-build projects by Department of Labor and Industries eliminating wage concerns between the time of proposal submittal and contract execution	Complete Q1 2024
Stipend increase	Complete Q1 2024
Staff training (design-build academy)	Work in progress, Q4 2024 anticipated
Industry feedback on design-build	Work in progress, developed surveys Q4 2023.
WSDOT/industry design-build fish barrier task force	Ongoing, created Q4, 2023



Next steps

WSDOT will continue meeting with the Advisory group to identify how they will guide WSDOT in updating the Construction Program Business Plan leading up to the next biennial report to the Legislature. The group will advise WSDOT on actions to increase employee engagement, and retain, recruit and train workforce and consultants to ramp up to deliver the increasing construction program. WSDOT will provide the next biennial progress report to the Legislature on September 30, 2026.

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