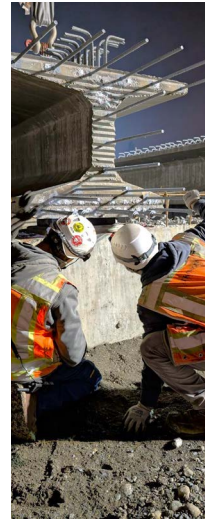
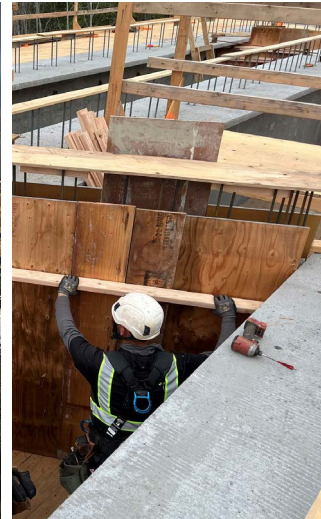
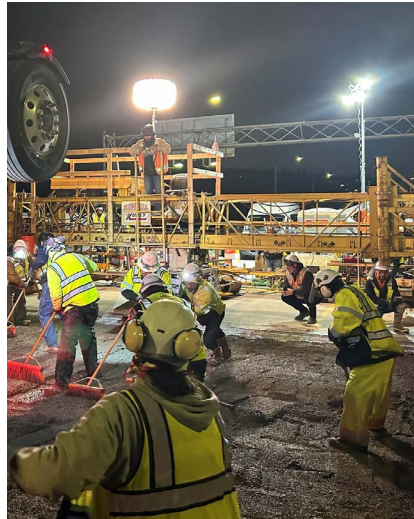


Biennial Progress Report



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 through its 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 improvements and preservation program by addressing staffing needs in a productive, sustainable and predictable way.

Goal 3: *Project delivery*

WSDOT will focus on growing expertise in innovative project delivery methods, including leveraging progressive design-build (PDM) project delivery for suitable projects and exploring other project delivery methods, such as GC/CM, Multiple Award Task Order Contracting (MATOC), alliancing and Public-Private Partnership (P3) models.

WSDOT priorities

In line with Construction Program Business Plan goals of strong ownership and stewardship, sustainable staffing levels and project delivery, WSDOT is focused on five critical funding needs.



Preservation

Washington's highway system includes 20,679 highway lane miles, over 3,000 bridges, 1,100 traffic signal systems, 10 major mountain passes and close to 50 safety rest areas. These assets are showing signs of underfunding for the last 20 years. Preservation work extends the life of these assets and keeps people and goods moving safely, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Fish barrier removal

WSDOT constructs projects that remove barriers that restrict or block historic salmon and trout spawning and rearing habitats. Consistent funding is required to continue this work in line with the federal court injunction.



Operations and maintenance

Day-to-day operations and maintenance keep our system open, operating and functional. Funding gaps caused by underfunding, increased responsibilities and damaged assets lead to deferred maintenance that negatively impacts the system.



Safety

The state has adopted a Safe System Approach (SSA) that recognizes the interconnected elements of safer road users, safer land use planning, safer speeds, safer roads, safer vehicles and effective post-crash care and response. Effective implementation of SSA requires stable funding to advance projects that improve safety of all road users.



Keeping ferries running

WSDOT operates the largest ferry fleet in the United States. Keeping these services running in a sustainable and efficient way requires sustained investment.

Message from advisory group

Over the last two years, we continued our partnership with WSDOT as it implements the Construction Program Business Plan and delivers the peak of the design program. This work continued as WSDOT grappled with unprecedented emergency work and constrained budgets. Continued focus on recruitment and retention and a strong partnership with industry have been instrumental in moving this plan forward, despite challenging circumstances.

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 state's transportation system. The data in this progress report and our experiences working with WSDOT highlight three priorities for consideration by the Legislature:

- Providing stable, predictable and appropriate funding levels.
- Closing the engineering salary gap.
- Exploring alternative delivery methods while recognizing their limitations.

Stable, predictable and appropriate funding levels are required for WSDOT to maintain its role as a strong owner and steward. We remain committed to WSDOT's priorities of preservation; fish barrier removal; operations and maintenance; safety; and ferries. The agency continues to face sustained budget gaps in delivering on these priorities. We appreciate the Legislature's steps to fund some preservation and maintenance work in the 2026 supplemental budget. Funding gaps and uncertainty, however, remain a persistent challenge that will require WSDOT to face tradeoffs that will impact the traveling public.

The engineering salary gap remains a significant issue that has a long-term impact of WSDOT's ability to recruit and retain its workforce. We recognize that WSDOT's approach to recruitment and retention has yielded some good results despite consistent salary gaps. These efforts, however, will have diminishing returns if the salary gap continues making it even more difficult to attract and retain the skilled workforce the agency needs. We urge the Legislature to prioritize taking steps to help close this salary gap.

Alternative delivery methods have improved program delivery, and we are encouraged by WSDOT's efforts to continue exploring these methods as described in revised goal #3. Successful implementation of most recommendations from the Joint Transportation Committee's design-build study is a major accomplishment of the CPBP and we are committed to continuing this momentum with WSDOT. It is important for us to note that while we see benefits, these methods are no substitute for the stable, predictable and appropriate funding WSDOT needs to meet its priorities. Additionally, selecting the wrong delivery method for a project can end up increasing costs. We encourage the Legislature to support WSDOT's efforts to explore methods including General Contractor/Construction Manager (GCC/CM), Multiple Award Task Order Contracting (MATOC), Alliancing and Public-Private Partnerships (P3), but urge caution about expectations that alternate delivery methods will resolve funding gaps and budget concerns.

We appreciate our continued partnership with WSDOT as we deliver this program.

Van Collins

Tyler Kimberley

Sarah Lorenzini

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

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.	● 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.	● Maintain a workforce development toolkit. ● Conduct and report 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.	● Conduct more than 84 meetings with construction industry partners. ● Work with industry partners to create a better plan for claims notice to make the process easier to follow. ● Hold more than 65 meetings with ACEC.

Goal 2: Sustainable staffing levels

Strategies	Actions
Develop a staffing forecast through 2026 that avoids significant increases or reductions in staffing levels, communicate projections with staff and update every biennium.	● Update FTE and expenditure actuals through June 2026. ● Maintain a 6-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.	● Ongoing coordination between WSDOT Human Resources and Advisory Group with PROTEC17. ● Share 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.	● Conduct industry outreach as outlined in Goal 1. ● Continue 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

By 2024, 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 four progressive design-build projects, 29 design-build projects and about 200 design-bid-build projects.

Revised Goal 3, 2026-2028

WSDOT will continue fixed-price design build project delivery while leveraging progressive design-build (PDB) project delivery experience for suitable projects. We will also explore other project delivery methods, such as GC/CM, Multiple Award Task Order Contracting (MATOC) and Alliancing.

Strategies	Actions
Continue expansion of PDB on appropriate projects.	Conduct PDB training, share lessons learned and create resource library of prior projects.
Increase institutional knowledge of GCCM project delivery.	Collaborate with agencies familiar with GCCM delivery to develop lessons learned and best practices.
Add delivery methods such as MATOC, and Alliancing and Public-Private Partnership (P3) models delivery methods to agency’s toolbox.	Collaborate with agencies familiar with MATOC, and Alliancing and P3 to determine feasibility and any necessary policy changes.
Investigate applicability of adapting Project Delivery Method Selection Guidance (PDMSG) to address feasibility of other delivery methods	Develop criteria in PDMSG that addresses the characteristics of additional delivery methods.



2017 PLAN STATUS UPDATE

Goal 1: Strong owner and stewardship

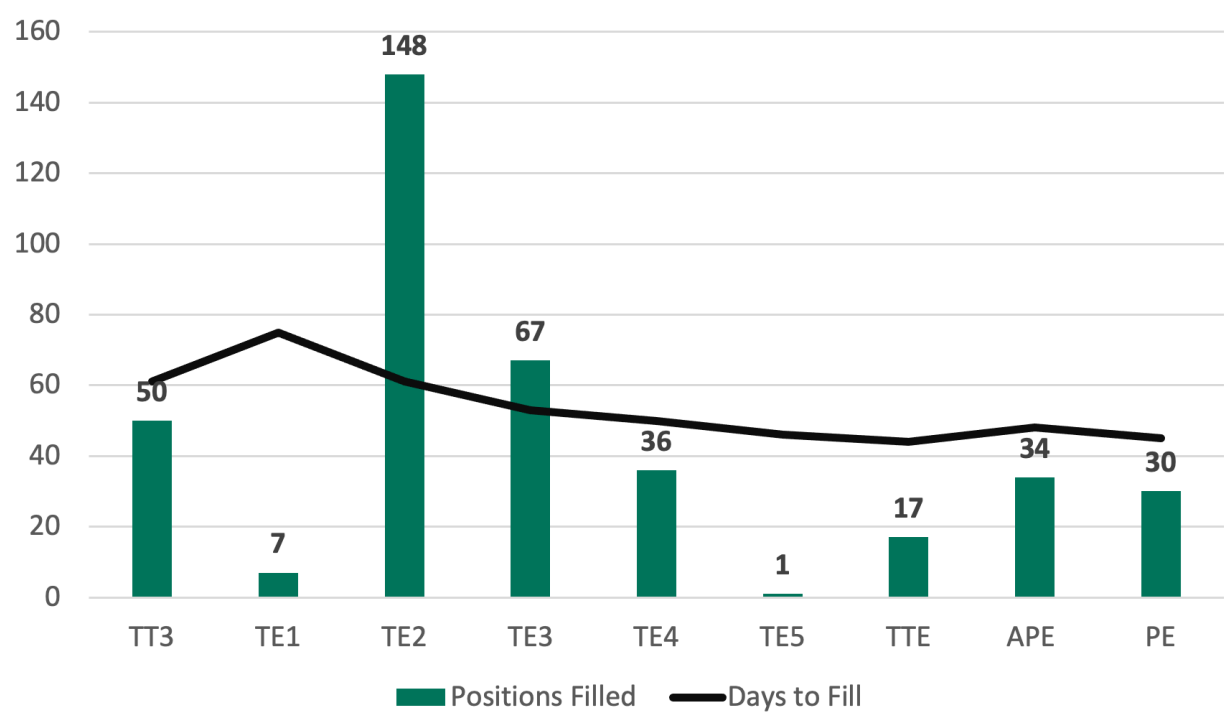
Contractors, consultants and taxpayers expect WSDOT to provide quality staff who are capable and knowledgeable about building, preserving and operating the state’s multimodal transportation system. The focus of the plan included developing a strong owner strategy as it relates to recruitment, staff development, retention and compensation for engineering group positions. WSDOT is also 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 54 days between fiscal years 2025 and 2026. WSDOT made 390 new hire appointments in fiscal years 2025 and 2026.

Average days to fill and number of positions filled



WSDOT attended

132

EVENTS

between January 2025 to present.

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 outreach venues to enhance and diversify the talent search.

In 2025 and 2026, Recruiters also represented WSDOT at over 60 recruiting fairs and outreach events each year. 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, veterans and more.

Training and staff development

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) training enrollments
 - 2025 – 65 attendees
 - 2026 – 75 registered attendees

Leadership development

Gonzaga Center for Lifelong Learning:

- Women in Leadership is a 14-week hybrid course designed for professionals who wish to advance women in the workplace and work toward gender equity. The course exposes attendees to research and studies about women in the workplace. The course also offers practical skills for overcoming common barriers women face in the workplace. Since fall 2024, six WSDOT staff completed this course.
- Authentic Leadership Program is a 3-day, in-person leadership experience focused on deepening self-awareness, developing leadership identity and enhancing communication skills. Since fall 2024, nine staff have completed this program.
- Certificate in Foundational Leadership is a 9-month hybrid program designed to accelerate leadership skills through practical learning, mentorship and assessments. Since fall 2024, four staff have completed this program.

Career development

- The Regional Assistant Project Engineer Prep Group supports supervisors advancing toward management positions. The group meets quarterly and focuses on building technical and personal skills needed to become a leader.
- Construction Inspector Training is offered to all new Construction Inspectors, encompassing 10 recurring training courses and several just-in-time training sessions.
- Engineering & Maintenance Partnership resulted in cross training between engineering inspectors and highway maintenance staff for a better understanding of the work of each division. Additionally, maintenance staff members are participating in temporary transportation technician positions for the summer 2026 construction season.
- The PE incentive program encourages more engineers to seek their professional engineering license. In total, 131 employees have received PE incentive since January 2019, with 85% remaining employed with WSDOT and 55% promoted within the agency.
- WSDOT offers \$4,000 a year in tuition reimbursement for successful completion of classes or training conducted, outside of work hours, directly related to employees' current job or future WSDOT career ladder.

Employee engagement programs

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

WSDOT sees value in investing in our workforce through mentorship programs. **In 2025 and 2026, over 390 employees participated in the mentorship program,** developing career skills and leadership, collaborating across divisions and transferring institutional knowledge.



Early career engagement program

WSDOT provides opportunities for entry-level engineers to learn about many specialized aspects of WSDOT programs and projects through presentations and hands-on site visits that they would not otherwise get to experience early in their careers. This program aims to focus on the retention of employees who are early in their career.

All about WSDOT, an annual open house-style event, is aimed at educating and retaining employees. WSDOT staff host tables to share many unique programs and projects. Employees are invited to visit tables, talk with presenters and learn more about areas of the agency.

Health and wellness

Some employees participating in wellness committees attended the Healthy Worksite Summit, dedicated to making healthy places to learn, share and explore ways to create a workplace where people can connect and thrive. WSDOT also partners with Washington State Employee Credit Union to host financial wellness workshops featuring topics like credit reporting, education payoff, identify theft, emergency planning and financial management.

Peer support program

This statewide program offers group and individual resources and support for employees experiencing trauma. Peer support members are chosen through a rigorous process and trained by nationally recognized expert in Critical Incident Stress Management. WSDOT designates two leaders within each region to coordinate peer support meetings, engage regional peer support team members, and outside resources from law enforcement, fire service, WSDOT Memorial Foundation and other organizations as needed. These groups have responded to many traumatic events affecting multiple crews, individuals and families across the state. The positive impacts of their work have been felt far and wide, earning trust and a sigh of relief when peer support arrives to assist their fellow co-workers.

Fun committees

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



Internship Program

Of the 282 interns that WSDOT hired in 2025 and 2026, 100 remained employed with or returned to WSDOT for new employment opportunities. During the program, interns participated in virtual events and field visits to worksites and program offices across the state:

- Introduction to Toll Division.
- Introduction to Hydraulics.
- Interstate Bridge Replacement Presentation.
- Introduction to Avalanche Program.
- I-90 Wildlife Crossing.
- King County International Airport – Boeing Field.
- I-90 Vantage Bridge.
- Fish Passage Site Visit.
- Tacoma Narrows Bridge.

Programs for students pursuing civil engineering education

Civil Engineering Technician Program

In Spring 2026, the program celebrated its first graduating group of four employees, who earned their two-year Civil Engineering degree from Bellingham Tech and Yakima Valley College. Designed to increase the number of trained Civil Engineering Technicians, the program supports project delivery needs while creating valuable career advancement opportunities. Six new employees will begin the program in Fall 2026.

University of Washington Fellowship Program

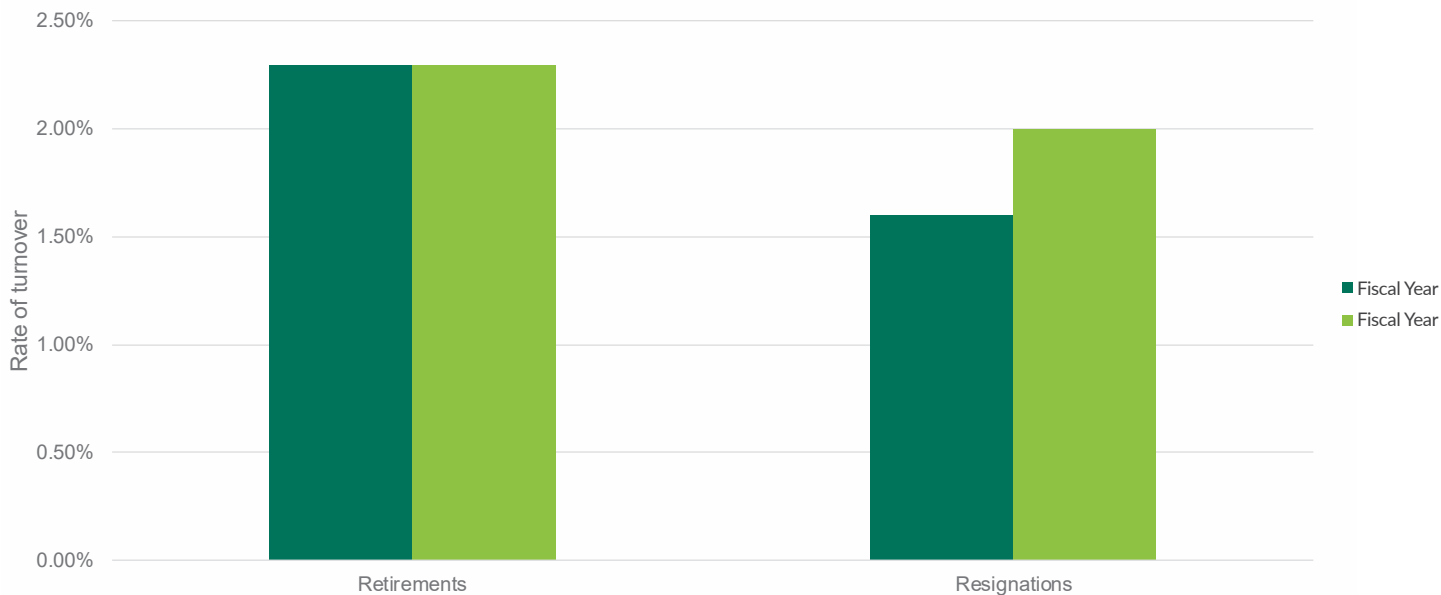
WSDOT continues to support the Fellowship Program in partnership with the University of Washington. Nine students have completed the Master’s program in Transportation Engineering, and four more students begin in Fall 2026. Through this program, WSDOT continues to provide funding for students to maintain salaries and benefits while attending school full time.

Community outreach events

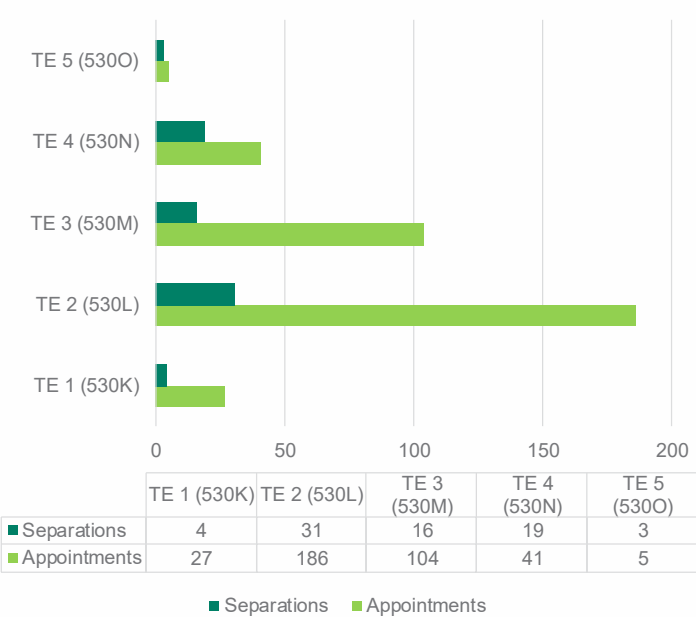
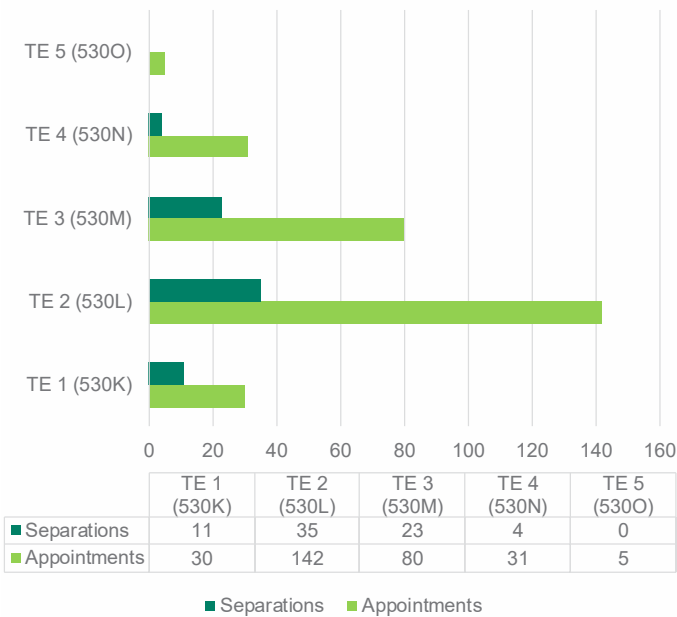
- STEM outreach program:** In 2025, WSDOT’s Eastern Region launched the STEM Outreach program, inviting local schools to participate. Teachers attended AASHTO training and WSDOT staff participated at four school-sponsored STEM events in the area.
- Construction Career Days:** In 2025, more than 10,000 students participated in this annual industry-sponsored event aimed at introducing high school students to careers in construction. Students met industry professionals and gained hands on experience, including operating equipment, bending conduit, welding, masonry or just swinging a hammer.
- Take Your Kids to Work Day:** WSDOT opened its doors to the next generation of transportation professionals during Take Your Kids to Work Day. Employees’ kids got a firsthand look at the important work happening behind the scenes of our state highways.

Retention

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

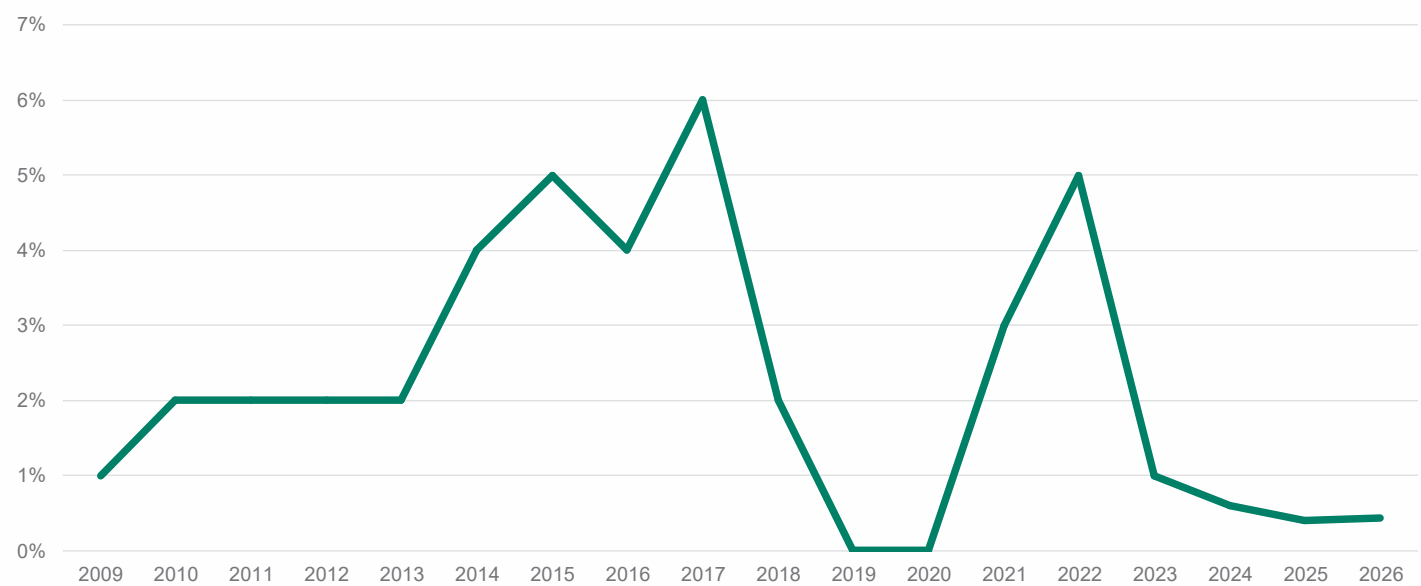


Appointments to separations



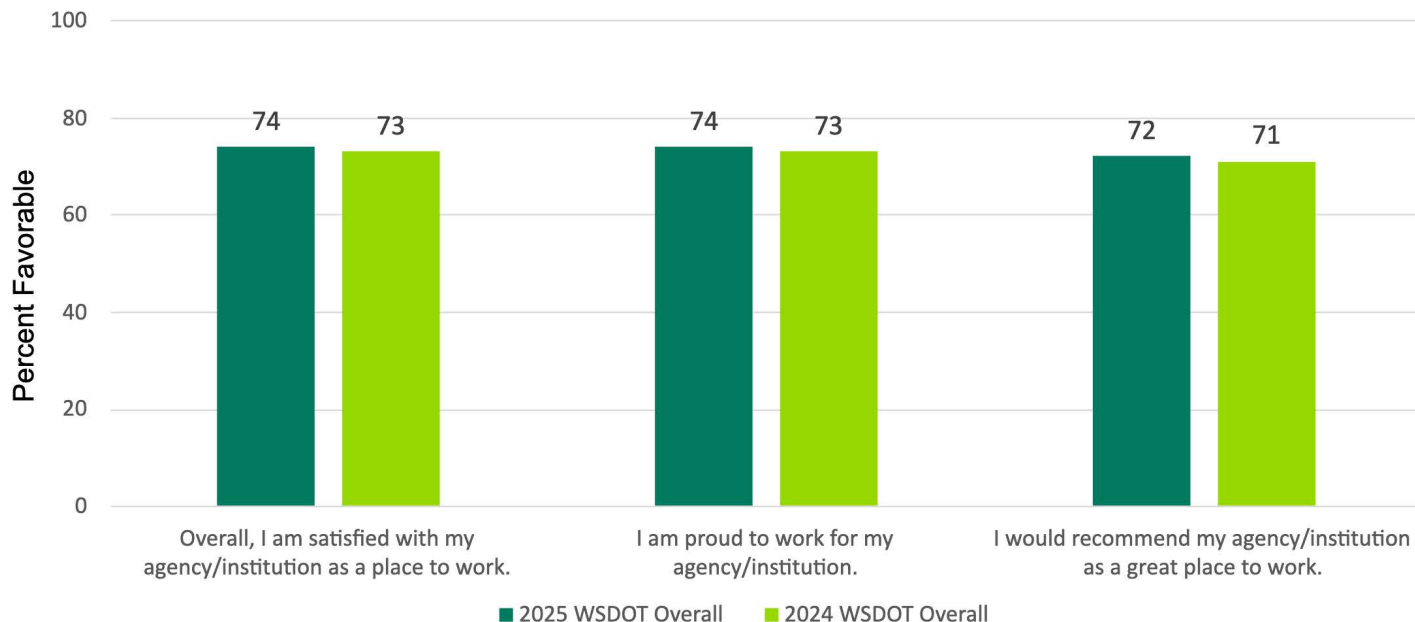
TE = Transportation Engineer

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



Employee engagement

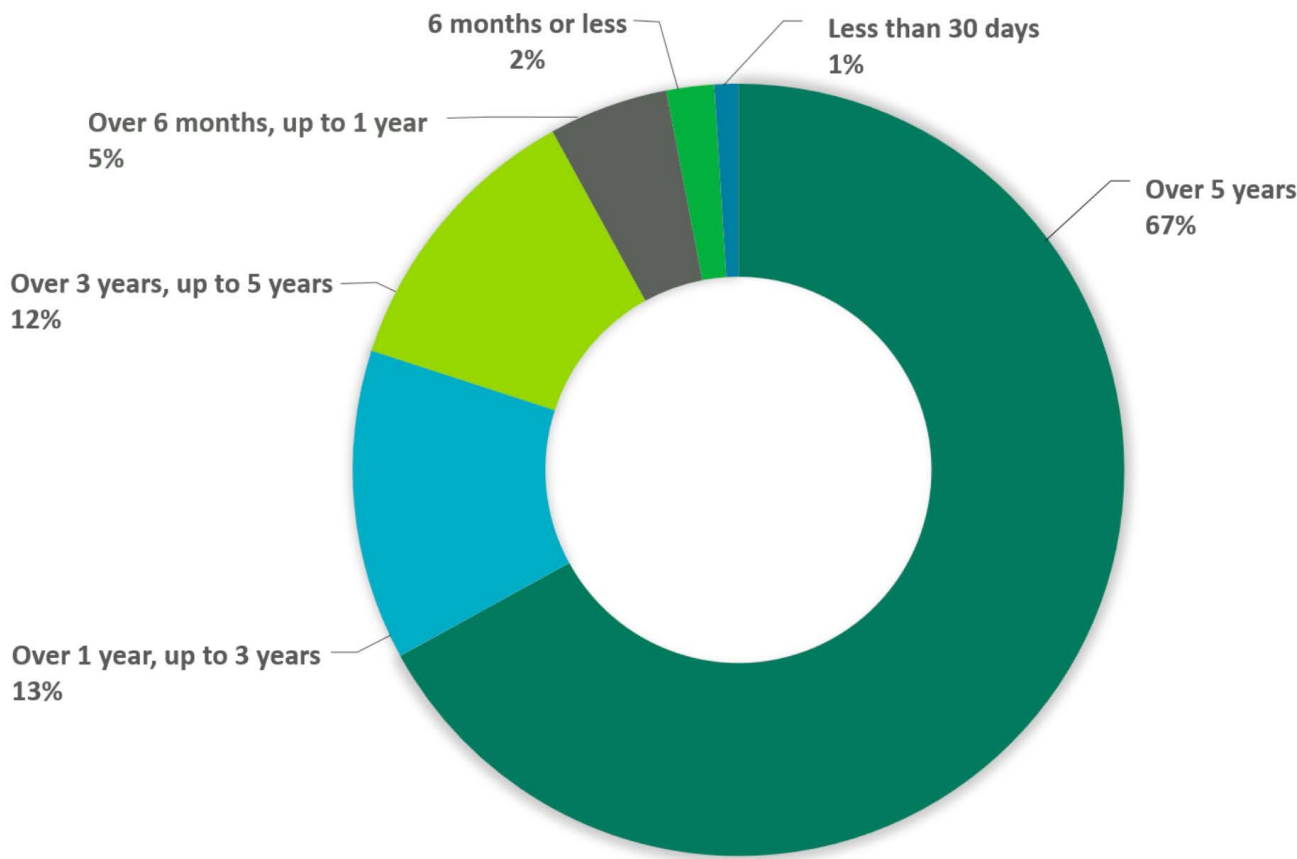
Engagement has remained stable overall with minimal change



Top 10 factors employees selected that would most improve their satisfaction with their job.



Employee intent to stay



Competitive compensation

According to the 2026 Washington State Employee Compensation Survey of 54 public-sector entities, 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	Percent behind market 2026
Transportation Technical Engineer	38.5	44.8	18.1	26.2	25.6	24.0%
Transportation Engineer 1	38.5	44.7	18.1	26.2	25.6	24.0%
Transportation Technician 1	29.6	24.5	14.8	16.8	18.0	18.0%
Transportation Planning Technician 1	26.3	18.5	15.7	15.0	17.7	12.0%

WSDOT’s Civil Engineering 3 compensation in the market

-24%

Lead Lag

WSDOT’s Engineering Technician 2 compensation in the market

-18%

Lead Lag

Industry outreach

From July 2024 to July 2026, WSDOT conducted the following outreach with industry professionals:

- More than 84 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 Paving Work Zone Risk Reduction Committee meetings, and AGC/WSDOT Roadway, Structures, Administration and Design-Build subcommittees.
- At least 65 meetings with ACEC, including annual meetings, meetings with the Executive Liaison Committee, and Business Administration, Project Delivery, Structures and Geotechnical and Design-Build Subcommittees.

WSDOT's outreach to WAPA and WACA resulted in the following key outcomes:

- Trained contractor and WSDOT staff on best practices and advancements in the industry.
- Improved the timeliness and accuracy of test data.
- Developed methods to increase pavement life through modifying material specifications.
- Improved communication through partnering.
- Reviewed and investigated advancements in mix design including Balanced Mix Design and using highly modified asphalts.
- Identified ways to improve consistency in testing between QC, QA and QV.
- Participated in trials to develop Environmental Product Declarations for the hot mix asphalt paving industry in Washington.
- Incorporated the Chip Seal contractors into the WAPA team and updated Chip Seal specifications.
- Increased use of connected devices such as arrow boards and portable change message signs.
- Developed new specifications for the use of Mobile Barrier Trailers and Movable Barriers (zipper barrier)
- Modified specifications to increase the use and presence of uniformed law enforcement that includes both active and passive enforcement.
- Discussed the use of Work Zone Speed Safety cameras in active work zones.

ACEC and AGC outreach resulted in the following outcomes:

- Improved consultant rates review and approval process including the Safe Harbor program.
- Developed contract boilerplate language updates regarding Prompt Pay and usage of artificial intelligence.
- Developed contract administration and boilerplate language updates regarding Federal and State contract goals.
- Provided clarity on the use of Bluebeam at WSDOT.
- Coordinated annual design manual update reviews.
- Reviewed and provided comments on WSDOT's updated design parameters worksheet tool.
- Reviewed and discussed Project Delivery Memorandum Policy updates.
- Updated Plan for approval on PFA process to provide a single WSDOT checklist across the state.



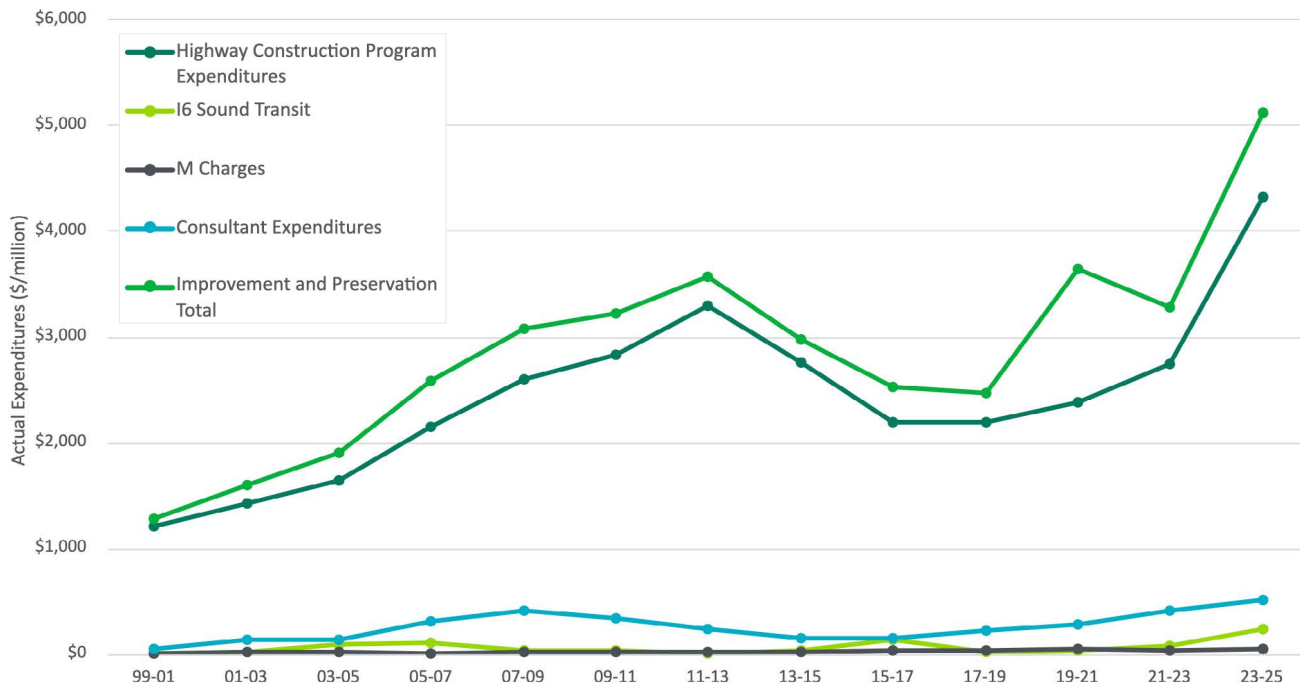
Goal 2: Sustainable staffing levels

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

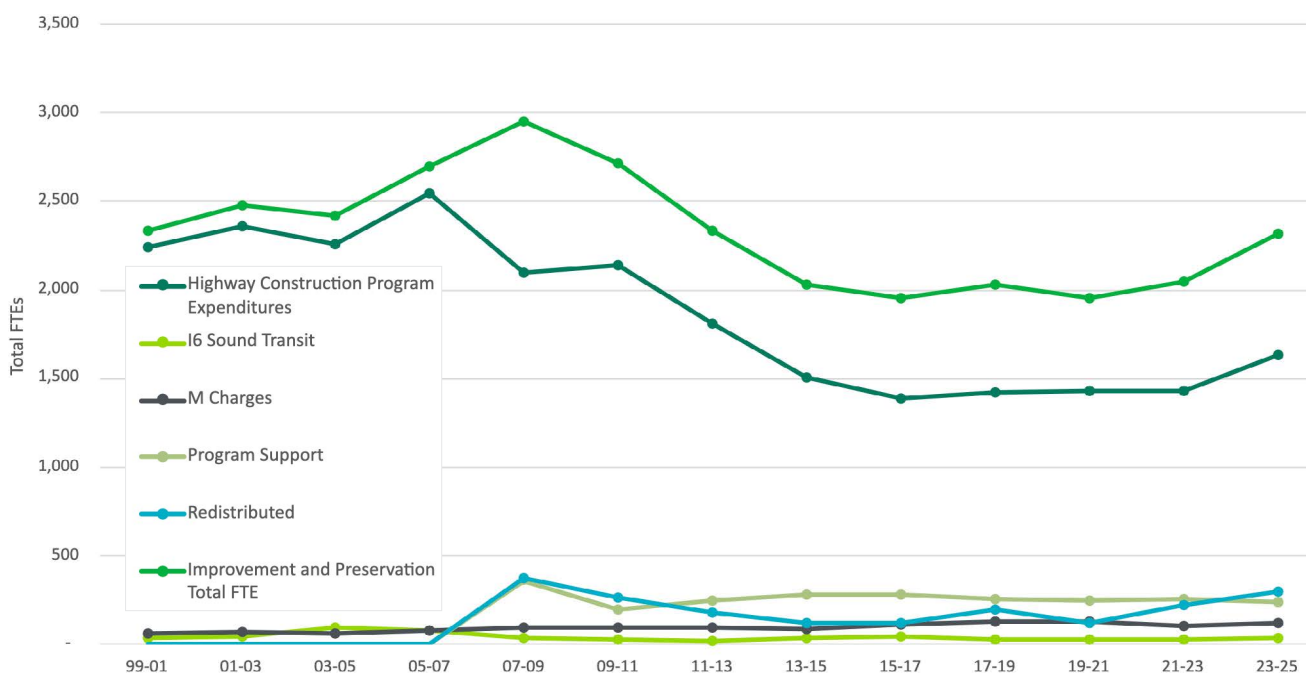
How is WSDOT doing?

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.

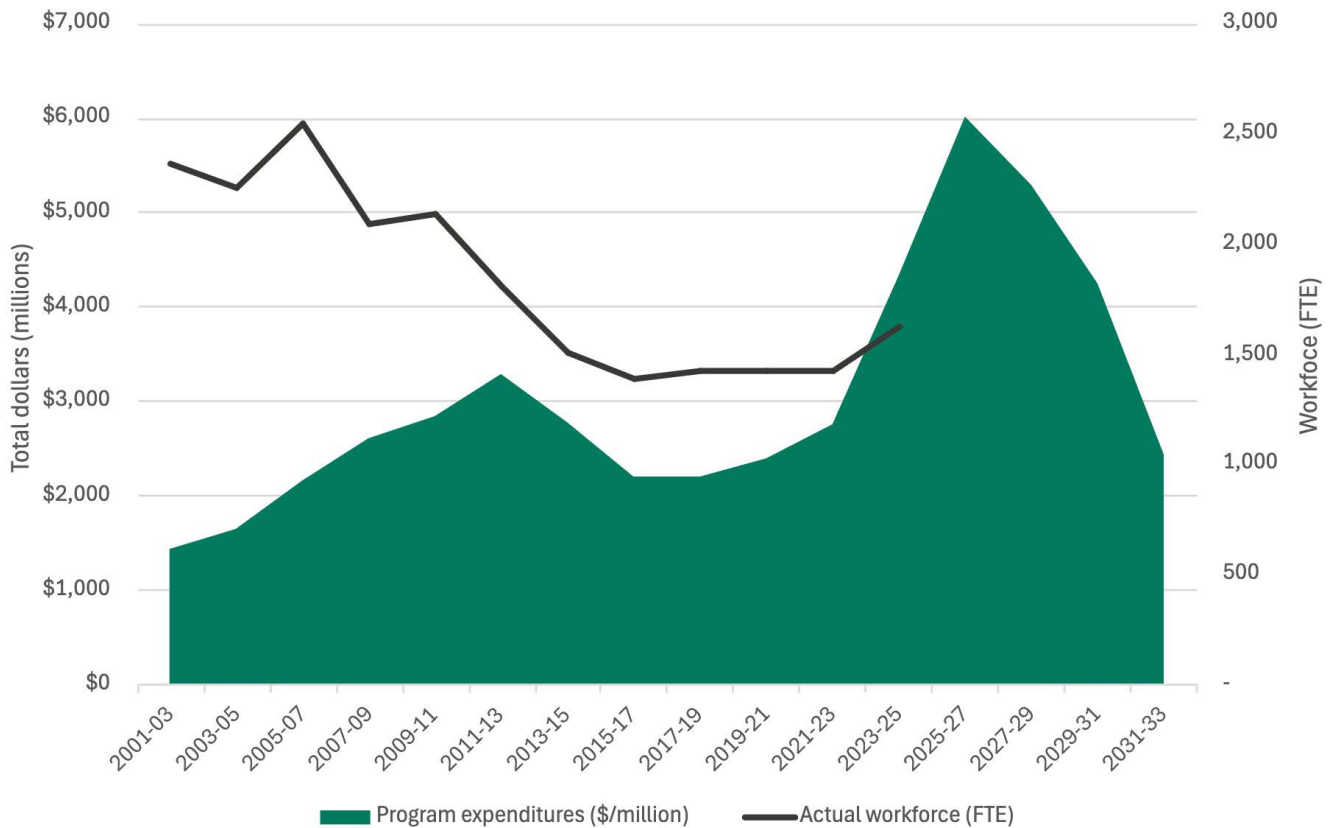
Historic expenditures



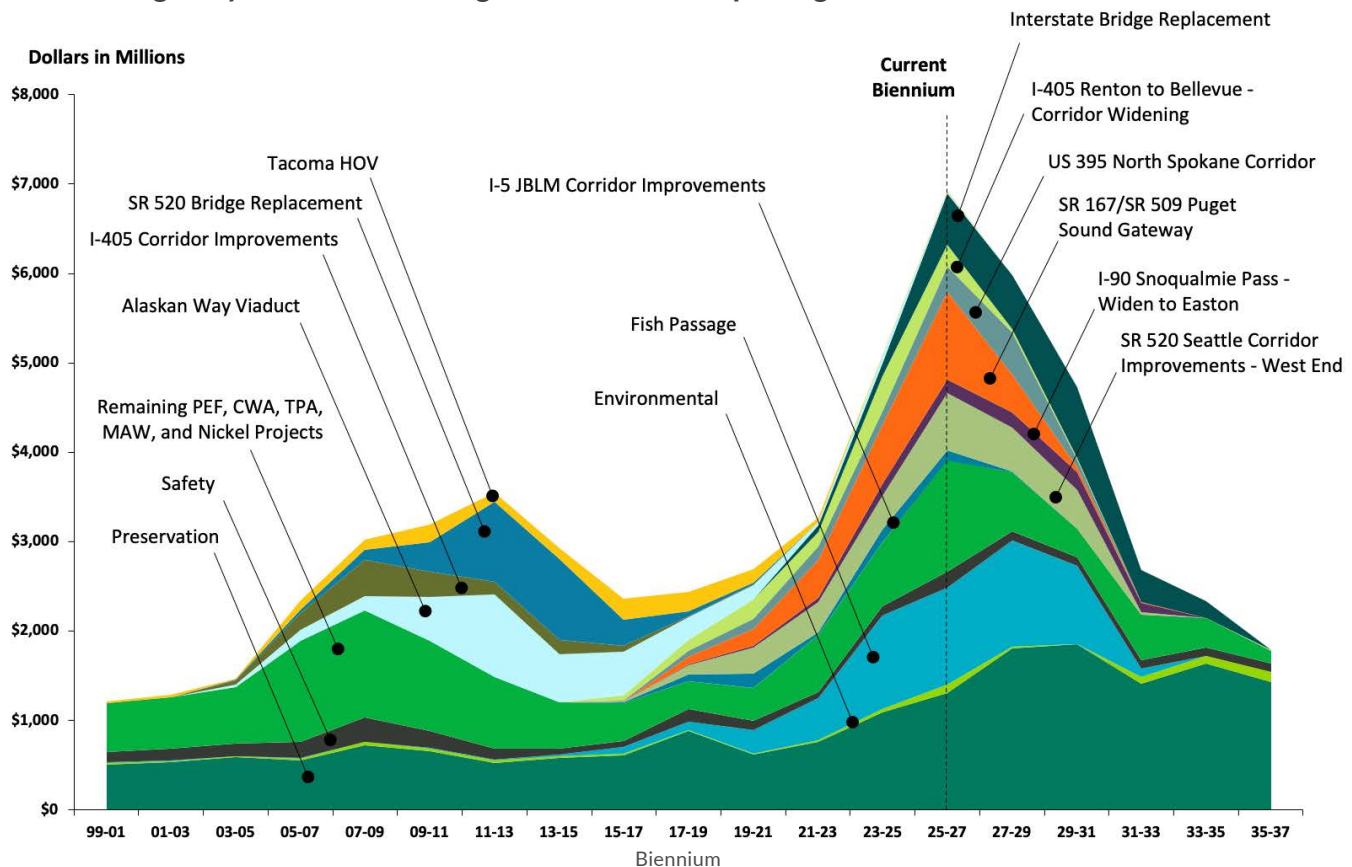
Historic FTEs



Historic and future program expenditures and FTEs

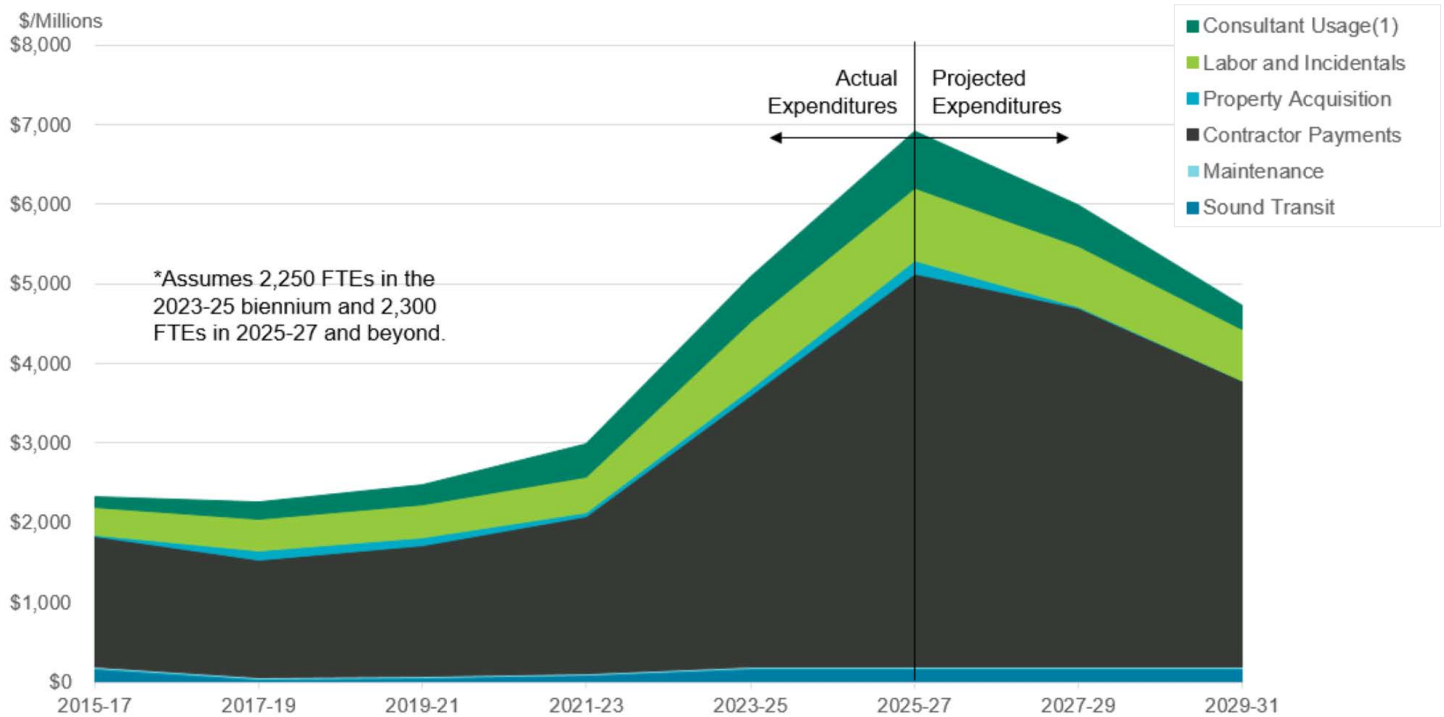


WSDOT Highway Construction Program with revenue packages



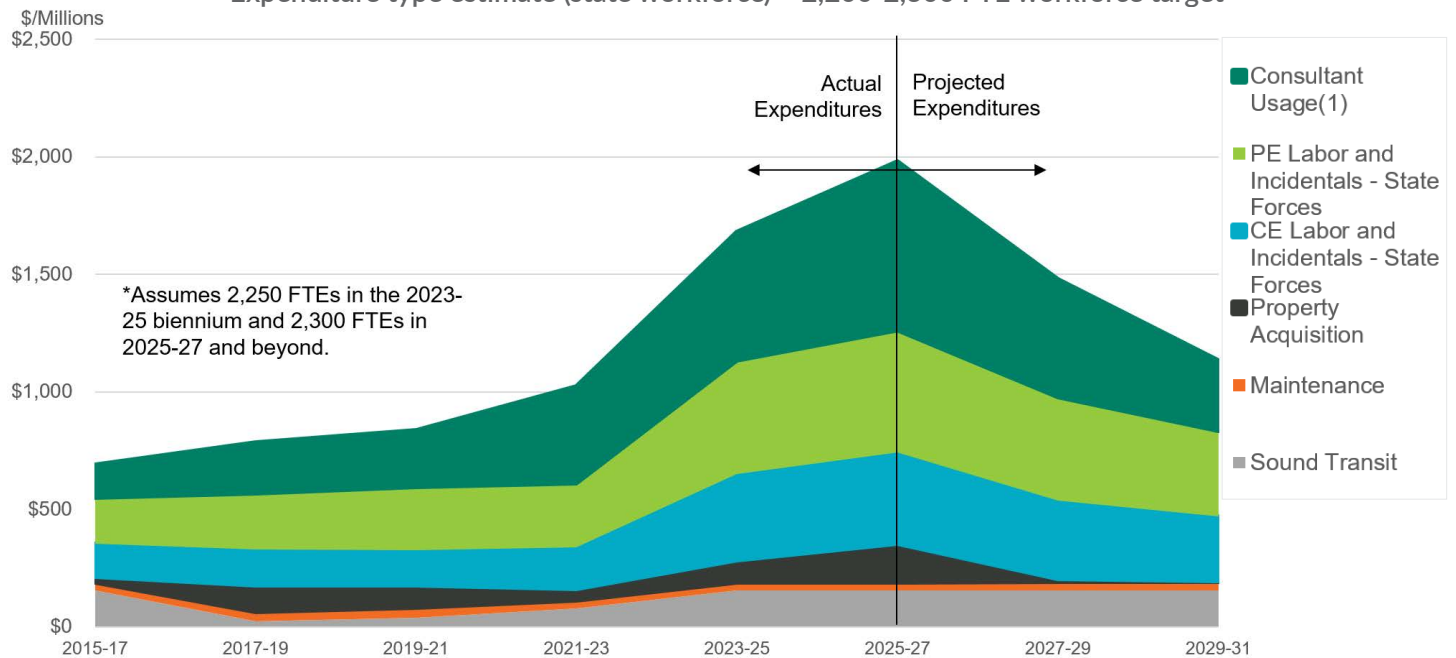
FTE workforce targets

Expenditure type estimate (total workforce) – 2,200-2,300 FTE workforce target



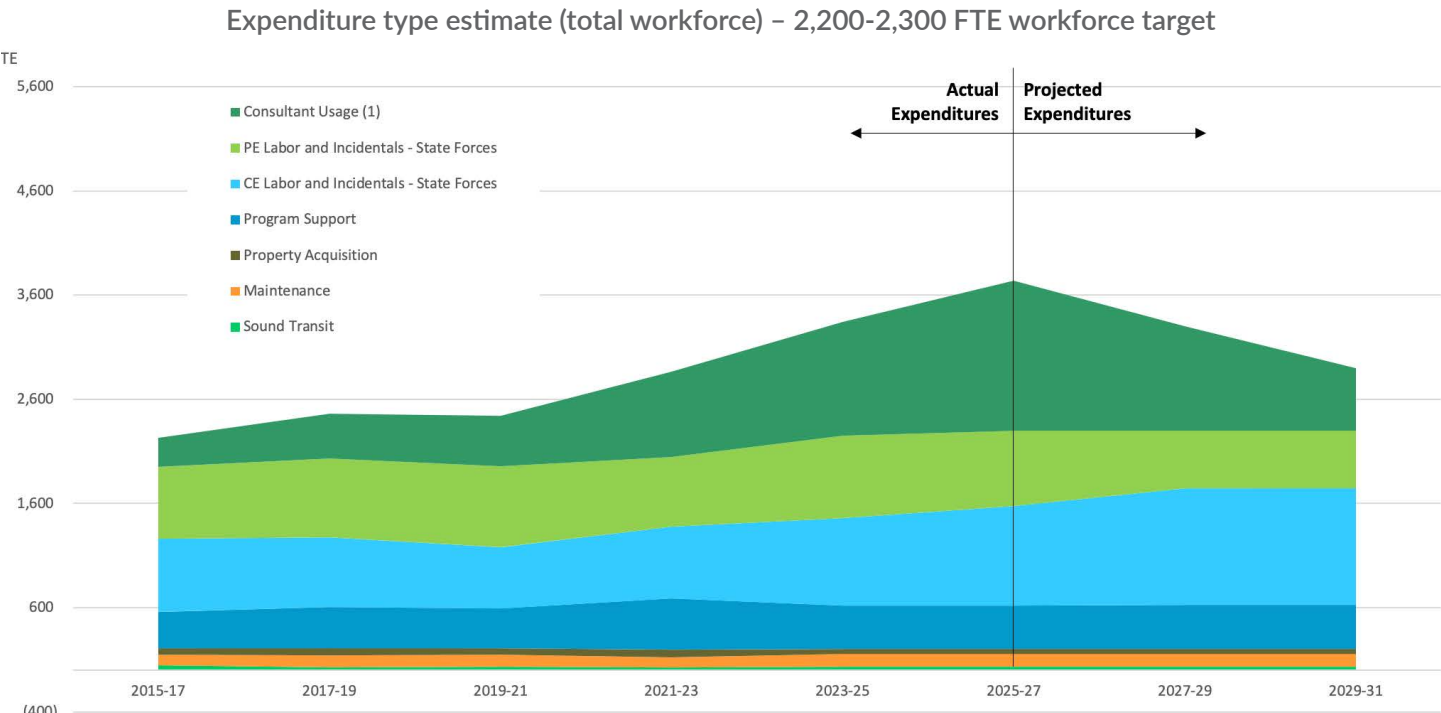
¹ Consultant usage does not include consultant support on design-build projects.

Expenditure type estimate (state workforce) – 2,200-2,300 FTE workforce target



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

FTE workforce targets (continued)



*Assumes 2,250 FTE in the 2023-2025 biennium ¹ Consultant usage does not include consultant support on design-build projects.

Goal 3: Project delivery

In 2025-2026 WSDOT continued exploring additional project delivery methods. The table below summarizes WSDOT’s current focus areas and status update.

Strategy	Strategy status
Establish WSDOT/Industry Fish Barrier Design-Build Task Force.	Established Q4 2023, ongoing.
Develop WSDOT/design-builder evaluation tool.	Rulemaking complete (Q4 2025), Manual/report form published (Q1 2026).
Expand WSDOT's alternate delivery method choices.	CPARB review Q1-Q4 2024, statutory changes enacted Q2 2025.
Refine processes, including comment resolution, working drawing responsibilities, lane closure approvals and partnering.	Work in progress.
Investigate benefit/cost of warranty requirements for fish barrier projects.	Q4 2025 to Q2 2026, completed. Instituted equitable cost sharing between WSDOT and design-builder.
Maintain design-build resources (manual, contract documents and training material).	Work in progress.



Next steps

WSDOT will continue meeting with the advisory group to guide WSDOT in implementing 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 deliver the construction program. WSDOT will provide the next biennial progress report to the Legislature on September 30, 2028.

For more information contact

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