

AGENDA

WSDOT/ACEC PD Team Meeting

June 27, 2024

9:00am – 11:00am

Attendees:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rafael Reyes/WSDOT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dan Lewis/WSDOT NCR | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manuel Feliberti/DEA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mike Fleming/WSDOT | <input type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Darcy/WSDOT SWR | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Olling/Parametrix |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TBD/WSDOT HQ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larry Larson/WSDOT ER | <input type="checkbox"/> Suryata Halim/RHC Engineering |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chris Damitio/WSDOT NWR | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ben Hoppe/JUB Engineers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heather Weeks/Jacobs |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joseph Perez/WSDOT OR | <input type="checkbox"/> Daniel Babuca/WSP | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Saugen/Perteet |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Randy Giles/WSDOT SCR | <input type="checkbox"/> Don Sims/HNTB | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cesar Mayor/WSDOT WSF | <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Adams/Skillings | |

1 *Welcome and Team Member Replacement Discussion*

Steve started off asking for a replacement for Lisa Reid (ACEC team member), who left us a few months ago. This was provided by Joseph at the beginning of the meeting, and it will be Stacy Davis from Cobb, Fendley & Associates, Inc. Stacy has been invited to the next meeting.

Steve also reminded the team that he will be stepping down as the ACEC committee co-chair and is asking for a volunteer (see separate e-mail), starting before the next meeting in August. Steve will work with his replacement between now and the next meeting to get him/her up to speed.

Ben is also leaving the group and may provide a replacement name, **but we are asking everyone to think about someone who has and continues to work on WSDOT related projects that are at least a mid career level individual.** The preference is to have another person representing the east side of the state.

Steve will be leaving the committee later this year and plans on providing a replacement from Parametrix as there is a lot of interest at his firm. Plus, they do a lot of WSDOT and local agency work on state highways.

2 *WSDOT/ACEC Annual Meeting Debrief*

Rafael or Steve will send out the annual meeting notes to the group when they are available. The rest of this discussion related to item 5 and those notes are included there.

3 *Design Manual update and review outcomes*

Steve gave a brief overview of the annual update process this year. It went well, but more ACEC member input would have been better. However, the input received from a few ACEC members of this committee was excellent and very meaningful. Thank you all! Rafael provided the schedule for the manual update and in a few weeks, responses to everyone's comments should be available and he will ensure they get to this team.

4 **Staff Updates**

1. HQ Development Division – Chad Hancock moved on to the private sector, WSDOT HQ’s is actively looking for his replacement.
2. WSDOT Regions & Consultants
 - NW - still looking for a Bellingham office PE, but overall, the Region is stable.
 - OR – Region is stable.
 - SCR – There was a lot of staff movement recently, but all is stabilizing now.
 - NCR – Region is stable, still looking to fill a design office PE.
 - ER – Region is stable, still need to fill the RA position, round 2 interviews are underway.
 - SWR - no report.
 - WSF – no report.
 - ACEC folks – nothing new to report except all are looking to hire more staff. Everyone is busy.
 - Overall, WSDOT continues to staff up.

5 **Active Focus Areas**

Plan For Approval process improvement update - WSDOT is in the early stages of creating a work group for improvement of the PFA process that will provide consistency throughout the state. This will involve updates to the design manual (and potentially other documentation). Changes will not be seen until the 2025 design manual update at the earliest, but there could be design guidance before then. Joseph mentioned that there will be a discussion of this work group at the upcoming PDE conference in July. Joseph also mentioned that a small committee has already been formed for several months now and is working on setting up the larger statewide committee. The work group will then be fully formed after the PDE conference, and it will have representation from each Region. Larry suggested that there should be a couple of ACEC members as part of this work group. This was discussed and ACEC members can be added after the WSDOT team is set. Larry indicated that having an ACEC member on the team will help with developer and local agency projects because that is also where there is a bit of confusion that may not be regularly seen by WSDOT staff. ACEC folks see this all the time as a good portion of their work is with developers or local agencies. ACEC input is very important.

Randy suggested that there are other design documentation processes that may need improvement (BOD, SOD, ADA, Design Parameters, etc.) that are key feeds into the PFA, and improvement opportunities will be discovered when looking at the PFA process, especially to improve working with local agencies and developers that do work on state highways. There will need to be a holistic approach that could involve another revisit of the entire design documentation process. Plus, this will require some improvements to the LAG manual. There are many items that go along with the PFA and there needs to be a stronger tie in the design documentation process and far more clarity in the design manual rather than the brief mention of this in Chapter 1130. Randy also suggested that Development Services staff should also be in this work group. Heather reminded everyone to not forget about how this process works within Design Build projects. There is some streamlining that is needed here, and Heather would be interested to be part of the PFA work group as a representative of the ACEC DB community.

Other Focus Area ideas discussed – Steve brought up a recent issue regarding the use of small DBE consultants on federally funded local agency projects that don't have a Safe Harbor review, a formal Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) review done by WSDOT, or an approved FAR audit. This is a requirement for a consultant on all FHWA federally funded projects per the LAG. There is no flexibility, per the LAG, and as DBE goals are increasing, the pool of smaller DBE firms is getting smaller because these reviews are costly and a lot of these firms do not have, or desire/need to get the required audit. Even the Safe Harbor review can cost \$10,000+ and take several months. This does affect project delivery as teams may need to change if earlier phases were locally funded and federal funds were obtained through a grant process for later phases. This can mean a loss of project knowledge and can increase the cost of a project. **Steve asked other ACEC members to share their thoughts on similar issues before the next meeting (e-mail them to Steve).** Steve will formulate a summary to provide to Rafael that he can pass on to the WSDOT/ACEC Business development Committee for consideration.

The group needs to come up with some other focus area improvement ideas, this will be discussed again at the next meeting. In the meantime, e-mail Rafael and Steve on any ideas so they can be added to the next meeting agenda

6 *Next meeting*

The next meeting will be August 15, 9am-11am. Potential agenda items are:

- Welcome new committee members
- Design Parameters new tool update
- PFA improvement update - Post PDE meeting
- Brainstorm new focus areas (include those that are provided between meetings)

Action Items

In **bold** text within the notes