

WSDOT/ACEC-WA Executive Liaison Committee

Tuesday, May 19, 2026 – 2:00 pm to 3:50 pm

Virtual: MS Teams

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Introduction

Present Attendees:

Mark Gaines
Todd Trepanier
Evan Grimm
Leann George
Van Collins
Richard Patterson

Jennifer Saugen
Rafael Reyes
Jilma Jiminez
Erik Jonson
Allison Dane Camden
Brian Nielsen

Agenda Overview

Leann George reviewed the agenda. Hearing no additions or objections, the agenda was accepted, and the meeting proceeded.

WSDOT Updates

Todd Trepanier

Todd noted a growing understanding of the significant transportation program being delivered through the partnership between WSDOT and industry stakeholders. While acknowledging the breadth of work underway, the group emphasized continued focus on the agency's five key program elements and the substantial effort required across the organization to support those priorities.

There are several provisos related to these focus areas, as well as the ongoing effort to address emergency response and recovery work resulting from the December weather events. Participants noted the challenge of balancing these responsibilities while continuing to advance existing program commitments.

Current projections suggest revenues may return to levels experienced approximately two years ago, creating additional challenges in sustaining and funding existing programs. Despite these fiscal pressures, the agency continues to have a substantial workload, and significant transportation needs to be addressed.

Legislative updates

Van Collins

Van Collins noted that the policy and funding landscape continue to evolve rapidly, particularly during the election year. He observed that several high-profile initiatives, including proposals such as a millionaire tax, are consuming much of the attention in current policy discussions. The operating budget will be an important area to monitor, noting that it is likely to experience its own set of challenges and dynamics as budget decisions are considered during the election cycle.

Todd Trepanier

Todd shared his interpretation of recent legislative provisos, noting that they may reflect ongoing discussions about whether transportation programs and projects could be delivered differently to address current challenges. He suggested that a key question moving forward will be identifying alternative approaches that allow the agency to continue delivering a substantial amount of work while adapting to evolving expectations and constraints.

Van noted that while alternative options may exist to address current transportation funding and delivery challenges, significant questions remain regarding what those alternatives would look like in practice. Political considerations will likely play a major role in shaping future decisions.

Mark mentioned that alternative delivery or funding approaches do not necessarily reduce overall project costs but may instead shift who bears those costs. He further noted that Design-Bid-Build remains the most cost-effective project delivery method for many transportation projects.

Subcommittee Updates

Business Administration – Erik Jonson/ Ron Paananen

- The Business Administration Subcommittee completed its sixth meeting of the year. Attendance remains consistently strong.
- Recent efforts included work related to contract language and artificial intelligence considerations

Project Delivery – Rafael Reyes/ Jennifer Saugen

- The Project Delivery Subcommittee continues to experience strong participation and engagement.
- Members are actively discussing emerging issues and working collaboratively to develop solutions as challenges arise.
- We've also been working on OpenRoads consultant resources and participated in the Statewide Design Manual review.
- Mark raised questions regarding Open Roads and associated concerns. He asked whether ACEC representatives could serve as resources as discussions continue and opportunities for improvement are explored.

Design/Build – Richard Patterson/ Art McCluskey

- The Design-Build Subcommittee continues to be highly active. Recent discussions have focused on lane restrictions, project delivery challenges, and contract resolution processes.
- Members discussed concerns regarding lump-sum design-build projects, noting that some issue resolution timelines have increased significantly from several weeks to several months. The subcommittee plans to examine these concerns in greater detail.
- Discussion also focused on the importance of trust, partnering, and effective communication when navigating complex project issues. The industry continues to face challenges associated with retirements and the loss of experienced personnel and institutional knowledge. The group expressed interest in developing approaches that prioritize project success and collaboration.

WSDOT/ACEC-WA Structures Geotechnical Hydraulics Sub-Committee – Evan Grimm/ Greg Hess

- The Structures, Geotechnical, and Hydraulics Subcommittee reported that meetings continue to be productive with strong attendance. Members recently received a presentation regarding vessel-related risks and gained valuable insights into associated

challenges. We took this opportunity to invite other DOTs and had a great group and discussion.

- Greg Hess provided an update on membership changes within the subcommittee. The group is adding two hydraulics representatives and continues to build a diverse cross-section of industry and agency perspectives. Greg inquired about the ACEC process and asked for guidance. Evan Grimm announced he will be stepping down from his leadership role Andrew Fiske will replace him. Andrew has been actively engaged with the subcommittee and is expected to provide a smooth transition.
- Allison shared that the committee is implementing a more formalized member selection and review process to support continuity and ensure regular evaluation of membership needs. Member selections are expected to be completed by the summer.

General contractor/Construction Manager (GCCM) Discussion

Ron Paananen asked about the current status and use of GCCM project delivery.

Mark responded that GCCM continues to be frequently recommended as a viable project delivery method. He noted that GCCM remains an important tool within the project delivery toolbox but shares similar decision points and risk considerations as Progressive Design-Build approaches.

There are concerns regarding design responsibility and accountability, particularly in situations where contractor-provided engineering services are involved. He noted that there can be challenges associated with omissions and ensuring accountability for design-related issues.

Allison Camden suggested continuing the discussion and exploring potential improvements and solutions in future conversations.

WSDOT/ACEC Annual Meeting – All

Mark went through the annual meetings agenda and provided brief overview of the purpose of each topic. Mark opened the floor for feedback, and no one responded.

Action Items:

- Jenn will send Mark contact information for ACEC members to sit with a group of WSDOT staff to discuss OpenRoads.
- Mark asked to attend their next meeting, and Jenn will send him an invite.
- Mark/Allison will come back with project procurement and contracting and bring this back in September.
- Leann will schedule Mark/Allison coordination meetings for the above action item.
- Leann will make a few adjustments to the WSDOT/ACEC Annual Meeting Agenda.
- Allison will send her Subcommittee panel questions to the Subcommittee for feedback.
- Leann will send Doodle Polls for fall/winter meetings. September meeting invite will be in person. We will maintain the current meeting schedule.

Adjourn