WSDOT/ACEC-WA Executive Liaison Committee Meeting
October 2, 2026 – 9:00 am to 12:30 pm
Agenda

In-Person: WSP Tacoma Office, 1201 Pacific AVE Suite 550, Tahoma Conference Room

ROLL CALL			
x	Co-Chair	Mark Gaines	WSDOT
x	Co-Chair	Allison Camden	STV Inc.
x	Member	Todd Trepanier	WSDOT
x	Member	Kerri Woehler	WSDOT
	Member	Brian Nielsen	WSDOT
	Member	***** (NWR Alternate)	WSDOT
	Member	*****	WSDOT
	Member	Jay Drye	WSDOT
x	Member	Kyle McKeon (L.P.Alternate)	WSDOT
x	Member	Aaron Adelstein	ACEC-WA
	Member	Richard Patterson	ACEC-WA
	Member	Jilma Jimenez	ACEC-WA
	Member	Vacant	ACEC-WA
	Member	Vacant	ACEC-WA
Design Build			
	Sub-Committee Co-Chairs	Art McCluskey	Asst. State Construction Engineer
	Sub-Committee Co-Chairs	Richard Patterson	AECOM
Project Delivery			
x	Sub-Committee Co-Chairs	Rafael Reyes	Asst. State Design Engineer
x	Sub-Committee Co-Chairs	Jennifer Saugen	Ardurra
Business Administration			
x	Sub-Committee Co-Chairs	Erik Jonson	Technical Services Director
	Sub-Committee Co-Chairs	Ron Paananen	HDR Inc.
Structures, Geotechnical and Hydraulics			
x	Sub-Committee Co-Chairs	Andre Fiske	State Geotechnical Engineer
x	Sub-Committee Co-Chairs	Greg Hess	KPFF

Agenda overview/introductions
The agenda was reviewed with no additions or concerns.

Aaron Introductions to the team and vision for ACEC-WA
Aaron Adelstein, the new President/CEO of ACEC-WA, introduced himself and shared his professional background, experience, and vision for strengthening the relationship between ACEC-WA and WSDOT. Aaron noted that he began his career approximately 20 years ago working with residential contractors and later worked with the King and Snohomish County Master Builders.

Aaron outlined his vision for strengthening partnerships between industry and public agencies, including WSDOT, Sound Transit, and the Port. He emphasized the importance of engaging engineers across generations, expanding ACEC membership, and identifying opportunities for membership and revenue growth. Aaron acknowledged that his strategies for growth are still in the early stages of development.

The group discussed opportunities to strengthen collaboration and explore new approaches to working together. Mark encouraged members to identify areas for improvement and share recommendations or proposed changes. Aaron emphasized the value of cross-pollinating ideas and approaches across groups to strengthen partnerships and encourage innovation.

Review Charter, discuss WSDOT/ACEC websites
Leann presented the Committee Charter, last revised in March 2026 to update the Mission and Vision statements. In preparation for the discussion, she incorporated minor proposed revisions using Track Changes. The committee reviewed and agreed with the proposed updates. Mark noted that the Charter should be revisited in the future to further refine and strengthen its content.

Mark reported two ACEC and two WSDOT committee membership vacancies. He also noted that Andrew Fiske has replaced Evan Grimm on the Structures, Geotechnical, and Hydraulics Subcommittee.

Aaron expressed concerns regarding attendance and participation across the subcommittees, emphasizing the importance of member accountability and consistent engagement. He suggested considering replacements for members who are not actively participating. Mark recommended implementing an attendance tracker to monitor participation and identify opportunities for follow-up with members.

Allison agreed that ACEC members should be more consistently engaged and supported the proposed Charter revisions, acknowledging that additional review may be beneficial in the future.

WSDOT Updates
Todd Trepanier and Kerri Woehler provided updates on WSDOT activities, legislative funding, project delivery expectations, and emerging agency priorities.

Increased legislative funding has brought greater expectations for project delivery, alongside additional resources for emergency response and recovery efforts associated with severe weather and infrastructure damage. Emergency situations require rapid mobilization, sometimes involving around-the-clock operations and temporarily redirecting staff from existing projects. The current response model utilizes three shifts to maintain continuous coverage. Balancing these demands with existing project commitments, schedules, costs, and staffing resources remains challenging. Alternative delivery approaches and increased consultant involvement may be necessary to meet growing expectations.

Bridge preservation and replacement remain priorities, with approximately 60% of bridges and structures identified as due or pastdue for work and approximately 30 structures are identified for replacement. Continued investment is needed to preserve existing infrastructure while advancing replacement projects. The ferry system faces similar challenges, with prolonged underfunding contributing to fleet shortages and service limitations.

Safety-related projects and public concerns were also discussed, including challenges communicating the urgency of certain improvements. Transportation safety remains WSDOT's foremost responsibility, requiring a balance between immediate needs, project delivery expectations, and long-term infrastructure investments. WSDOT's new agency values reinforce the importance of accomplishing work while maintaining a forward-looking perspective. The recent introduction of new Amtrak trains into service was also highlighted as a positive development.

The transition to TRAINS 4.0, WSDOT's new accounting system, has presented implementation challenges. Contractors were asked for patience as the agency continues addressing issues associated with the transition.

Maintaining the Legislature's confidence in WSDOT's ability to deliver projects remains essential. Increased funding brings greater accountability and expectations for results, emphasizing the importance of adequate staffing, resources, and delivery capacity.

Workforce development, succession planning, and preservation of institutional knowledge were identified as priorities. As experienced employees retire, training, mentoring, and project-level collaboration become increasingly important in preparing emerging leaders and transferring knowledge. The group discussed expanding training opportunities, including potential consultant participation in WSDOT's Design Academy and additional project management training. Design Trainer staffing has decreased from approximately six or seven positions to two, highlighting the need for additional training resources. Communities of practice were also discussed as opportunities to share information, reduce complexity, and improve organizational effectiveness.

Staffing challenges extend beyond WSDOT, with FHWA Area Engineers decreasing from six positions to two, meaning each position is covering a larger geographic area. The group discussed opportunities to identify projects or work areas where additional consultant support may be beneficial. Members also emphasized the need for greater staffing depth to support emergency response and acknowledged the time required to train new employees.

Increasingly dispersed teams, remote work arrangements, and limited office space present additional challenges for collaboration and coordination. The group recognized opportunities to learn from ACEC's experience with knowledge sharing across organizations and emphasized the value of continued partnership in strengthening workforce development and project delivery. Appreciation was expressed for the consultant community's ongoing support.

ACEC support of WSDOT alternative delivery approaches
The committee discussed opportunities for ACEC to support WSDOT in exploring alternative project delivery methods, particularly for preservation projects. Additional information is needed to evaluate when and where these approaches may be most effective, their potential benefits and drawbacks, and opportunities for implementation.

Discussion included bundling bridge projects to improve coordination, reduce costs, and shorten delivery timelines, along with engaging project partners earlier in the process. Public-private partnerships were also identified as a potential delivery approach.

Allison asked whether WSDOT would benefit from ACEC presenting recommendations to the Legislature regarding alternative delivery methods and additional staff training. Todd emphasized gathering input from across the agency and consultant community to better understand available options and determine which approaches would provide the greatest benefit for specific projects.

The group discussed evaluating alternative delivery opportunities across approximately 115 pavement projects and engaging consultants to support bridge preservation efforts. Andrew emphasized that wall preservation needs should also be considered rather than focusing exclusively on pavement and bridge projects.

Mark, Allison and Aaron will meet with Todd and Kerri in approximately one month to continue exploring these opportunities. Continued WSDOT and ACEC collaboration was recognized as important to identifying effective project delivery solutions.

Local Program Update

- Kyle McKeon reported approximately $398 million in applications, $652 million in federal funding associated with 136 projects, and approximately 1,500 active projects statewide.
- Continued collaboration with ACEC remains an important component of the program.
- Members were reminded to monitor consultant agreement expiration dates to avoid disruptions in payment for work performed.
- The transition to TRAINS 4.0 has contributed to payment delays, with approximately 830 invoices currently behind schedule.
- LAG Manual: Recent changes to fee calculations produced unintended results and have since been reversed. The revisions are awaiting FHWA approval.

Fish Passage Updates – Including Peer Exhange

Kim Rydholm provided an overview of WSDOT's Fish Passage Program, highlighting significant growth in funding, program accomplishments, and ongoing delivery efforts. As of June 2026, approximately 60% of blocked potential habitat of the 2013 list significant gain injunction barriers had been opened, with continued work underway to advance additional projects. Kim discussed project prioritization, the successful use of Progressive Design-Build, and ongoing challenges related to funding, staffing, and infrastructure needs.

The discussion emphasized continuous improvement, lessons learned, and opportunities to strengthen project delivery through consultant partnerships and knowledge sharing. Topics included alternative delivery methods, risk allocation, utility relocations, and the establishment of a WSDOT-Industry task force to identify implementation challenges. A second Peer Exchange is planned for March 10, 2027, with potential support from ACEC.

Sub-Committee Report Outs

Business Administration Subcommittee

- Erik Jonson reported that upcoming priorities include the updated Charter, DBE and minority contracts, future meeting planning, attendance tracking, and lump-sum contracting.
- The group emphasized the importance of understanding available contracting methods, including their benefits, risks, and appropriate applications.
- Mark will provide a presentation on the various contract types.

Project Delivery Subcommittee

- Jenn Saugen reported that the subcommittee meets approximately every six weeks, with attendance ranging from one-half to two-thirds of its members.
- Current efforts include Design Manual reviews, project delivery discussions, and bulletins.
- Rafael Reyes noted that consultants are experiencing challenges establishing projects and contracts through Open Roads.
- The group discussed opportunities to strengthen communication and collaboration between WSDOT and consultants.

Structures, Geotechnical, and Hydraulics Subcommittee

- Greg Hess and Andrew Fiske reported that the subcommittee remains in the planning phase and is seeking four additional ACEC members.
- Potential improvements include expanded training opportunities, increased member engagement, greater information sharing, and more frequent in-person meetings.

Design Build Subcommittee

Below is an update provided by Richard Patterson via email.

- There is a special subcommittee work effort that we just completed centered on lump sum design build delivery for WSDOT. The Subcommittee had excellent support from all three of our organizations.
- We met for about 8 months, multiple times each month. We developed an overall document on focusing the greater project team on a Project First Mentality, and we developed six supporting documents that will be used to change WSDOT manuals, used as material for DB training for all three organizations.

Time Permitting: Discussion on paying for consultant services

- Lump sum: Mark Gaines suggested that Erik Jonson and the Business Administration Subcommittee think about doing a presentation or assembling a report on the various approaches WSDOT can use for making payments to consultants.

Next MeetingAction Items

- January 20th from 10-11:50 am
- March 24th from 9-10:50 am
- May 17th from 10-11:50 am

Action Items

- Leann build attendance tracker
- Leann update Charter - Email, post and save in Teams
- Mark will work on WSDOT Committee member vacancies.
- Leann set Kim Rydholm as a WSDOT Committee Member
- Mark, Allison, and Aaron will meet in 1 month to draft an Alternative Delivery Approach proposal for Todd/Kerri
- Leann sends FPDT links shared by Kim during her presentation and presentation
- Kyle McKeon send Leann a copy of Newsletter
- Leann will post Local program Newsletter, save in Teams and send via email to committee Members
- Leann will share 2026 Annual meeting summary report
- Leann will start a document and send link for “what does success look like for 26-27” committee collaboration
- Leann will send proposal for 2027 Annual meeting changes & Leann will send a link for 2027 Annual meeting topics

Adjourn