



Preliminary Report

Follow-Up on WSDOT's Long-Term Estimates of Bridge Preservation Needs

Legislative Auditor's Conclusion: WSDOT has taken steps to improve its long-term estimates of bridge preservation needs, but will need to continue its work to provide complete and reliable estimates.

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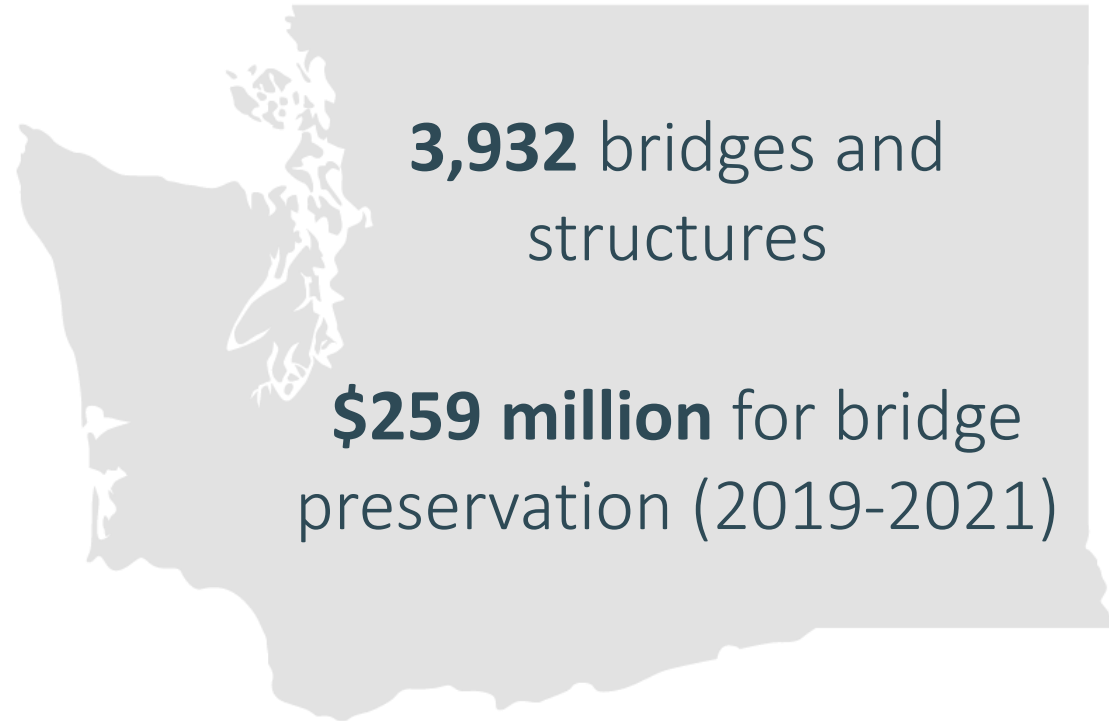


Seismic retrofit on West Lake Sammamish overpass. Source: WSDOT

Preservation

- Reduce, delay, or prevent deterioration
- Extend service life

Long-range planning required under state and federal law



2015 JLARC report

“WSDOT can provide reliable long-term pavement estimates, but accuracy of bridge estimates is uncertain.”

2015 Legislative Auditor Recommendations:

1. WSDOT should improve long-term estimates of bridge preservation needs.
2. WSDOT and OFM should develop a process to improve stakeholders' confidence in its estimates.

**WSDOT has
taken steps to
improve**

WSDOT has acquired a bridge management system



Software program used by 42
other states



Fully implemented by July 2020



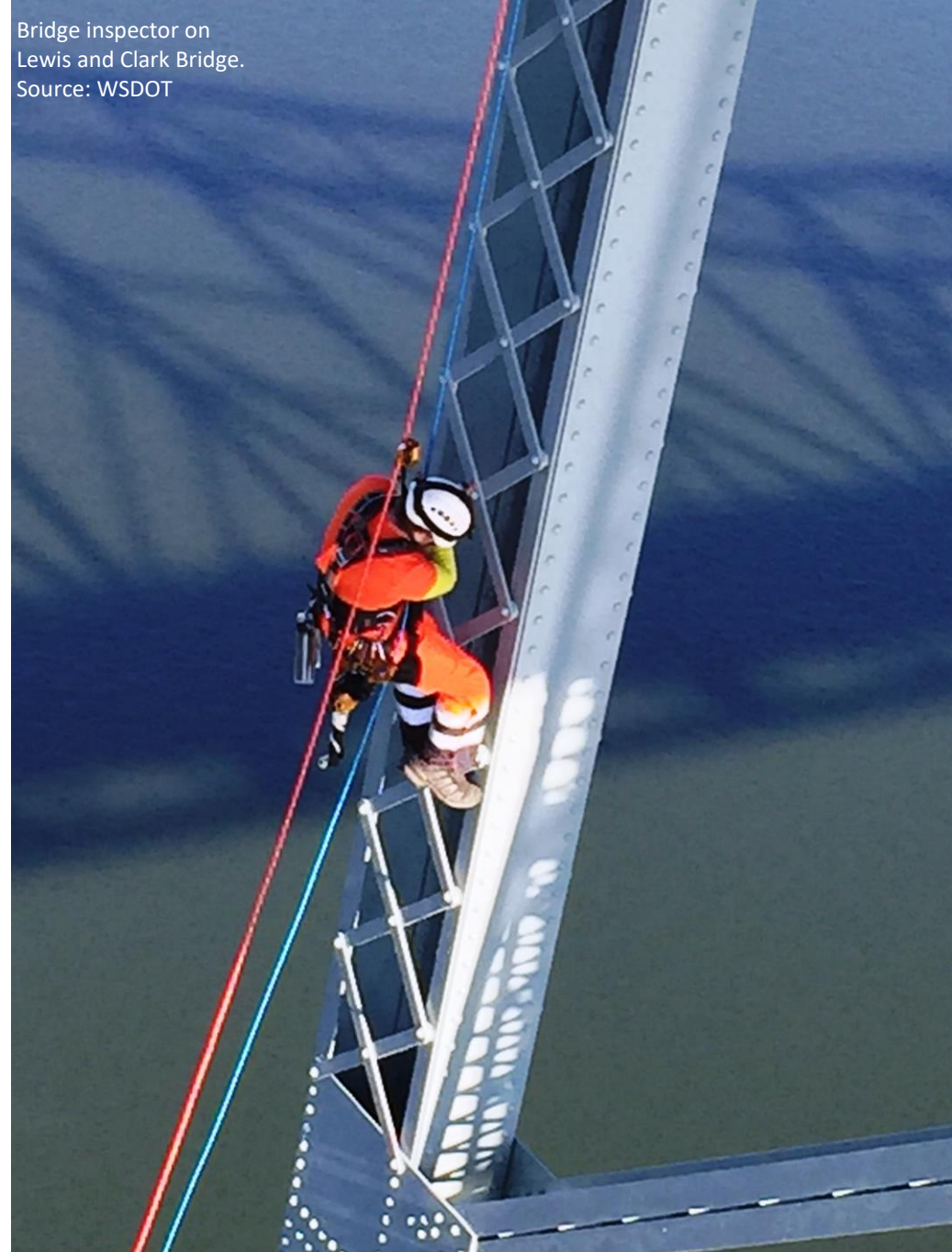
Federally required since 2017

WSDOT maintains extensive and accurate data

WSDOT:

- Inspects bridges every two years
- Evaluates 172 bridge elements
- Imports data into bridge management system

Bridge inspector on
Lewis and Clark Bridge.
Source: WSDOT





Over-height collision on SR 410
White River Bridge. Source:
WSDOT

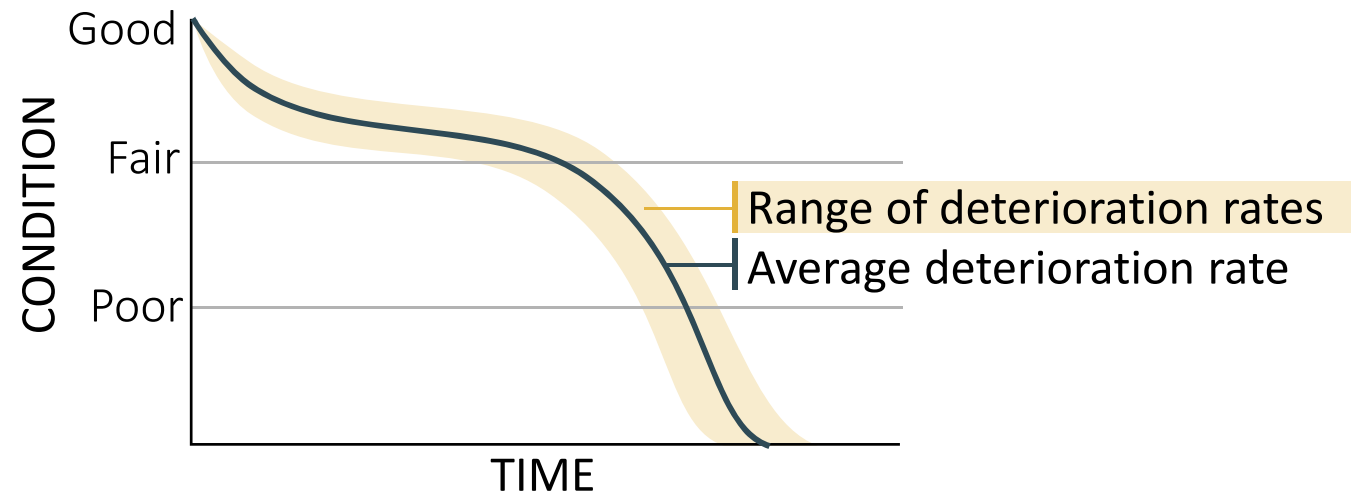
WSDOT has identified high-priority hazards

WSDOT is working on risk mitigation plans.

Additional work is needed for bridge management system.

Despite
progress, more
work is needed

WSDOT does not yet use deterioration models



WSDOT has completed preliminary analysis
for all elements



WSDOT does not yet perform life cycle cost analysis for the bridge network

Life cycle cost analysis can help WSDOT:

- Manage bridges at the lowest cost
- Perform the right work at the right time

Peeling paint and rusting steel on Lewis and Clark Bridge. Source: WSDOT

WSDOT has not yet evaluated funding scenarios

Risks of insufficient funding:

- Increased costs
- Poor conditions
- Bridge closures



Closure for maintenance of SR 520 floating bridge. Source: WSDOT

2015

WSDOT issues plan to improve estimates

2018

WSDOT begins implementation of bridge management system

2017

Federal regulations require improvements

2020

WSDOT system fully operational (expected)

Progress is similar to other state departments of transportation.



Legislative Auditor's Recommendation

WSDOT should report to the Legislature on its progress implementing its bridge management system.

Report must provide clear timelines and anticipated completion dates for implementing deterioration models, analyzing life cycle costs for the bridge network, and evaluating the impact of different funding scenarios on its bridge conditions.

WSDOT can improve communications

Reported needs: \$2.7 billion

Incomplete. Does not include:

- Border bridges
- Moveable bridge components
- Seismic retrofits

Out of date

- Created in 2016
- Costs have increased by hundreds of millions

Stakeholders would benefit from additional detail and information

Some of WSDOT's communications have misrepresented the analysis underlying its own estimates.

Connection between funding and bridge improvement is unclear.



US 395 Pioneer Memorial Bridge repainting project. Source: WSDOT

OFM concurred with 2015 recommendations

In 2015, OFM stated it would “work with WSDOT to identify opportunities for improvement, emphasizing **clarity, predictability, timeliness, transparency and accountability.**”

OFM has not yet completed steps to help improve stakeholder confidence in bridge estimates



Legislative Auditor's Recommendation

WSDOT and OFM should develop and implement a plan to communicate long-term preservation needs accurately, reliably, and transparently.

WSDOT and OFM should seek input from legislative transportation committee staff to ensure that the plan meets legislative needs.



Next Steps

Proposed Final Report | **December 2019**

Full Report

leg.wa.gov/jlarc/AuditAndStudyReports

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