



Proposed Study Questions: Follow-Up on WSDOT Bridge Preservation Cost Estimating

State of Washington Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee

March 2019

JLARC directed a study of how WSDOT has responded to recommendations to improve cost estimates of bridge preservation needs

In the 2013 transportation budget (ESSB 5024), the Legislature directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to review the methods used by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to develop long-term estimates for highway preservation needs.



In its 2015 report, JLARC found that while WSDOT followed best practices for developing pavement estimates, it did not do so for bridge estimates. For example, WSDOT did not analyze life-cycle costs, project the rate at which bridges deteriorate, or measure the effectiveness of bridge preservation projects.

The Legislative Auditor recommended that WSDOT:

- Improve long-term estimates of bridge preservation needs.
- Work with the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to develop a process that would improve stakeholders' confidence in its estimates.

WSDOT and OFM concurred with these recommendations.

In July 2018, JLARC directed its staff to conduct a follow-up study to evaluate improvement efforts.

“Preservation” is defined as actions that prevent, delay, or reduce deterioration and extend service life

Preservation includes painting, seismic retrofits, sealing expansion joints, and deck repair. The 2017-19 state transportation budget appropriated \$222 million for bridge preservation.

Study Questions

1. What actions has WSDOT taken to address the recommendations in JLARC’s 2015 report?
2. Since 2015, are there new best practices for developing long-term estimates for bridge preservation needs? If so, has WSDOT used them as it responds to the recommendations?
3. What actions have WSDOT and OFM taken to improve stakeholders’ confidence in preservation estimates?

Study Timeframe

Briefing Report: September 2019

Study Team

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