



JTC LOCAL PROJECT DELIVERY STREAMLINING

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PROJECT TEAM

Consulting Team



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WORKGROUP MEMBERSHIP

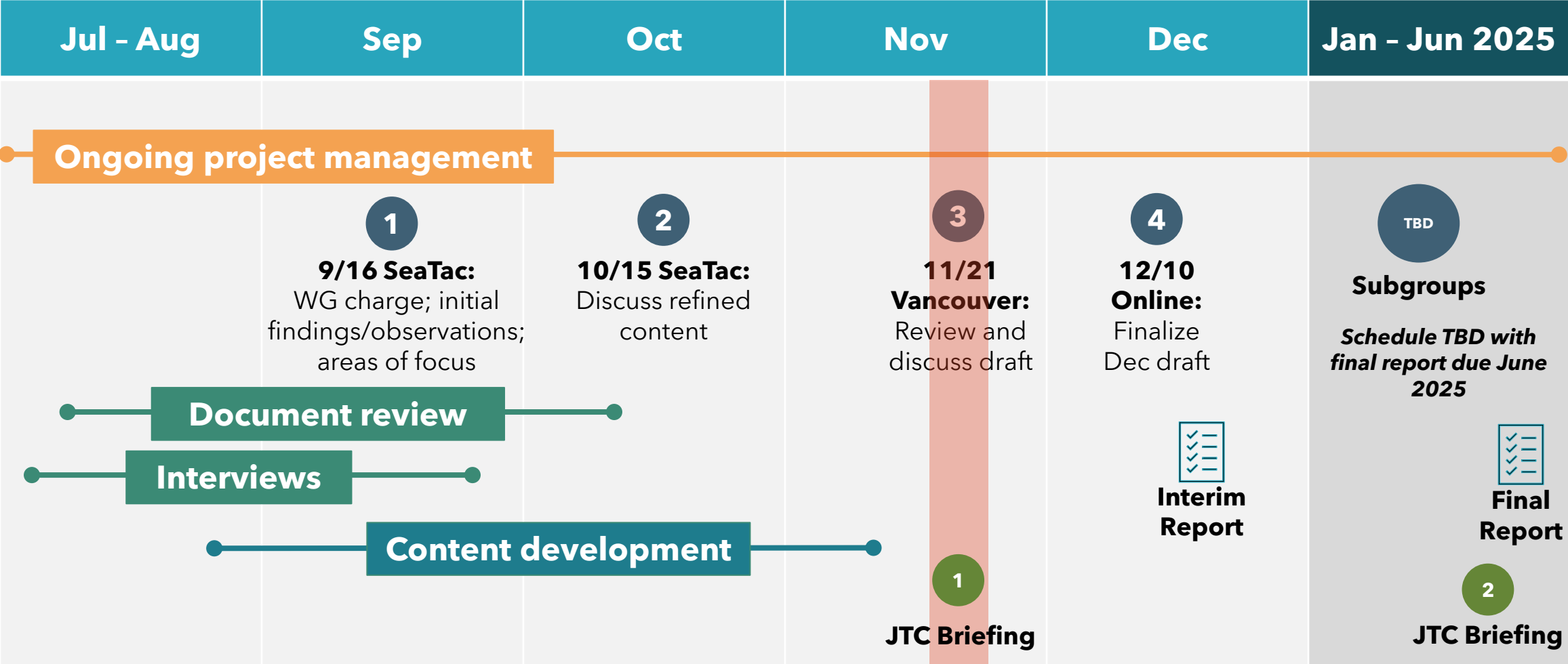
Representative(s)	Workgroup Membership (Proviso)
Roscoe Slade, City of West Richland	City with population >5,000 and <50,000
Katherine Miller, City of Spokane	City with a population >50,000
Phil Wallace, Kiewit	Construction
Steve Johnson	County Road Administration Board
Brian Johnston, Pierce County	County with a population >100,000 and <400,000
Ryan Morrison, Whatcom County	County with a population >400,000
Jonathan Nichols, Sound Transit	Regional Transit Authority
Peter Stackpole, Intercity Transit	Transit serving an urban county
Brad Windler, Island Transit	Transit serving a rural county
Ashley Probart	Transportation Improvement Board
Terry Drochak, Jay Drye, Kyle McKeon, Melanie Vance	WSDOT
Chris Herman	Washington Public Ports Association

PROJECT BACKGROUND

[ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2134 \(2024\)](#)

- To convene a project delivery streamlining work group to review streamlining options and recommend practices that support expedited **[local]** project delivery.
- Review options that include, but are not limited to: preapplication communication; partnership agreements; contracting processes; fund sources; mitigation; land use; ROW; permitting; and shared technology;
- Must identify opportunities for pilot projects to test some of these options

PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINE



WHY THIS MATTERS?

The objective of streamlining:

Delivering benefits to Washington communities and taxpayers efficiently and effectively.

Transportation projects support:

- Safety
- Mobility
- Economic development
- Air quality
- Other public goods

WORK GROUP EXAMPLES OF PROJECT DELAYS

- Since 2022, the number of local projects that trigger NMFS formal consultation has more than doubled. This has particularly impacted areas within watersheds that drain into Puget Sound.
 - This typically adds 3-5 years to the ESA compliance process.
 - Federal funding may be the sole reason that this consultation and delay is triggered
- Coordinating permits for projects that are over, on, or in navigable waters can create unpredictable timelines and lead to project delays
 - One bridge required 12 permits (City/County, Department of Ecology, Department of Fish & Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Coast Guard, US Environmental Protection Agency)
- WSDOT Local Program's capital program is 3-4 times greater than it was several years ago, with State funding for local projects approaching \$1 billion per biennium. Local Program's operating funding has not increased commensurately over that time, causing delays in project review times.
 - Anecdotal evidence from local agencies indicates that issues that used to be resolved in 2-3 weeks, now can typically take 3-6 months to resolve.

BROAD CONTEXT

- **Achieving full funding is a challenge.** Delays add to costs, which mean more funding is needed than originally estimated.
- **Workforce availability** continues to be a challenge at all levels and across sectors
- **Streamlining has been a consistent goal in Washington over many years.** The challenge has been to enact measures that protect the environment and public welfare without creating unnecessarily complex, duplicative, and overlapping approval processes for transportation projects.

“This is not going to be easy -- none of this is easy. You’ve got to deal with escalating costs and the inflationary environment that we have, you’ve got to deal with permitting, you’ve got to deal with local alignment, with raw materials, workforce constraints. But I would argue that these are the kinds of problems we went into public service to solve.”

Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, February 24, 2023, National Association of Counties
<https://www.naco.org/articles/buttigieg-talks-partnering-counties-infrastructure-safety-climate-change>

RECENT TRANSPORTATION PROJECT STREAMLINING ACTIONS IN WA

STRATEGIES	EXAMPLES
<p>Consistency: Establish policies and a framework to improve coordination and consistency of project review</p>	<p>2001-2005: Reforms initiated by the Transportation Permitting Efficiency and Accountability Committee, including (1) multiagency programmatic permits, (2) watershed-based mitigation, and (3) local permitting improvements</p> <p>Ongoing: WSDOT Local Program’s efforts to improve consistency of WSDOT project reviews and quickly identify issues that should be elevated for resolution</p>
<p>Consistency: Integrate/coordinate environmental statutes</p>	<p>2010: Legislation aligning Shoreline Management Act and Critical Areas requirements</p>
<p>Staffing: Increase staffing to expedite permit review and improve interagency coordination</p>	<p>2003: Creation of the Multi-Agency Permitting Team (MAP) at WSDOT</p> <p>2023-2024: Funding of 2 positions within WSDOT Local Programs to expedite NMFS ESA reviews</p>
<p>Staffing: Provide staff training on specific areas of project delivery</p>	<p>2015: Adoption of RCW 47.85 Transportation Project Delivery and Review that includes provisions for training and technical assistance</p>
<p>Permit: Streamline permit application process (one-stop portal for permitting)</p>	<p>2006-2007: Improvements to the online Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA)</p>
<p>Permit: Establish permit review timeframes</p>	<p>2021: Amendments to RCW 77.55.181, establishing specific timeframes for review of fish passage permits</p>
<p>Permit: Create/expand exemptions from certain permitting requirements</p>	<p>2015: New statutory exemption from SEPA for the repair or replacement of state bridges deemed structurally deficient by WSDOT (RCW 43.21C.480)</p>
<p>Funding: Reduce requirements related to federal funding</p>	<p>2022-2024: Pilot program to swap federal funding for state funding for certain local projects</p>

WE'VE DISCUSSED MANY OVERLAPPING CHALLENGES

- Washington applies more federal dollars to local projects than other states, leading to increased project complexities and timelines.
- Inconsistent / changing interpretation of requirements from state and federal regulatory agencies.
- Uncoordinated interagency review.
- Local agencies challenged when project size and complexity outstrip their capacity.
- Difficulties meeting federal DBE and state apprenticeship requirements, particularly on the east side of the state; waivers are time consuming.
- Local jurisdiction requirements don't account for costs of mitigation.
- Established project scope can constrain contractor flexibility.
- Difficulties in utility coordination.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS TO EXPLORE IN Q1 2025

The interim report will identify the work group's initial findings related to streamlined project delivery.

- 1. Reduce unnecessary review.**
- 2. Enhance coordination of state interagency review.**
- 3. Provide technical assistance and tools to enhance local capacity.**

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS TO EXPLORE

1. Reduce unnecessary review and expedite required reviews.

- Concentrate federal dollars in larger projects so that fewer projects require federal review.
 - Washington's environmental protections would still apply to projects without federal funding.
- Expedite the ESA compliance process to ensure more predictable outcomes.
- Explore potential legislative fixes.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS TO EXPLORE

2. Enhance coordination of state interagency review.

- Improve state interagency coordination and staffing levels to achieve greater consistency of reviews and so that issues are surfaced and resolved quicker.
- Create a centralized state interagency portal that captures all project comments (to avoid restarting conversations, revisiting decisions).
- Identify and apply relevant Multi-Agency Permitting Team (MAP) tools and innovations that have streamlined processes for WSDOT projects.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS TO EXPLORE

3. Provide technical assistance and tools to enhance local capacity.

- Support success in local projects of scale and complexity.
 - Could include the assignment of an experienced owner representative to assist and oversee elements of project delivery.
- Develop a Resource Toolkit for delivery of local transportation projects
- Provide training on best practices to local agency staff.
- Explore options to meet DBE requirements.

NEXT STEPS THROUGH JUNE 2025

2024

- **Interim report** by December 15, 2024.
 - Findings to date.
 - Areas of focus for additional exploration.

2025

- **Topic-specific technical work sessions** on the three areas of focus discussed above.
- **Additional Work Group meetings** to refine and vet final recommendations.
- **Final report and recommendations to the Legislature** by June 30, 2025.
 - Summary of findings.
 - Recommendations.

APPENDIX

PROVISO ELEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proviso reads: *"The work group must review options for project streamlining to expedite project delivery that include, but are not limited to: Preapplication communication; partnership agreements; contracting processes; fund sources; mitigation; land use; rights-of-way; permitting; and shared technology; and must identify opportunities for pilot projects to test some of these recommendations."*

Proviso elements → Recommendation topics ↓	Preapplication communication	Partnership agreements	Contracting processes	Fund sources	Mitigation	Land use	ROW	Permitting	Shared tech
Inconsistent / changing interpretation of requirements	✓					?	?	✓	
Staffing								✓	
DBE / apprenticeship			✓						
Overall coordination of the review process	?								
ROW negotiation and certification							✓		
Environmental permits and approvals								✓	
Appeals / public opposition					✓	✓			
Project scope clarity	✓	✓						✓	
Funding methods, coord, and cost escalation		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Utility coordination		✓							
Contractor methods being a subject of the permit process								✓	
Proviso topic addressed?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓