What does the WSDOT Project Manager do?

The WSDOT Project Manager is ultimately responsible and accountable for ensuring that the rail project is completed on time, on budget, and within the scope of work. The WSDOT Project Manager will take the lead on developing the Project Charter, project plans, project funding agreements, and will oversee all aspects of the work to be performed. The WSDOT Project Manager will also ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, process invoices, and work closely with project partners to guide the project to a successful completion.

Who is on WSDOT's Rail Project Management Team?

WSDOT State Rail and Marine Office Project Managers have been trained by certified instructors from the Project Management Institute. WSDOT Project Managers come from a variety of backgrounds, but all have a strong commitment to public service, best project management practices, open communication, and accountability.

Contact Information

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Washington State Department of Transportation

October 2009

WSDOT Rail Projects: A Guide For Funding Recipients

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) administers state and federal grants and loans for rail construction projects. WSDOT partners with counties, cities, port districts, short line railroads and others to complete rail projects on time, on budget, and within the scope of work envisioned by the state legislature and our state's Congressional delegation.

Rail transportation funds must be spent in a manner that delivers the maximum benefit to taxpayers. This brochure will help WSDOT's partners understand how rail projects will be managed by the department, funding recipient roles, and the process for working together to improve the state's rail transportation system.

Why does on time, on budget and within scope matter?

Governor Christine Gregoire and the Washington State Legislature established an ambitious goal for WSDOT: Deliver 90 percent of transportation projects on time, on budget, and within the agreed upon scope of work. This goal has been set so that WSDOT continues to work diligently to fulfill public expectations after two successive transportation tax increases in 2003 and 2005. As project partners, it is important that funding recipients understand the process that WSDOT will follow, starting from the time that project funds become available, through the planning, permitting, and construction phases, and finally to project completion and closure.

By working together to successfully meet our project delivery goals, the state legislature and our Congressional delegation are expected to continue to provide public funds for rail projects across the state. Failure to meet these targets could cause decision-makers to direct funds to other non-rail transportation projects.

A new crossover is installed near Lacey, Washington.

What steps will we take together?

Initiating Process

This is the exploratory phase that allows us to understand the mission, goals, and processes of our respective organizations, and how we will work together. It establishes a framework for the scope of work and culminates in the establishment of a Project Charter that will guide how the various project managers will proceed.

Planning Phase

Good planning is essential to a successful project. The planning phase is a very detailed part of the project–and the most important. We will work together to develop the project schedule and examine all the risks. We will meet with all the stakeholders to ensure that their needs and views are considered in the project plan. The project plan will be used as our guide through project completion.

Executing Phase

This is where we put the plan into action and build the project. Activities include coordinating people and resources, obtaining environmental clearances and permits, submitting invoices for payment, and dealing with day-to-day issues as the project moves toward completion. The majority of the project budget will be expended during this phase.

Monitoring and Controlling Phase

This process takes place through every other phase, but especially during the executing phase. We will devise ways to check that the project is on schedule and on budget, and make the appropriate corrections when needed. We will monitor third party contractors to make certain that construction standards are being met and the terms of the construction contract are being fulfilled.

Closing Process

This is the final phase where we finish the project, close out contracts, make final payments, and archive project records. This is also the time to review successes and what needs improvement in the future so that WSDOT can better serve our project partners and stakeholders.

What is a Project Charter and why do we need one?

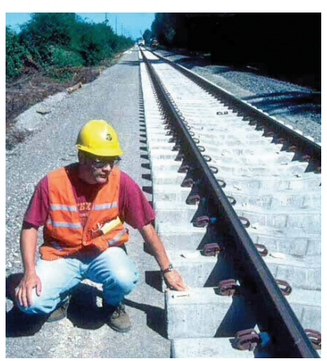
A Project Charter is a document that's designed to "get everyone on the same page." Project Charters are commonly used by WSDOT to outline the key project elements and to ensure that all project partners have a shared understanding of the work ahead. Project Charters also serve as a foundation for more detailed project planning. WSDOT will work with rail project funding recipients to develop a Project Charter that will include the following elements:

- Project purpose
- Project benefits
- Project scope of work
- Project managers and other team members
- Key stakeholders
- Milestones/goals
- Legislative deadline
- Budget
- Communications
- Assumptions and risks
- Project sponsor signatures

What's the difference between a Project Charter and a project funding agreement?

A Project Charter outlines the key project elements and ensures that all project partners have a shared understanding of the work ahead. A project funding agreement is the legally-binding contract between WSDOT and a funding recipient that enables WSDOT to spend state and federal funds for rail transportation projects. When the funds are distributed as loans, loan repayment terms will also be included in the funding agreement.

WSDOT will take the lead on developing the project funding agreement. These agreements are typically reviewed by legal experts



representing WSDOT and the funding recipient.

In most cases, public entities such as cities, counties, and port districts must get final approval from a council or board of commissioners before executing the funding agreement with WSDOT.

How will project funds be distributed by WSDOT?

Washington State law requires that WSDOT only distribute funds as reimbursements for work that has already been completed. This applies to both rail project grants and loans.

Once the project funding agreement has been executed, funding recipients will submit monthly invoices to WSDOT for actual costs incurred during project execution. The WSDOT Project Manager will review these invoices, work with funding recipients to clarify and correct any discrepancies, and process the invoice for payment. WSDOT typically distributes payments within 30 days of receipt of the invoice.

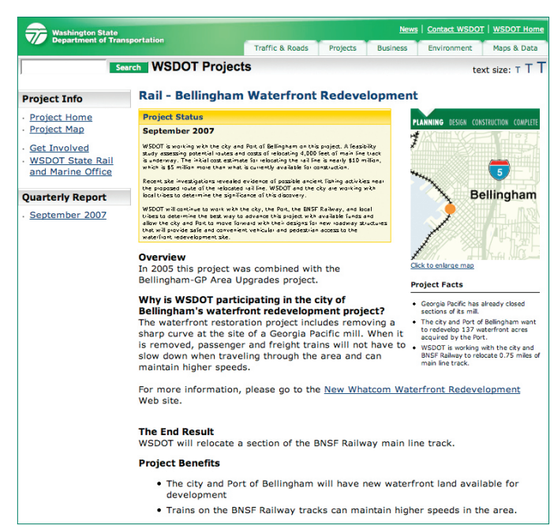
Does WSDOT have any reporting requirements for funding recipients?

The WSDOT State Rail and Marine Office requires all funding recipients to submit a monthly progress report along with their monthly invoice. This information is used to monitor project scope, schedule, budget, and risks. The progress reports also help support WSDOT's public communication activities.

The WSDOT Project Manager will work with funding recipients to develop the initial progress reports. The WSDOT Project Manager will also make regular site visits to verify the information included in the monthly progress reports.

Why is WSDOT taking a portion of the project funds for project management?

The WSDOT State Rail and Marine Office will withhold five percent of the project budget for staff time, travel, supplies, and overall project management. The balance of the funds will be available for preliminary engineering, environmental documentation, permitting, and construction as outlined in the scope of work.



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Quarterly Report
- September 2007

Rail - Bellingham Waterfront Redevelopment

Project Status

September 2007

WSDOT is working with the city and Port of Bellingham on this project. A feasibility study assessing potential routes and costs of relocating 6,000 feet of main line track is underway. The initial cost estimate for relocating the rail line is nearly $10 million, which is $5 million more than what is currently available for construction.

Recent site investigations revealed evidence of possible ancient fishing activities near the proposed route of the relocated rail line. WSDOT and the city are working with local tribes to determine the significance of this discovery.

WSDOT will continue to work with the city, the Port, the BNSF Railway, and local tribes to determine the best way to advance this project with available funds and allow the city and Port to move forward with their designs for new roadway structures that will provide safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access to the waterfront redevelopment site.

PLANNING DESIGN CONSTRUCTION COMPLETE

5

Bellingham

Click to enlarge map

Overview

In 2005 this project was combined with the Bellingham-GP Area Upgrades project.

Why is WSDOT participating in the city of Bellingham's waterfront redevelopment project?

The waterfront restoration project includes removing a sharp curve at the site of a Georgia Pacific mill. When it is removed, passenger and freight trains will not have to slow down when traveling through the area and can maintain higher speeds.

For more information, please go to the New Whatcom Waterfront Redevelopment Web site.

Project Facts
- Georgia Pacific has already closed sections of its mill.
- The city and Port of Bellingham want to redevelop 137 waterfront acres acquired by the Port.
- WSDOT is working with the city and BNSF Railway to relocate 0.75 miles of main line track.

The End Result

WSDOT will relocate a section of the BNSF Railway main line track.

Project Benefits
- The city and Port of Bellingham will have new waterfront land available for development
- Trains on the BNSF Railway tracks can maintain higher speeds in the area.

How will we share project information with the public?

Clear and accurate communication between WSDOT and taxpayers is a key part of our business.

WSDOT publishes and regularly updates project pages and status reports on the department's web site, holds public meetings, and develops printed materials for each rail project. The WSDOT Project Manager will work with funding recipients to develop a communications plan that meets the needs of the department, funding recipients, and the taxpaying public.

If the funds are issued as loans and must be repaid, what is the standard process for repayment?

Loans issued by the WSDOT State Rail and Marine Office are typically for 15 years at zero interest. Repayment will usually commence one year after the project has been certified as completed by the WSDOT Project Manager. Payments are typically submitted to WSDOT once per year.

The terms of repayment will be discussed during the development of the project funding agreement. The repayment schedule and annual amount of payment will be included as an exhibit in the funding agreement.