Washington State
Department of Transportation
Paula J. Hammond, P.E.
Secretary of Transportation

Transportation Building
310 Maple Park Avenue S.E.
P.O. Box 47300
Olympia, WA 98504-7300

360-705-7000
TTY: 1-800-833-6388
www.wsdot.wa.gov

November 30, 2011

The Honorable Mary Margaret Haugen
Chair
Senate Transportation Committee
PO Box 40410
Olympia, WA 98504-0410

The Honorable Judy Clibborn
Chair
House Transportation Committee
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

The Honorable Curtis King
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Transportation Committee
PO Box 40414
Olympia, WA 98504-0414

The Honorable Mike Armstrong
Ranking Minority Member
House Transportation Committee
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Re: Implementation of the JTC Recommendations

Dear Senator Haugen, Senator King, Representative Clibborn, and Representative Armstrong;

As required by Chapter 367, Section 223, Laws of 2011 (2011-13 Transportation budget), the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is pleased to forward our responses to the JTC Efficiency Study recommendations.

Attached you will also find a matrix that summarizes the responses produced in collaboration with Transportation Improvement Board, Freight Mobility Board, County Road Administration Board, and Washington State Department of Transportation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 360.705.7871.

Sincerely,

Kathleen B. Davis
Director
Highways & Local Programs

KBD:sas
enclosures

Washington State
Department of Transportation

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) 2012 Report to the Transportation Committee

JTC Efficiency Study Report per 2011-13 Transportation Budget Chapter 367, Section 223
December 1, 2011

Following are the responses to the JTC Efficiency Study recommendations that are pertinent to WSDOT, Highways and Local Programs (H&LP). The responses are grouped by the categories listed in the report and are identified by the recommendation number.

Strengthening Funding Programs and Technical Assistance

9. ***"FMSIB and H&LP (for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety (PBS) programs) should be given the ability to finalize their project lists without legislative approval."***

We agree with and support this recommendation. Currently the program of projects funded for SRTS and PBS are finalized with specific identification by the legislature as part of the process of approving the transportation budget. Consequently, no funds can be obligated for any of these projects until the budget bill is signed by the Governor after the legislature closes its session. The result of this approach is to delay project planning and implementation because the budget tends to become law after the start of the construction season. This often results in projects not being started for nearly a year after they have been selected for funding by the legislature. Having the ability, like CRAB and TIB, to manage fund balances to project cash flow/project needs would allow projects to advance more quickly and provide the ability to assign funding over multiple biennia rather than having to commit full funding for projects that will only use a small portion of the appropriation in a given biennia. Delivery continues to be H&LP's priority and we support earlier implementation of projects that this recommendation would allow.

10. ***"Opportunities to create a combined quarterly project update should be explored so a jurisdiction with a project funded by multiple funding sources could complete a single update."***

Although H&LP requires quarterly project reports, we believe an initiative to coordinate project milestones that are reported with TIB and FMSIB should be formalized. We will establish a regularly scheduled meeting to share project data.

11. **"Washington should collaborate with other states to advocate for less onerous project reporting requirements for federally funded projects."**

WSDOT collaborates with other states through participation in APWA, AASHTO, and WASHTO. Paula Hammond is the chair of the AASHTO Standing Committee on Highways and H&LP's Director

is a member of APWA's Reauthorization Task Force and the APWA National Transportation Committee, which gives Washington an excellent opportunity to advocate for changes in project reporting requirements at the national level.

Improving Financial Management, Portfolio Management, and Performance Measures

12. ***"Agencies should actively manage their portfolio of projects."***

H&LP has procedures and tools that allow us to actively manage our portfolio of projects. We have developed a robust, functional capital project management system called SPORT. The system is currently being fully deployed and includes a dashboard function that allows users to perform searches via a web based mapping query.

15. **"Shift responsibility for cash advances of federal emergency funds from CRAB to WSDOT and target freed–up funds to immediate county preservation needs."**

H&LP has discussed this issue with CRAB and will continue to work toward a solution for emergency response. CRAB has requested that counties aggressively move projects to construction. In response, counties have advanced more projects to construction and the "freed-up" funds, previously held in reserve by CRAB for emergency cash advances, have been expended.

16. **"The state should continue to track and monitor the agencies' program administration costs relative to their capital budgets to ensure continued efficiency."**

H&LP will continue to track and monitor our administrative costs.

17. **"Agencies should link program outcome measures to program objectives and project selection criteria."**

H&LP currently does link program outcome measures to program objectives and project selection criteria.

- For safety programs, we make project selections based on a data-driven analysis that focuses on reducing fatal and serious injuries.
- For our federal bridge program, we make project selections based on a data-driven analysis that focuses on extending the useful life of the bridge and replacing bridges that are no longer cost effective to maintain.
- For our Safe Routes to School program, we make project selections based on a data-driven analysis that focuses on reducing the number of accidents near schools and that also increases the number of children walking and bicycling to school.

18. **"The same set of outcome measures should be tracked consistently over time. Tracking measures over time facilitates comparison across agencies when appropriate, and provides valuable information to agencies on trends."**

- For safety programs, we measure and report on the number of fatal and serious injury crashes and the rate of serious injury and fatal crashes per vehicle miles traveled.

- For bridge programs, we measure and report on the bridges that are in good, fair, and poor condition by structure and total deck area.
- For the Safe Routes to School program, we measure and report on the number of accidents near schools and the number of children who are walking and bicycling to school.

H&LP also tracks and reports on pavement preservation measures that include the number of arterial miles in good, fair, and poor condition. The measures cited above are tracked consistently over time and are reported in the Gray Notebook and the Governor's Biannual Attainment Report.

19. **"Institute a manageable set of internal performance measures consistent across the four agencies related to financial management, portfolio management, and customer service."**
WSDOT's internal measures have been tracked monthly and annually since 1996. New reporting tools will be deployed January 2012 that provide the following measures in a web-enabled format.

Program Management Measures as of 9/30/2011

ITEM	Measure
Number of Projects in Design	#480 projects
Number of Projects in Construction	#570 projects
Number of Delayed Projects	#0 Projects
Percent of Administrative Overhead	1.9 %

Communicating More Effectively

20. **"Agencies should ensure that their reports and briefings tell the full story, reminding decision-makers of their respective roles, how those roles create specific benefits and challenges, and an annotated description of current contributions and challenges."**
Agency-wide performance reporting is a high priority at WSDOT. We strive to be a high performance organization that is credible and accountable to the Governor, Legislature, taxpayers, and transportation delivery partners across the state. The Gray Notebook anchors WSDOT's management philosophy and is the basis for external performance reporting. The JTC Efficiency study will be a good reference document to share with new lawmakers.

21. **"Briefings with decision-makers and staff should augment written reports, and particular effort should be taken to develop relationships with new policy makers and their staff as turnover occurs."**
H&LP meets with OFM and legislative staff quarterly to bring them up to date with current federal transportation legislation. Also, H&LP regularly meets with city, county, state, and federal decision-makers who are involved with the management and oversight of transportation project issues at all

levels. Contact with new congressional, state, and local policy makers and their staff is a routine part of our everyday business activity.

22. ***"CRAB, FMSIB, and H&LP should identify ways to use their websites to communicate more timely information about project and portfolio status to support transparency and encourage timely project advancement."***

The development of a new web-enabled capital project tracking system for projects funded through H&LP has recently been completed. This application is unique to H&LP's capital project inventory. In developing this application, a dashboard functionality has been included that will allow users to conduct ad hoc queries of our portfolio in January 2012.