Lower Snake River Dams Transportation Study

Joint Transportation Committee Meeting

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Julie Meredith, Secretary of Transportation
Mike Gribner, Deputy Secretary of Transportation
Steve Nevey, Deputy Secretary of Transportation – WA State Ferries

Agenda

- Project Overview
- Infrastructure Impacts of Dam Breach
- Scenarios Under Evaluation
- Update on Outreach
- Next Steps

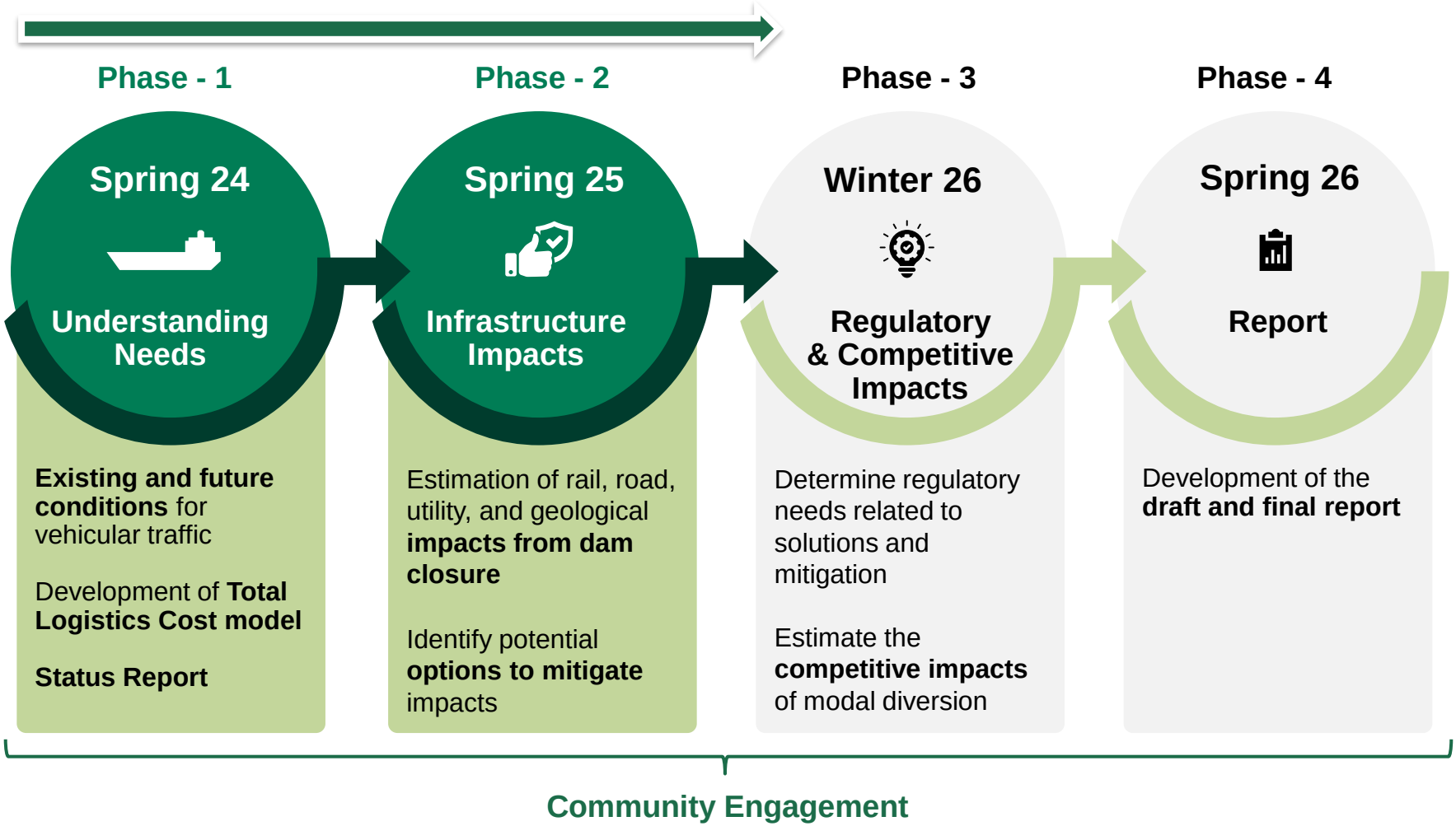
Project Purpose

Study to understand the transportation impact of shifting barge traffic on the Lower Snake River to other modes.

Technical analysis and engagement to understand the impacts, including:

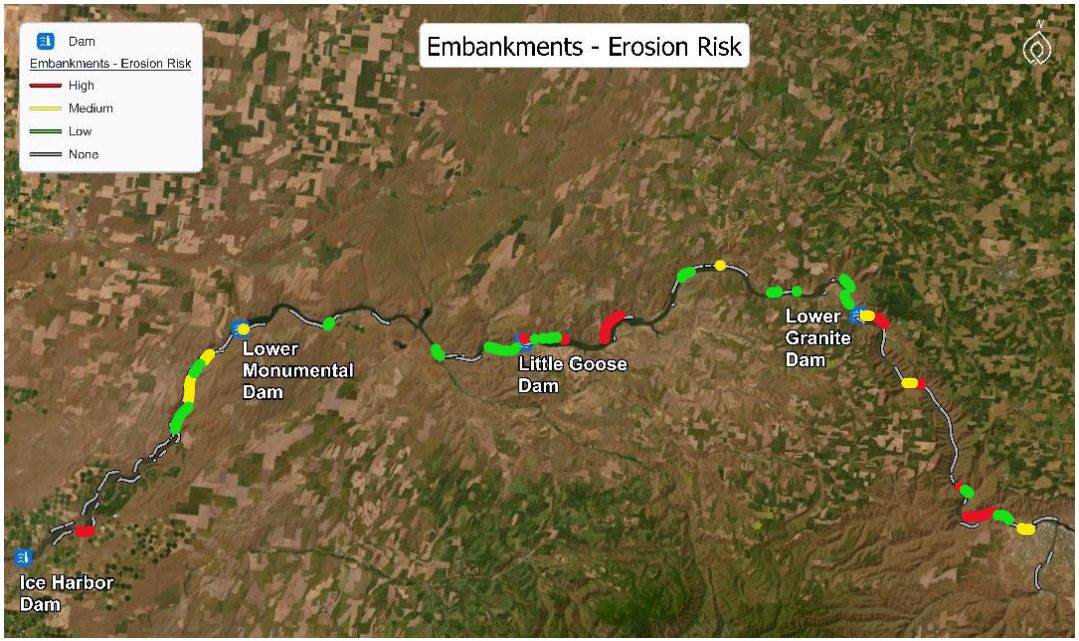
- Truck, rail and barge movements
- Geological
- Safety
- Emissions
- Competitiveness

Study Phases: Where We are Now



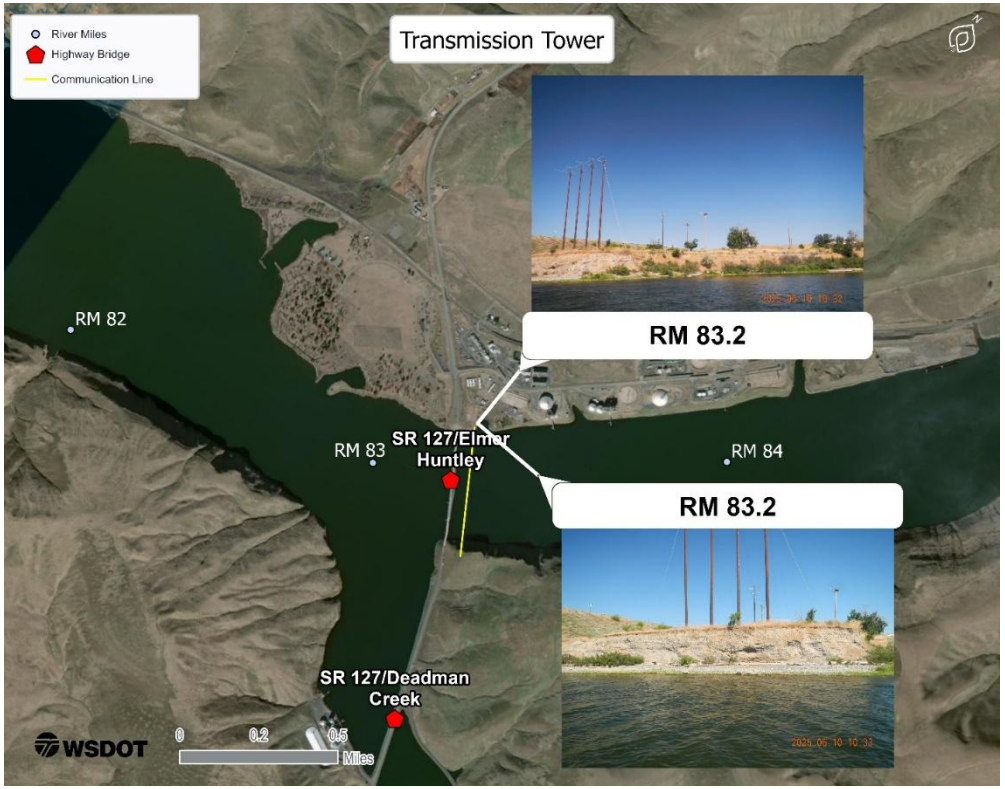
Geologic Impacts

- Site visit to Snake River
- Drawdown risk to embankments:
  - Occurs over the short term (weeks)
  - Impacted by drawdown rates
- Erosion risk to embankments:
  - Occurs over the long term (years)



Impacts on Roads, Rail, and Utilities

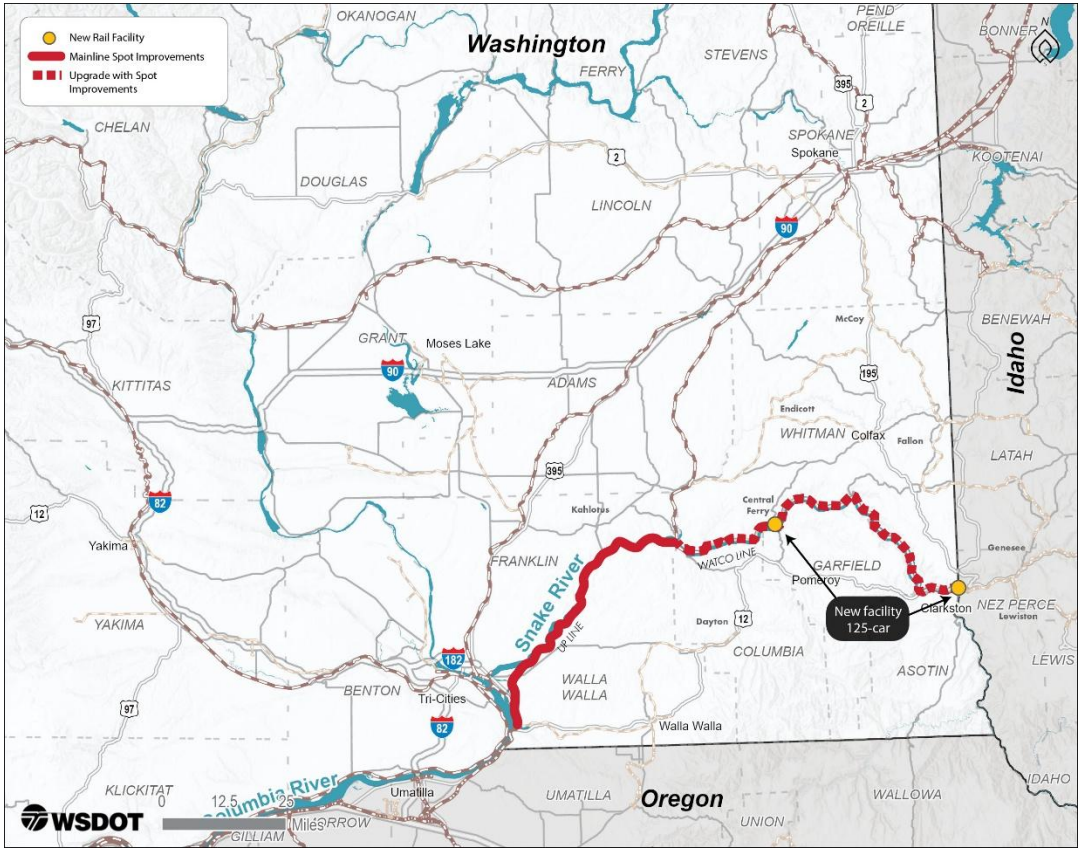
- Utilities identified based on existing databases
  - Verified through site visits
- Impacts on roads and rail are developed for locations close to the river



Alternative Future Scenario 5

New Unit Train Terminals

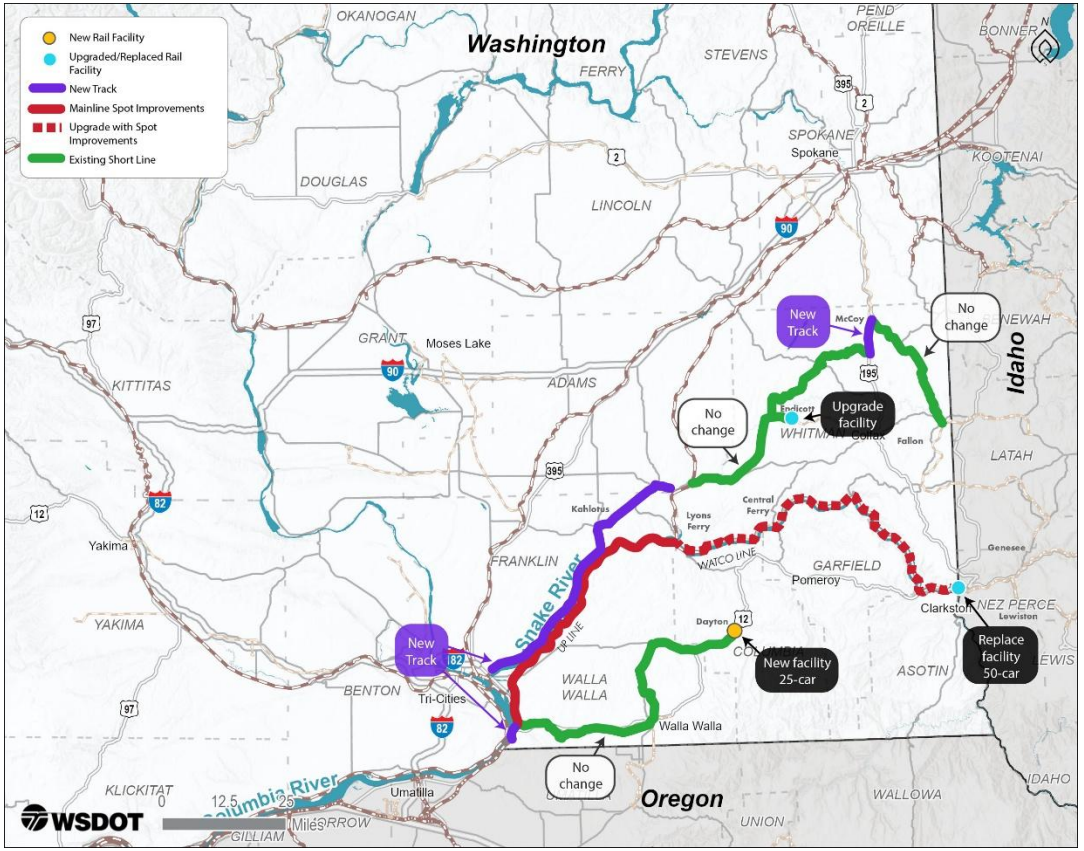
- New unit train terminals:
  - Central Ferry
  - Lewiston-Wilma
- Track improvements to WATCO and UP lines next to the Snake River



Alternative Future Scenario 6

Shortline to Tri-Cities

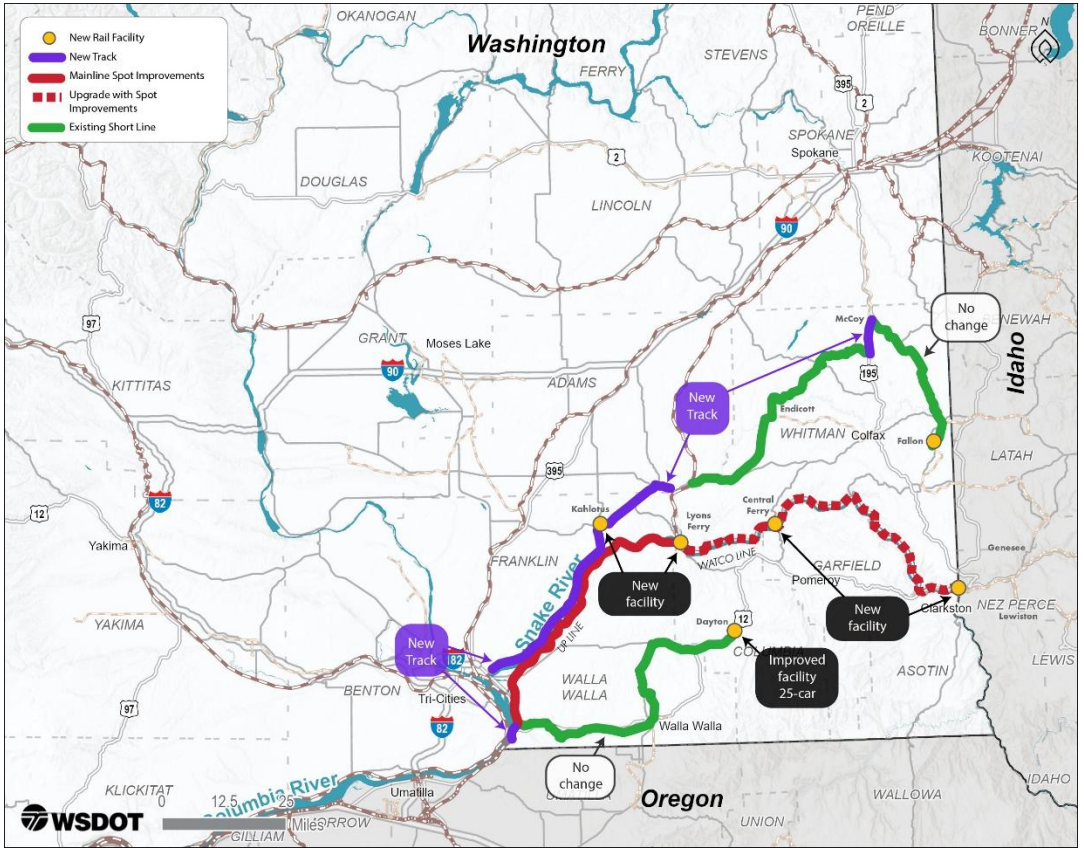
- New/improved train terminal:
  - Lewiston-Wilma
  - Endicott
  - Dayton
- New/improved track:
  - WATCO
  - UP along LSR
  - Columbia Plateau Trail/SPS Railroad
  - Thornton to McCoy



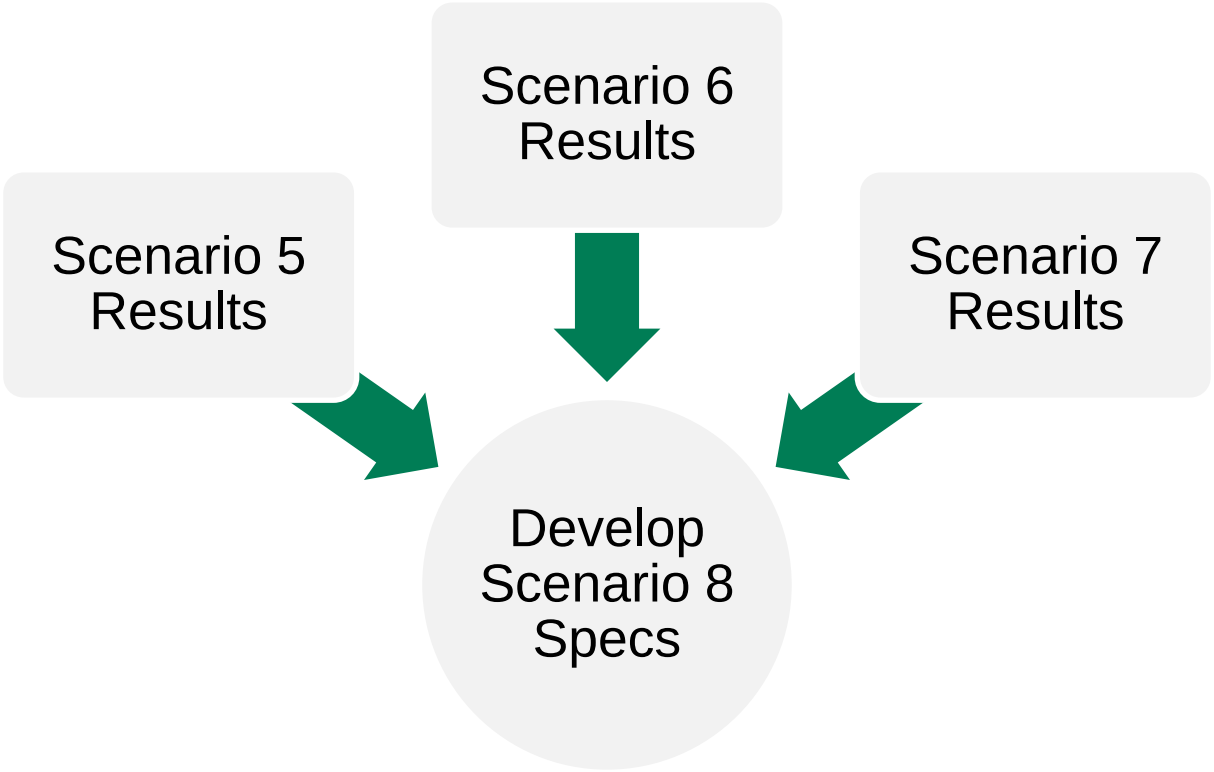
Alternative Future Scenario 7

Many Solutions

- Combination of most effective elements of Scenarios #5 and #6
- New/improved train terminal:
  - Lewiston
  - Dayton
  - Fallon
  - Wilma
  - Central Ferry
  - Lyons Ferry
  - Kahlotus
- New/improved track:
  - WATCO
  - UP along LSR
  - Columbia Plateau Trail/SPS Railroad
  - Thornton to McCoy



Alternative Future Scenario 8



Engagement Structure

- Community Advisory Committee meetings
- Technical Advisory Committee meetings

- Online Open House
- In-person Open House

- WSDOT Executive Steering Committee
- Monthly meetings with JTC Legislative staff
- Monthly meetings with the Six-Sovereigns

- Presentations to local transportation entities and stakeholders
- Individual consultations and discussions with private sector

Recent and Upcoming Engagement Activities

- Online Open House (Nov/Dec 2024)
  - Shared general information about the study
  - Gathered feedback on main concerns for the study and assess how study findings align with public experiences
  - 2,276 people visited the online open house, 455 responded to feedback questions
- In-Person Open Houses (June 2025)
  - Reviewed scenario analyzed
  - Gathered feedback on the model results and existing conditions
  - 130 people attended, with 52 people providing feedback
- Upcoming Engagement
  - Technical and Community Advisory Committee meetings will continue
  - Online open house to share model results will be held in January/February

Key Deliverables

Quarterly Reports

- Submitted to state legislature
- Progress across each of the phases and upcoming work to be conducted

Final Report (2026)

- Summarizes the data, analysis, methodologies, findings, and engagement used for the full study
- Main report with technical appendices

Next Steps

- Complete scenario analysis
- Develop cost estimates for infrastructure enhancements
- Continue to implement engagement plan
- Develop Final Report

Questions?

Washington DOT Contact

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