

2023-25 Route Jurisdiction Study

Washington State
Transportation Commission



FACT SHEET: Route Jurisdiction Study

Since Washington's initial Route Jurisdiction Study was conducted in the late 1980s, the state has gone through significant changes, including considerable population growth, the addition of newly incorporated cities, shifts in land use and roadway use, the condition of infrastructure, and the fiscal capacity of both state and local governments. These changes have rendered current requirements around route jurisdiction transfer and assignment outdated and out of synch with today's statewide road network.

In its role as the body who considers petitions for route jurisdiction transfers from cities, counties, and the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Transportation Commission encouraged the Legislature to direct this study so that necessary updates to transfer criteria can be made and a refreshed assessment of the current state highway system can be conducted. The intended result of this study is to inform law makers on recommended changes that will enable the advancement of a transparent and collaborative process between the state and local jurisdictions as true partners and stewards of the collective state roadway system.

Legislative Direction

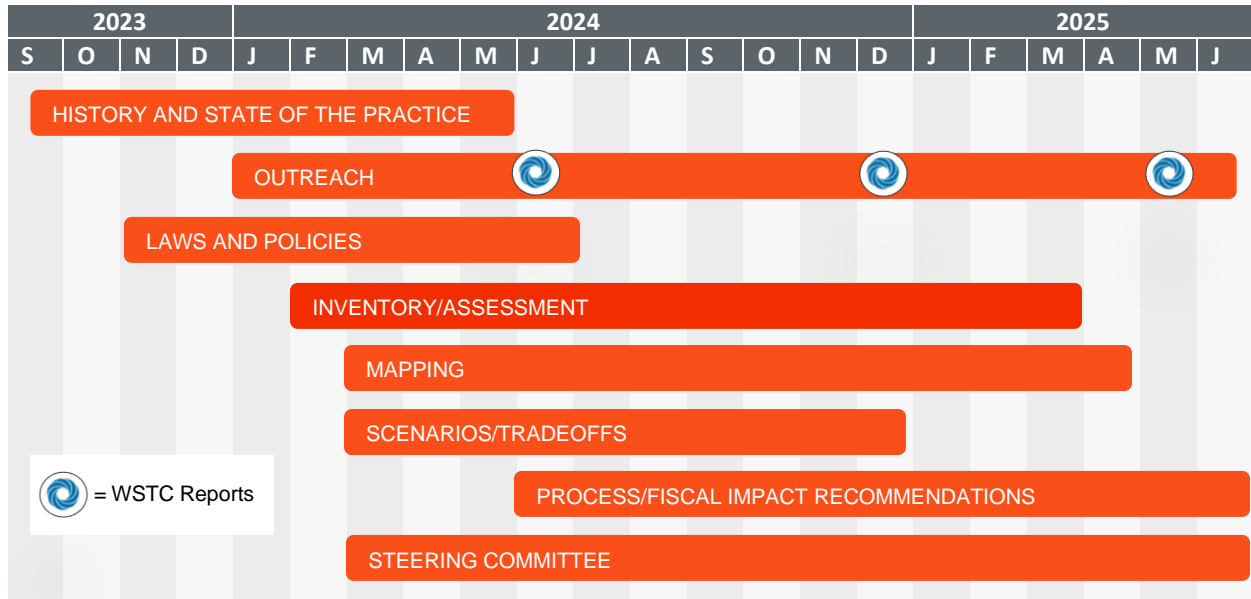
The state's 2023-25 Transportation Budget directs the WSTC to conduct a Route Jurisdiction Study aimed at assessing the current state highway inventory and local roadway designations to determine if changes are needed in jurisdictional assignment among state, county, and city road systems. The assessment will also review current criteria used to define the state highway system to determine if they continue to be applicable. The commission will submit a final report of findings and recommendations to the transportation committees of the Legislature in 2025.

The Role of Stakeholders

In an effort to ensure a collaborative and organic process, with local jurisdictions and the state at the table together throughout this study, the Commission will establish a Steering Committee. The Committee will be made up of local and state representatives and will serve in the role as a critical advisor and partner in the advancement of this study and the shaping of the results and recommendations. In order for change to happen, it is critical that together, we identify the possible changes and determine the impacts of them.

For more information, please contact: Paula Reeves at ReevePa@wstc.wa.gov or visit: <https://wstc.wa.gov/programs/2023-25-route-jurisdiction-study>

Overall Route Jurisdiction Study Timeline



Key Tasks of the Study

Task 1: History and State of Practice

In this task, the history of Washington’s designations and transfers, outcomes, and current statutes as well as current jurisdictional practices in other states will be evaluated. We will also conduct interviews with agency and community partners.

Task 2: Laws and Policies

We will take inventory of laws, rules, policies, and other changes since the 1988 Route Jurisdiction Study.

Task 3: Outreach

Throughout much of the project, we will gather input from local agencies, tribal nations, boards, elected officials, and the public, as well as conducting targeted outreach to underserved communities and BIPOC populations.

Task 4: Inventory and Assessment Plan

Through this task, we will identify factors and criteria to assess changes to route jurisdiction classifications and propose a process for assessing the jurisdiction of the roads in the current system.

Task 5: Mapping Inventory

This task will complete mapping to apply the evaluation criteria and identify transfer candidates considering fiscal impacts, safety, connectivity, access, continuity, preservation, roadway classification, and other factors.

Task 6: Define Scenarios and Tradeoffs

The project will define scenarios and tradeoffs including fiscal impacts of maintaining or shifting jurisdiction.

Task 7: Update Process and Determine Fiscal Impact

The final report will include recommendations for possible changes to jurisdiction transfer criteria, process, transfer candidates, implications for reporting and administrative processes, and steps needed to implement the proposed changes.

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