SR 164 Corridor Study

Corridor Working Group Session
Meeting Summary

Meeting date: **August 9, 2005**

Location: Phillip Starr Center – Muckleshoot Indian Reservation
(39015 172nd Ave S)

Attendees:

Partners in attendance:
Dennis Dowdy – City of Auburn
Kelvin Frank, Woody Ward – Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
Chris Searcy – City of Enumclaw
Ann Martin – King County
Seth Stark – WSDOT, Urban Planning Office
Don Sims – WSDOT, Northwest Region

Partners not in attendance:
Steve Taylor – Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
Mike Cummings - Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)

Others in attendance:
Rich Wagner – City of Auburn
Dennis Swanson – Citizens for Safety and the Environment (CSE)
Molly Zidow – White River Amphitheatre
Linda Hanson – King County
Pamela Arora, Cathy Higley, Keith Sabol – Parsons
Kathlyn Kocher – EnviroIssues

Welcome and Goals for the Day

Seth Stark, WSDOT, welcomed the partners and thanked them for taking the time to attend the Corridor Working Group (CWG) session. Seth also thanked Kelvin Frank and Woody Ward from the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe for hosting the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and shared the name of the organization or jurisdiction they were representing.

Seth Stark reviewed the session agenda and informed the group of recent changes in the last few months. WSDOT is currently looking to replace Kamuron Gurol and Mike Cummings. Kamuron Gurol is now working for the City of Sammamish and Carol Hunter is acting as his interim replacement. Mike Cummings started a position with PSRC and is coincidently, the new PSRC representative. Cathy Higley with Parsons Transportation Group has also joined the project team to act as the day-to-day Project Manager. Chris Searcy will replace Les Johnson for the City of Enumclaw.

March 2005 Open House Summary

Seth Stark reviewed the contents of the open house summary and the table of recorded comments that were emailed to the CWG the week prior. Seth distributed a folio that outlines each segment, the public comments received and potential improvements under consideration along each segment. This folio will be available for public review on the website, local fairs and festivals and the upcoming open houses. The public frequently commented on vehicle and pedestrian safety along the corridor. Traffic congestion near the SR 164 and SR 18 interchange was also a main concern.

The public's comments have been incorporated into the list of previously identified projects that will be analyzed as part of the process to recommend for transportation solutions in the final Route Development Plan (RDP). WSDOT is not simply cataloging the comments, but hopes to address the public's concerns through the projects recommended in the final RDP.

Ann Martin, King County, asked for clarification on a public comment about the Amphitheater's egress patterns. The comment was in regard to the options for returning to SR 164 using rural back streets. Molly Zidow, White River Amphitheater, responded by saying that these egress patterns reflect the current egress management plan which has the approval of King County roads.

It was suggested that this is the type of matter that should be discussed more fully by the local Operational Traffic Committee.

Future Baseline Modeling for Auburn bypass

Craig Helmann, WSDOT's Transportation Planner and modeler, explained the considerations that went into the 2030 baseline model. The model is based on the King County Travel Demand Model. The land use and socio-economic data (employment and population projections) upon which the forecasts are based were reviewed by local agency technical representatives. Generally, the socio-economic data forecast are somewhat higher than what is included in the King County and PSRC models. Craig Helmann also indicated that household and employment forecast data from the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, provided by Steve Taylor, had been included in the forecasts.

Seven different bypass alternatives were modeled, each with two to three lanes and a carrying capacity of 1,250 cars per lane at 45mph. The length and route of the bypass varies in each alternative. One alternative looked at a combination of two routes. These alternatives were modeled with SR 164 assumed to remain in its current configuration. Seth distributed a handout showing the potential rough estimates of routes for each alternative and the projected daily traffic

volumes at various locations along the current SR 164 corridor. Please refer to Results of the Auburn Bypass Modeling handout for further information.

The results of the modeling show that Alternative 1 (a bypass running along R Street) has a higher percentage (67.3%) of daily traffic volume using R Street rather than using the remainder of SR 164 to SR 18. An even higher percentage of traffic volume resulted when combining Alternative 1, R Street and Alternative 6, Academy to R Street.

Ann Martin asked why some alternatives that might have significant environmental impacts were included in the modeling effort. Seth responded by saying that these alternatives were the same alternatives presented at the open houses. These alternatives were only being analyzed from a traffic demand standpoint. Environmental impacts along with other "fatal flaw" considerations would be looked at in the next stage of analysis to be done between this Corridor Working Group meeting and the next meeting at the end of August.

Linda Hanson, WRIA 9 Team, asked why environmental considerations weren't taken into account in the modeling and when such consideration will begin. Cathy replied that the study team is in the process of considering environmental factors for every single project. After narrowing down the project list, the study team will identify significant adverse effects with respect to socioeconomic and environmental issues and then carry forward the alternatives with the most potential.

Rich Wagner, City of Auburn, questioned the assumption that people will take the shortest route rather than the route with the fewest number of traffic lights. Craig Helmann stated that the data is based on speed and route to determine the fastest travel time.

Existing Traffic and Safety Conditions

Cathy introduced the PowerPoint presentation on existing traffic and safety conditions along the corridor. The goal is to present the group with an overview of each segment, after which the study team will present a list of potential improvements that address traffic flow and safety issues. Seth noted that some options may overlap and apply to the same designated area. These potentially conflicting options would both not likely prevail through the upcoming initial screening and the following more detailed level of analysis

For each segment, Cathy Higley reported on:

- travel times taken in the field at off and on-peak PM hours,
- 2004 and projected 2030 average daily traffic volumes,
- traffic flow conditions,

- total number of accidents between 2002 & 2004,
- types of accidents, and
- pedestrian and automobile accident locations.

Please refer to the SR 164 Existing Conditions and Proposed Project Solutions PowerPoint presentation for a detailed description of the existing traffic and safety conditions for each corridor segment.

Comments and questions from CWG members are listed below according to segment:

Auburn Segment:

- The travel time of four minutes for this segment seems incorrect. The study team will check this information.
- It was also suggested that perhaps the travel times were at speed limit and optimum travel time to catch signals.
- Don Sims asked about the type of improvements lead by the City of Auburn, the severity of the accidents and whether driveway accidents were taken into account.

Muckleshoot Segment:

- Krain-Wabash Street is more commonly known as SE 400th St and should be labeled accordingly.
- Ann Martin is interested in seeing the conditions and severity of the three fatal accidents that occurred on the Muckleshoot Segment.

Enumclaw Segment

- Chris Searcy, Enumclaw noted that the SR 164 and SR 410 junction becomes a high traffic area during the afternoon lunch period.

Potential Traffic Flow and Safety Improvements

Cathy Higley, of Parsons, continued the presentation by showing examples of all the potential traffic flow improvements. The types of projects under consideration include:

- traffic signals/roundabouts,
- channelization (roadway restriping),
- widening/shoulder improvements, and
- pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements.

The group discussed the differences between traffic signals and roundabouts. Don Sims provided further information about roundabouts. Studies show a 90% reduction of severe or high fatality accidents after a roundabout is installed. WSDOT believes this is a good solution, especially in rural areas. There are about 67

roundabouts along state highways in Washington. There has yet to be a recorded pedestrian accident at a roundabout because roundabouts tend to slow approaching vehicles, and pedestrians and automobiles have better visibility of each other. Roundabouts and effective other options for vision-impaired pedestrians are currently under study. At intersections monitored by traffic signals, there are more opportunities for automobiles to "T-bone", which causes a more severe accident. Accidents at roundabouts typically result in mainly property damage, rather than injury to the person. Members of the public usually feel opposition to roundabouts because of their unfamiliarity with them. Before and After studies show positive feedback from the public six months after a roundabout is installed. Members of the CWG were interested in reading some of these studies. Don Sims noted that a roundabout is not always the best solution at every intersections and a study will be conducted to determine whether a traffic signal or a roundabout is the proper solution.

Cathy Higley then gave examples of the potential safety improvements under study for each segment including:

- street lighting and horizontal curve realignment,
- channelization (roadway restriping),
- roadway alignment, and
- pedestrian, bicycle, transit improvements.

Cathy concluded the presentation with a summary of the types of traffic flow and safety improvements under consideration at specific locations along each segment. Below is a summary of these improvements and comments made per segment:

Auburn Segment:

- The team is studying ways to help vehicles make smoother turning movements.
- The topography in this segment makes it challenging to realign intersections.
- Installing ADA crosswalks being considered.

Academy Segment:

- This segment calls for a lot of safety improvements and the installation of traffic signals or roundabouts.

Muckleshoot Segment:

- Traffic flow intersection improvements include either traffic signals/roundabouts or channelization.
- Building trails is an option to provide safer pedestrian access along this segment.

Rural Segment:

- The rural segment mainly requires intersection channelization improvements.
- Chris Searcy questioned why a traffic signal or roundabout would be needed at 188th St SE to 196th Ave SE. It seems that this would be more of a safety issue rather than a traffic volume issue. Cathy Higley stated that these improvement projects are included to address future traffic volumes and potential problems.

Enumclaw Segment:

- Traffic signals and roundabouts are suggested at this segment because of significant side street delays.
- A truck bypass is under consideration because of the high volumes of trucks and their difficulty to make the turns in these areas. The City of Enumclaw would like to see options and recommendations for a viable truck route.

  It was mentioned that this "truck bypass" is more a bypass of north/south SR 169 traffic through Enumclaw, rather than SR 169 traffic. The SR 169 Corridor Study is addressing this issue. It was also noted this "bypass" may not be an official bypass as much as it might just be intersection improvements along SR 169 to respond to travel behavior that is already using alternative routes.
- Chris Searcy suggested a traffic signal or roundabout at SR 410.

Project List

Seth handed out a list of current and potential transportation solutions including milepost, type of solution, and a description of the solution. The study team requested that the partners review the list to make sure each project is listed correctly (i.e. urgent need or useful thirty years from now), if there really is a need for an improvement, and if there are necessary improvements that are not on the list. The list is now a compilation of projects identified by the CWG partners, projects identified by the Corridor Study team in response to identified corridor deficiencies, and projects identified in response to comments received from the public at the open houses, through the website, or during stakeholder interviews.

Cathy explained that this list should be all encompassing and is the initial step to recommending projects to move forward for the route development plan (RDP). Items noted in green are short-term solutions that are currently funded and in some phase of the planning process. Blue projects are potential long-term solutions. The salmon color

highlights projects developed in response to gathered field data, accident data, and comments from open houses and the CWG.

Ann Martin inquired about the packaging of these individual projects and how they could be assembled into categories to provide clear alternatives.

The project list will be packaged into alternatives containing short- and long-term solutions with packages differing by amount of funding or level of impact. The study team is in the process of making a comprehensive list that will be put through an initial screening analysis and grouped into initial packaged alternatives.

Next Steps

The study team has developed a fairly ambitious program. The team will perform an initial screening analysis and present six alternatives at the next CWG meeting on August 30th. With feedback from the CWG, the alternatives will be narrowed down to three. The public will be able to comment on these three alternatives at the next round of open houses in early October. The previously established Evaluation Criteria will be used for a detailed analysis of the three alternatives and the first draft of the RDP will be completed in November and presented to the CWG at the November meeting. The team plans to have the SR 164 RDP finalized in December. WSDOT and Parsons know that this is an aggressive schedule but believe that the RDP can be completed in this time frame.

Although an extensive environmental analysis will not be conducted in the RDP process, significant environmental factors will still be considered. Ann Martin expressed concern about not conducting a full environmental analysis on the bypass options. The team is working to combine our efforts and resources with the SR 167 Corridor and SR 167 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes projects for the open house in Auburn on October 4th.

Seth announced the dates for the second round of open houses that will occur.

EDIT NOTE: Since the CWG meeting the following dates, times, and sites are confirmed.

All Open Houses will be held from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm on the dates and at the sites listed below:

- October 4th, Auburn, SR 164
  Chinook Elementary School Gym
  3502 Auburn Way South, Auburn, WA

- October 6th, Muckleshoot Indian Reservation, SR 164
  Philip Starr Center, Cougar Room
  39015 172nd Avenue SE
  Auburn, WA

- October 11th, Enumclaw, SR 164 and SR 169
  Thunder Mountain Middle School
  Multi-Purpose Room
  42018 264th Avenue SE
  Enumclaw, WA

- October 13th, Renton, SR 169
  Renton Community Center
  Banquet Room
  1715 Maple Valley Highway

Action Items:

- The team will review travel time data gathered in the field for accuracy.
- The team will direct CWG members to studies on roundabouts.
- Partners were asked to send any comments on the SR 164 Project list to Seth Stark (starks@wsdot.wa.gov, 206.464.1288) by Tuesday August 16th.
- The team will send electronic versions of the presentation, the Auburn Bypass modeling results, and back-up accident data to the CWG members after the files are cleaned up next week.

Upcoming Meetings

- CWG Meeting: August 30, 2005 from 1:00pm – 4:00pm (Green River Community College in Enumclaw)

Handouts

- CWG Session Agenda
- SR 164 Folio
- Results of Auburn Bypass Modeling
- Project List