

SR 167 Corridor Plan, HOT Lanes Pilot Project and S 277th to 8th St. E Managed Lanes

Corridor Working Group Meeting – Meeting Summary

April 17, 2007

1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

WSDOT Kent Maintenance Center
26620 68th Avenue So, Kent

Attendees:

WSDOT

Ed Barry
Carol Hunter
Susan Everett
Gordon Roycroft

City of Auburn

Dennis Dowdy
Roger Thordarson

City of Kent

Tim LaPorte
Cathy Mooney
Steve Mullen

City of Pacific

Jay Bennett
John Welch

City of Renton

Keith Woolley

Pierce County

Cindy Bui

Envirolssues

Amy Turner

Perteet

Michael Booth
Jeff Lundstrom

I. Welcome and Introductions - Carol Hunter, WSDOT

Carol Hunter, WSDOT, welcomed the group and thanked them for coming. Attendees introduced themselves and the agency or organization they represent.

II. Approve February 2007 Meeting Summary – Carol Hunter, WSDOT

Copies of the February 2007 meeting summary were e-mailed to the partners before the meeting and a hard copy was provided at the meeting.

Cathy Mooney and Steve Mullen from the City of Kent suggested modifications to the meeting minutes including revising the transit portion so it doesn't sound like transit is the only solution.

Cathy Mooney also indicated that managed lanes are free flowing by the very nature of managing the lanes, but there needs to be additional capacity and general purpose lanes to meet the demand in 2030.

Dennis Dowdy, City of Auburn, brought up the SR 167 Extension economic benefits study and asked that the Corridor Plan discuss the regional and statewide economic benefits of expanding and improving SR 167. He asked if the conclusions of that report had been looked at and considered in the SR 167 Corridor Plan.

Susan Everett requested that the SR 167 Corridor Plan have a good introduction that speaks to the desperate need of improving this corridor and the statewide economic benefits of doing so. She suggested that the introduction mention important issues such as freight mobility, jobs and affordable housing.

III. RTID Update – Carol Hunter, WSDOT

Carol Hunter provided attendees with a map showing three potential packages for the Regional Transportation Investment District ballot in November.

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- The orange package is one that WSDOT initially proposed.
- The City of Kent requested that WSDOT look at the red set of projects that had a little more funding directed toward general purpose lanes.
- WSDOT staff looked at both the red and orange packages and came up with a hybrid which is the green set. This set has elements from the red set and addresses chokepoints at SR 516 and 277th by providing a southbound lane. It supports investments in the east-west arterial system.

An element that is common to all the packages is completing the northbound HOV lanes from 8th St. to 15th St. SW. The costs and improvements appear to be a wash. The biggest improvement and benefit comes from the SR 167 to I-405 connection.

In April, Susan Everett, Carol Hunter, Craig Stone, Chris Piccard and David Hopkins had a meeting with King County Councilmember Julia Patterson. She looked at the green set and asked about the 84th to SR 516 gap. The gap in the proposed improvements is there because it is a very expensive segment to repair. Including this segment in proposed package would cost another \$50 million. Councilmember Patterson indicated she would try and find an additional \$50 million. The public comment period for RTID has been extended until the end of May which means there is time to give Councilmember Patterson additional feedback.

WSDOT has been looking at these packages and will complete further analysis in the next few weeks. WSDOT will meet with Councilmember Patterson again and present findings from the additional analysis.

Discussion

- Tim LaPorte, City of Kent, asked if there are numbers for added benefits at the 277th to 15th St. NW section. Carol indicated the team is working on some numbers which will be included on the map.
- Tim LaPorte asked if it would be better to do a PM-type improvement as opposed to an AM-improvement. What makes the most sense from a peak hour point of view? WSDOT knows that southbound traffic is heavier so that is where the agency is focusing.
- Tim LaPorte indicated there is a backup near SR 18 and asked if the HOV lane continuation will help solve that. Susan Everett said WSDOT is committed to building the HOV lane in King County including southbound from 15th St. NW to the county line at 8th St.. which does free up that area through the SR 18 interchange. The ultimate plan includes having HOV lanes all the way to the Port of Tacoma.
- Tim LaPorte asked what the logical next improvement would be if there was another \$50 million available. Would that be the 84th Ave S to SR 516 segment? Susan indicated that the segment is very expensive because of walls and structures, additionally environmental improvement such as stormwater management and wetlands will be difficult

Susan Everett asked the group for their feedback on the best RTID package and posed the question: With your knowledge of the corridor, are there other improvements or chokepoints that should be considered?

- Keith Woolley, City of Renton, indicated the chokepoint at southbound SR 516 to 277th is very critical.

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- Dennis Dowdy thinks voters will appreciate interchange work. He also indicated that southbound lanes will provide the most benefit to people trying to get home after work. South County chambers want to see more improvements in the south end.
- John Welch asked if WSDOT is considering emerging growth areas and looking into the future when planning. Carol indicated that WSDOT recognizes a lot of growth in the south end, but RTID legislation directs WSDOT to address chokepoints and bottlenecks as opposed to accommodating future growth. Michael Booth said the land use growth will outpace freeway infrastructure – even if we added 10 lanes the freeway growth would outpace infrastructure. Susan Everett said future growth was anticipated in the study and that these projects will be built “forward compatible” so additional improvements can be made in the future.
- Keith Woolley said the key components are still the I-405 and SR 516 interchanges.
- Dennis Dowdy said the SR 167 Extension project is securing right of way for future expansion and asked why this isn’t a message for the SR 167 Corridor Plan. Jay Bennett, City of Pacific responded that the public wants to feel the impact and wants to be able to drive on something.
- Tim LaPorte asked how I-5 functions in relation to SR 167, assuming that SR 509 is improved. Susan Everett said that SR 509 makes I-5 flow better, but will look into how I-5 functions in relation to SR 167.
- Keith Woolley asked about phasing projects after RTID, specifically the interchange work. Susan Everett explained that the interchanges wouldn’t have to be torn up when adding one lane to SR 167, however, the interchanges would have to be torn up when adding two lanes. The Corridor Plan assumes that interchange work would be done after 2030 because it is so expensive.
- Carol Hunter explained that this is a challenging corridor plan because of the upcoming RTID vote and generally, when developing a corridor plan, there isn’t constant discussion about a fixed budget.
- Tim LaPorte asked if RTID passes, what projects will come first. Carol Hunter answered that there are a lot of scenarios and still a lot of discussion. There has to be a workable financial plan which will be independently reviewed in order for RTID to go to the ballot.

Carol Hunter told the group that there will be another meeting next month and information about the modeling will be presented.

Ed Barry informed the group that at the next meeting there will be a discussion about continuing the Corridor Working Group with a smaller group to discuss the 277th to 8th project. This will likely include Auburn, Algona, Pacific, King County and the WSDOT Olympic Region. Other jurisdictions are welcome to attend meetings that will take place every other month. Ed Barry also volunteered to meet with jurisdictions if needed.

- John Welch, City of Pacific, requested a separate meeting with Ed Barry to discuss the project.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: 5/15/07

WSDOT Kent Maintenance Facility
26620 68th Avenue South, Kent 98032