

CHAPTER 3

The Study Process

The public process used in developing the SR 19/SR 20 Corridor Plan consisted of two elements: a Corridor Working Group comprised of interested stakeholders, and community-based public open houses.

Communication with the public was accomplished using many different tools – open houses, mailings, paid newspaper advertisements, a website and the telephone. The study also received attention in the *Peninsula Daily News* and *The Port Townsend and Jefferson County Leader*, newspapers serving Jefferson County. The SR 19/ SR 20 corridor study was the topic of articles in these two newspapers.

3.1 Stakeholder Involvement

Early in the corridor planning process, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff met with or contacted key stakeholders to inform them of the up-coming study. Stakeholders included Jefferson County Commissioners and staff, City of Port Townsend Mayor, Deputy Mayor and staff, Jefferson Transit official, school district official, emergency responders (sheriff, police, fire department, Washington State Patrol), tribes, bicycle association, businesses, elected representatives, Indian Island/ Navy representative and others. Staff also provided information to others. These efforts were to publicize the study and recruit individuals with a strong interest in transportation issues to represent their organizations on the Corridor Working Group.

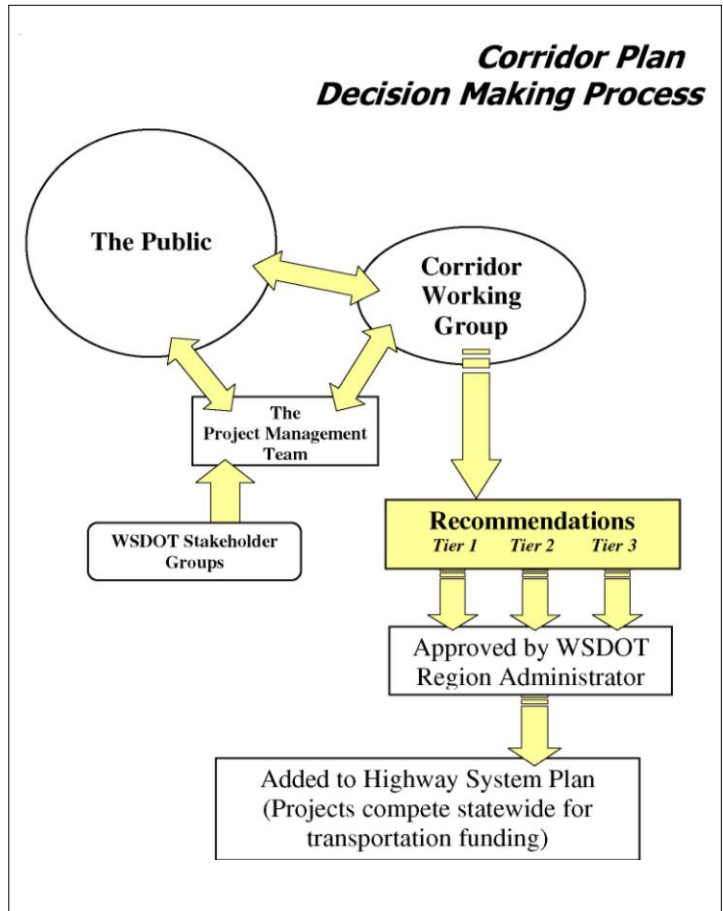


Figure 3-1 Decision Making Process

The role of the Corridor Working Group (Figure 3-1) was to help build the vision for the corridor, and generate solutions for corridor improvements, consider community input gathered at the public open houses, and endorse the final

recommendations to be included in the plan. They act as a focus group that brings community concerns and ideas in to build mutually acceptable recommendations.

The Corridor Working Group members' understanding and appreciation of the transportation issues regarding their particular areas of interest are important component in informing WSDOT staff and developing solutions inclusive of their diverse interests.

3.1.1 Corridor Working Group Membership

The Corridor Working Group represented a wide variety of transportation interests in the community near the corridor/routes. The consistent attendance and commitment on the part of the working group members was a crucial factor in the success of the study. The committee met four times between July 2008 and October 2009. Figure 3-1 shows the Corridor Working Group membership.

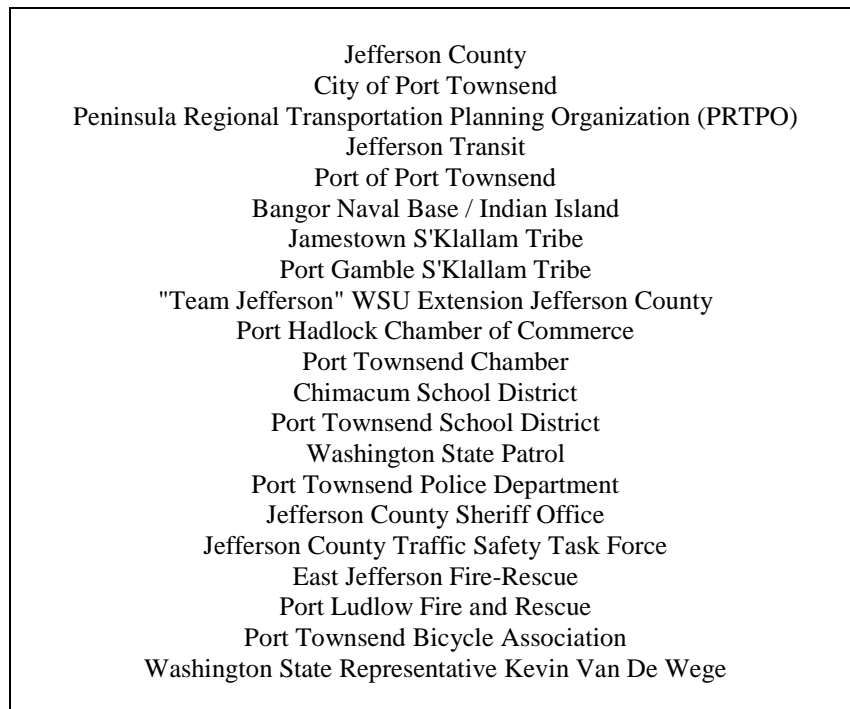


Figure 3-1: Corridor Working Group

3.1.2 Corridor Working Group Meetings

The main topic of each Corridor Working Group meeting was designed to work in sequence to build on information analyzed and presented by WSDOT staff, based on technical, public or stakeholder generated data. The schedule of study events (Figure 3-2) shows how the parallel public involvement processes – Corridor Working Group meetings and public meetings – worked together for gathering and sharing information pertinent to the study.

SR 19/20 Corridor Plan – Schedule

Between SR 104 and the Ferry Terminal

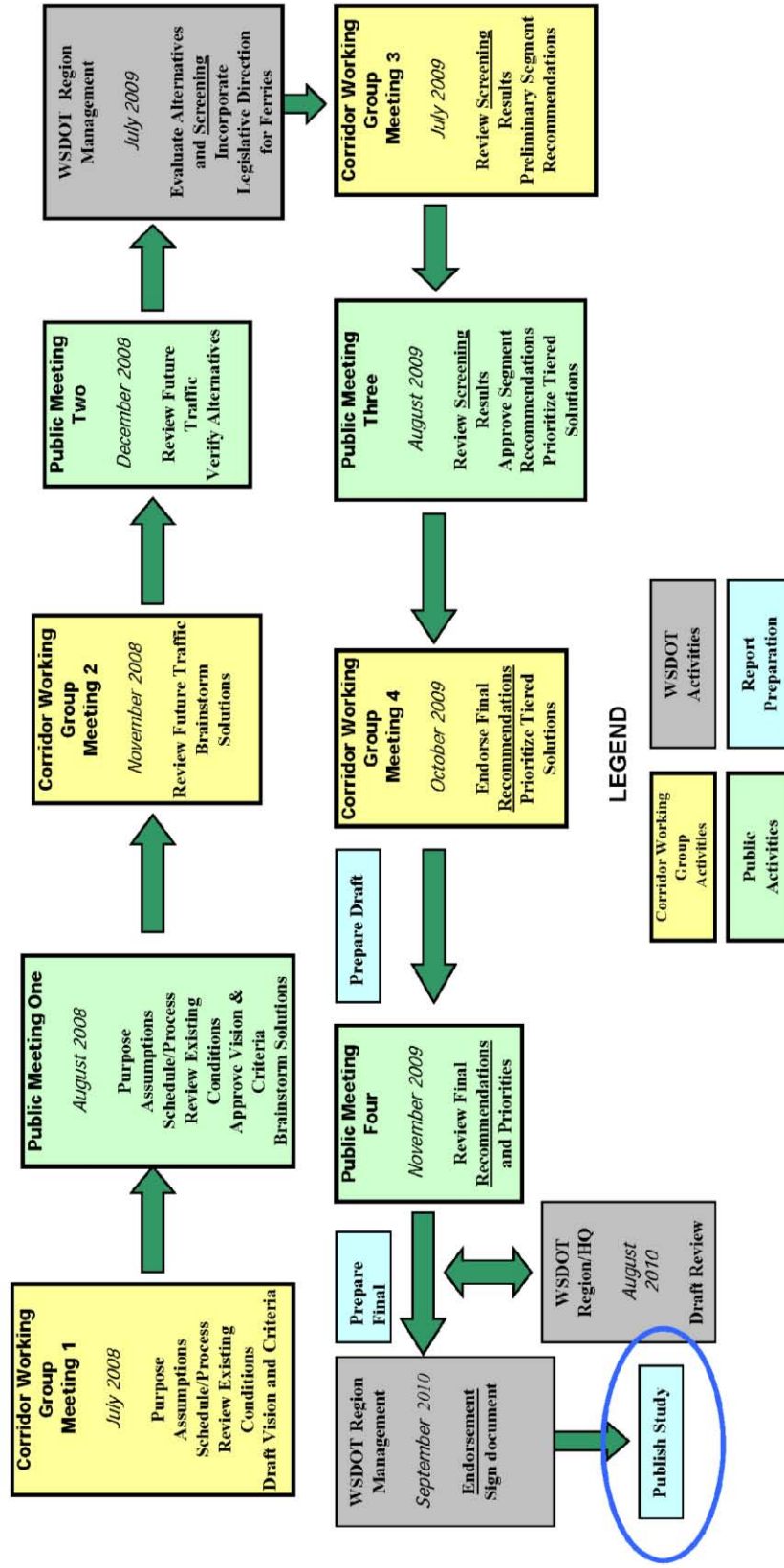


Figure 3-2 Study Schedule

The agenda and detailed meeting summary from each of the Corridor Working Group meetings can be found in Appendix E. General information about the Corridor Working Group meetings and public meetings is presented in the following sections.

Stakeholder and Public Outreach Meetings

Corridor Working Group Meeting #1 (July 17, 2008)

At this first corridor working group meeting, WSDOT staff shared information about the study purpose, schedule, process, and assumptions. The staff also reviewed existing corridor/routes conditions, described corridor segments, and presented collision history information.

The focus of the second part of the meeting was to develop a vision for SR 19/ SR 20 corridor and to establish a set of criteria against which to measure the alternatives that would be developed for the future of the corridor.

Staff facilitated the discussion as the Corridor Working Group drafted the vision statement for the corridor and the alternatives evaluation criteria. Vision, goals, and objectives from the city, county, and WSDOT long range plans provided the starting point for a comprehensive discussion, which resulted in a vision statement and a set of criteria being developed.

Corridor Working Group Meeting #2 (November 7, 2008)

The project team relayed the range of ideas and suggestions heard from the public at the open house regarding potential improvement options. It was mentioned by the project team that the vision and criteria drafted by the working group at their first meeting was shared with the public at the open house. No changes were suggested to the vision statement. The vision statement was adopted by the Corridor Working Group as follows:

Vision Statement for the SR 19/ SR 20 Corridor

A sustainable multi-modal corridor that integrates the movement of people and goods safely and efficiently, enhances regional connections, and contributes to economic vitality and improves quality of life, with minimum environmental impacts.

Alternatives evaluation criteria was also shared with the public and addition of the word “people” was suggested. The group approved the change and adopted the criteria with a thumbs-up vote. The evaluation criteria were grouped under safety, congestion/mobility, feasibility/constructability, and environmental impact.

The group was informed that Jefferson County recently developed their Quimper Peninsula travel demand forecasting model from which growth rates are used in this study. Jefferson County staff presented information on the model and on future traffic conditions based on the model forecasts.

Corridor Working Group Meeting #2 (November 7, 2008) *Continued*

The project team provided information on Whatcom County's Smart Trips program as an example of promoting alternative transportation choices and encouraging other than single occupancy vehicle trips that could potentially augment other strategies to reduce vehicle miles of travel (VMT) and green house gas (GHG) emissions, and help the environment. The group showed interest and decided to explore further the feasibility of such a program in Jefferson County.

A presentation on Access Management was provided and it was noted that no change in the access classifications for SR 19 and SR 20 within the study corridor were being suggested. What could potentially be considered through an Access Management project is how driveway access can be consolidated or certain movements can possibly be restricted to provided right-in, right-out type movements, and through other measures like installing sidewalks, to improve the traffic flow.

Finally a list of potential improvement options was reviewed by the group. Some options were dropped due to fatal flaws, while other solutions were brainstormed by the committee.

Corridor Working Group Meeting #3 (July 29, 2009)

Study corridor segment characteristics were reviewed as well as what the study team heard from the public during outreach efforts. The group was reminded that the study was utilizing Jefferson County's travel demand forecasting model, and model results were shared to illustrate existing and future traffic conditions. Collision history was also reviewed by each corridor segment.

The group was given a handout titled 'Evaluation Methodology'. This document summarizes the scoring method for each of the 18 specific criteria used. The alternatives evaluation criteria endorsed by the group was used in the evaluation process. The evaluation methodology for the corridor plan is designed to provide an unbiased rating for each potential improvement option to assist in prioritizing and recommending improvements for implementation as funds become available. The Project Team evaluated and scored the potential improvement options using the criteria adopted by the corridor working group and presented the results and preliminary tiered recommendations to the group for discussion and input.

Two examples were provided to explain the scoring process. The project team conducted traffic, safety and other technical analyses to generate measures of effectiveness, and to assist in the evaluation of each option during this process.

The preliminary tiered recommendations and top priorities were then presented to the group including Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and 'Projects of Special Interest'. These were discussed and the group provided input.

Corridor Working Group Meeting #3 (July 29, 2009) *Continued*

The study team completed a scoring matrix for over 70 potential improvement options. The improvement options were prioritized based on their total scores and listed by tiers.

Tier system and TDM was explained. Tier 1 projects are typically low cost high return projects, such as Intelligent Transportation System (ITS), turn lanes, and intersection improvements; Tier 2 are the moderate to higher cost projects that further reduces congestion on both highways and local roads, examples are auxiliary lanes and parallel corridors; Tier 3 projects are the highest cost and long range projects such as adding general purpose lanes and interchange improvements. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is an umbrella term for strategies that reduce vehicle trips or shift use of the roadway to off-peak periods. It was noted that demand management is one of WSDOT's important strategies to fight congestion. TDM options include low-cost and least amount of environmental impacts.

Included in the TDM strategies was a working draft of a proposal developed by the Port Townsend Transportation Lab, and reviewed by Jefferson County, City of Port Townsend, and Jefferson Transit staff. This was distributed to the project team and the group for consideration.

The project team highlighted three 'Projects of Special Interest' that resonated with the community and received the most interest and support. The Project team requested the group's input. It was decided the corridor working group should pick a list to present to the public. The group decided more projects should be on the projects of special interest list and five more projects were added. It was suggested this will help in seeking grant and other funding.

Corridor Working Group Meeting #4 (October 28, 2009)

Project team relayed the highlights of the August 27 open house to the group. Attendees at the open house were given 3 star-shaped stickers each to affix next to projects of special interest to them. Results of the star-vote were as follows:

PROJECTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST*
(listed by location from north to south)

Project Number	Description of Potential Improvement Option	Star-Vote
65	SR 20/Kearney Street Intersection Control***	3
51a	SR 20/Port Townsend Entryway Study (Discovery-Mill/Jacob Miller Vicinity)	(2)
41	SR 19 and SR 20 Intersection Control***	1
35	SR 19/Prospect Avenue Intersection Control***	(17)
31	SR 19/Irondale Intersection Control***	3
23	SR 19/SR 116 Intersection Control***	(10)
18	SR 19/West Valley Intersection Control***	2
3b	SR 19/SR 104 Intersection Control***	(8)

*Corridor Working Group Recommendations ***Signal or Roundabout

Corridor Working Group Meeting #4 (October 28, 2009) *Continued*

The top voted locations also ranked high in the criteria-based alternatives evaluation conducted by the project team. This information indicates that the right solutions are being targeted. No changes to the 'Projects of Special Interest' were proposed. It was decided to move forward with these.

The project team summarized some 30 plus written comments that were received at the open house. Types of intersection traffic control were suggested- some preferred signals while others supported roundabouts. Specific support for other intersection locations were expressed like SR 20/Sheridan, SR 20/Discovery-Mill, SR 19/Prospect Ave, SR 19/Airport-Woodland Dr, SR 19/SR116, SR 19/Oak Bay Rd, and SR 19/SR 104. Left turn lanes at a number of locations were also supported. Participants expressed support for TDM strategies and non-motorized options, as well as maintenance of scenic and cultural values, farming valley, and historic character of the community.

The project team reminded the group it was important to note that all of the study recommendations are unfunded at this time. Funding and implementation of the study recommendations were discussed.

The project team reviewed the study recommendation and priorities with the group. There were no changes in the Tier 1 list; Tier 2 list had two changes- #3b and #2 (Table 4-3). Initially, for project #3b an at-grade cheaper option was analyzed but that didn't pan out. This resulted in phasing out the ultimate long term solution which is 3a. Project #2 was added by the project team as a more cost effective option to help with the left and right turn movements.

In the Tier 3 list, there were two changes. Long-term solution #3a phasing has already been mentioned. The other change was to project #55 – text was added to reflect City of Port Townsend's interest in looking at drawing demand off of SR 20 through development of parallel corridors.

The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) list had minor changes for project #39 and #22. The previous description didn't have "access management" wording. This was captured in the revised description for these two projects.

Another change was in project #1 (Smart Trips). It is replaced by project #1a and #1b. Project #1a is a feasibility study supporting a 'comprehensive program to encourage alternative transportation choices', and 1b is its implementation.

This change was made after discussions with WSDOT Public Transportation office, WSDOT HQ Planning, and representatives of Transportation Lab and local agencies. A draft Jefferson Smart Trips document developed by the Transportation Lab was reviewed and discussed. It was determined a higher level approach would be appropriate keeping goals and visions intact (Appendix G, comprehensive Program to Encourage Alternative Transportation Choices).

The corridor working group members were informed that the next step is the final public open house scheduled. It was mentioned that the final study recommendations would be shared with the public at the open house.

3.2 Scheduled Public Involvement

3.2.1 Public Open House Meetings

Four public meetings were held in the communities near the study corridor. The purpose of the meetings was to inform the public about the study and its progress, and to collect information from the residents potentially impacted by the study for WSDOT staff and the corridor working group to consider when making their recommendations.



Public Meeting / Open House #1 (August 28, 2008)

The purpose was to introduce the study to the public and to seek community input on transportation issues and concerns facing them along the study corridor. Information stations and displays provided a project overview in terms of study purpose, corridor working group make-up, anticipated study schedule, study assumptions, etc. The draft vision statement for the corridor and alternatives evaluation criteria were shared for public comment. Also on display at the meeting were maps showing highway features, transit routes, walking and bike routes, trails, environmental conditions, current traffic conditions including roadway and intersection level-of service (LOS).

Jefferson County Public Works staff presented the County's Quimper Peninsula travel demand forecasting model and some preliminary existing and future traffic conditions information.

The WSDOT project team shared collision history information for the study corridor exhibiting a five year period from January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2007.

Staff from the Washington State Ferries, WSDOT Hood Canal Bridge office, City of Port Townsend, and Jefferson County was available to answer questions pertaining to their projects and plans.

Community members were provided an opportunity to indicate their transportation concerns along the corridor on large maps. They were also encouraged to fill out a comment card. These comments and input were later compiled and used to consider various potential improvement options.

Public Meeting / Open House #2 (December 4, 2008)

Potential improvement options along six segments of the SR 19/SR 20 corridor were presented. These options were developed through public and stakeholder input, and data analysis. Public comments on these potential improvement options were sought. Comments received were compiled and considered during the screening and evaluation process.



Travel demand forecasting steps, future traffic volumes, and maps indicating existing and future roadway and intersection Level of Service (LOS) in the study area, were presented by Jefferson County Public Works staff. The County also displayed a draft map showing Jefferson County's potential transportation improvement locations, in addition to state route locations.

Two stations at the open house addressed questions on Whatcom Smart Trips program- how it works, and can we make it work here in Jefferson County? Attendees were invited to participate in a Smart Trips survey. A total of 23 community members participated. Survey results indicated a good level of interest among those who participated.

Public Meeting / Open House #3 (August 27, 2009)

The alternatives evaluation criteria adopted by the corridor working group translated into 18 specific measures of effectiveness, and these were used to evaluate more than 70 potential improvement options. Attendees were encouraged to review and comment on the preliminary study recommendations and also to vote for their projects of special interest.

Key aspects of the six segments were highlighted under captions such as: what the segments look like, and what we heard from the public about these segments.

Collision history information was displayed. Most collisions were rear end, hit at an angle, or hit a fixed object. The collisions recorded on SR 19 and SR 20 in the study area are less in number than on similar highways in the state.



Public Meeting / Open House #3 (August 27, 2009) *Continued*

Exhibits showing the existing and future traffic conditions based on Jefferson County's travel demand forecast model were on display with staff available to answer questions.

Public comments were solicited on preliminary tiered recommendations and priorities. The project staff explained that 'intersection control' could be a traffic signal or a roundabout, and are subject to further planning and design analysis. Projects of special interest are those that resonated with most people and carried the most public interest and support. Attendees were given an opportunity to vote on a set of eight initial corridor working group recommendations. Projects that received the most votes also ranked high in the technical evaluation.

A draft outline of a Jefferson Smart Trips program developed by Local 20/20 Transportation Lab in collaboration with Jefferson County, the City of Port Townsend, and Jefferson Transit was presented at the open house. This is a program that provides incentives to change the mode of travel to reduce single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips.

Public Meeting / Open House #4 (November 19, 2009)

This was the fourth and final open house. A continuous loop slideshow presentation provided project overview. It covered a range of information provided during the course of the study. It included information on corridor segments, study purpose, vision statement, evaluation criteria, corridor working group membership and a recap of the last open house meeting. The star-voting results from that meeting on the 'Projects of Special Interest' were displayed, along with a summary of public comments. It also provided information on the study recommendations and priorities with a focus on the final changes. The slideshow provided next steps information which was writing of the report. **It was emphasized that all study recommendations were unfunded at this time.** Plan implementation process and possible sources of funding were noted.

Display boards with lists and maps of study recommendations and priorities included 'Projects of Special Interest', Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 solutions, and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies. WSDOT project team and local agency partners were on hand to assist attendees with their questions.

A feasibility study supporting a comprehensive program to encourage alternative transportation choices is one of the recommendations of the study under the TDM list of strategies. Display boards outlining the vision, purpose, and goals of this feasibility study were presented at the open house. After review of 'Jefferson Smart Trips' draft proposal, and based on consultation with WSDOT Public Transportation and with the local group, the study team prepared a working copy describing this feasibility study. It provides an approach that ensures the necessary groundwork to identify a program configuration that builds on existing successes in the community, and is likely to augment other efforts to reduce congestion and green house gas emissions.

3.3 Community Meeting

Staff also made a presentation at a meeting of the Port Hadlock Tri-Area Chamber of Commerce and they were invited to attend the corridor working group meetings. Participants provided a number of comments such as the need to consider signal or roundabout at certain locations, consider older demography, enhanced transit, and others.

3.4 Consistency with Transportation and Local Comprehensive Plans

The SR 19/SR 20 Corridor Plan is consistent with the transportation policy outlined in the various elements of the regional and local plans.

Visions, goals, and objectives from various plans were synthesized to set the vision for this corridor. Sustainability, multi-modal transportation system, integration, movement of people and goods safely and efficiently, contribution to economic vitality, quality of life, and minimum environmental impacts were some of the common themes running through all these plans.

The recommendations in this corridor plan are also consistent with the Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization's (PRTPO) Regional Transportation Plan. The plan identifies the Study Corridor/Routes as a major corridor serving regional connections, communities with their residences and businesses. The PRTPO has adopted a level of service (LOS) D standard for urban parts of the corridor and a level of service (LOS) C for the rural part. With more people living in the developing Urban Growth Area encompassing Port Hadlock, Irondale, and Chimacum, the distinction between urban and rural becomes blurred. WSDOT's LOS requirement for the rural routes is C, and for urban routes it is D.

3.5 Consistency with Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) and Highway System Plan (HSP)

The SR 19/SR 20 Corridor Plan is consistent with the goals established in the Washington Transportation Plan and supports the state's transportation policy goals:

- *Economic Vitality*: to promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.
- *Preservation*: to maintain, preserve and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services;
- *Safety*: to provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system;
- *Mobility*: to improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington state;
- *Environment*: to enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment; and
- *Stewardship*: to continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

The recommended solutions set forth in this corridor plan are consistent with the action strategies and service objectives of the WTP and HSP. Specific recommendations from this corridor plan will be used to update the HSP.