



SR-99 North Corridor Study

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #6 November 19, 2002 Draft - Meeting Summary

Agenda

7:00-7:10 PM	1. Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agenda Overview ○ Introductions ○ August 19 SAC Meeting Minutes 	Nytasha Sowers, WSDOT
7: 10 – 7:20 PM	2. Project Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schedule ○ Open House results ○ Responsible Agencies for improvements 	Nytasha Sowers
7:20-7:50 PM	3. Study Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Near term ○ Queen Anne Access ○ Aurora Bridge ○ North 38th St. to 50th St. ○ Long term cross-sections 	Nytasha Sowers
7:50-8:30 PM	4. Near Term Improvements	Therese Casper & Rich Meredith, City of Seattle
8:30-8:45 PM	5. Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Activities to complete the study ○ Implementation of near term improvements and long term recommendations 	Nytasha & Therese
8:45 – 9:00 PM	6. Questions & Answers	All

Stakeholder Advisory Committee members present:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warren Aakervik, Jr.
Ballard Intermodal North
Manufacturing Industrial Center
(BINMIC) | <input type="checkbox"/> Paulette Gust , Citizen and
transit rider | <input type="checkbox"/> Jerry Owens
Aurora – Licton Springs
Planning Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Susie Burke
Fremont Neighborhood WORKS | <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Hall
Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller
Lake Community Council | <input type="checkbox"/> Ron Sheck
Weaving Wallingford |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Coney , Transportation
Chair
Uptown/Queen Anne – Uptown
Alliance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clarice Keegan (Alt.)
Aurora Ave. Merchants Assn. | <input type="checkbox"/> Marty Spiegel
Greenwood/Phinney
Community Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jo Dawson
Broadview/Bitter Lake/Haller
Lake Community Council | <input type="checkbox"/> Ref Lindmark
Green Lake | <input type="checkbox"/> Jean Sundborg (Alt)
Uptown/Queen Anne –
Uptown Alliance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mike Foley , Transportation
Chair
South Lake Union Planning
Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Sue Linnabary (Alt)
Haller Lake Land Use | <input type="checkbox"/> Barbara Van Defen
Bicycle Advisory Board |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faye Garneau
Aurora Ave. Merchants Assn. | <input type="checkbox"/> Chris MacKenzie
Weaving Wallingford | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greg Hill
Wallingford Community
Council |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tony Gomez
King County Traffic Safety
Coalition | <input type="checkbox"/> James Mueller
Vulcan NW | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Roy Nelson (Alt)
South Lake Union Planning
Committee | |

Staff, Observers and Interested Parties

Eugene Wasserman
Neighborhood Business Council

Project Management Team

Nytasha Sowers, WSDOT
Therese Casper, SDOT
Rich Meredith, SDOT
Barrett Hanson, Entranco
Ellen Bevington, King County Metro
Tom Washington, WSDOT
Chris Picard, WSDOT

The following document summarizes presentations given, issues raised, actions undertaken and recommendations made at the November 19th, 2002 SR 99 North Stakeholder Advisory Committee

(SAC) meeting. When possible, lengthy discussions have been summarized into themes or summary statements.

WELCOME & AGENDA OVERVIEW

Nytasha Sowers, WSDOT, began the meeting at 7:10 p.m. Ms. Sowers reviewed the agenda and information packet then asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Ms. Sowers explained that the primary purpose of this SAC meeting was to receive any final comments from the SAC on study recommendations before these recommendations are finalized. Ms. Sowers noted that a new set of recommendations for Queen Anne access would be presented during the meeting for approval.

PROJECT UPDATE

Ms. Sowers provided an update on the study schedule explaining that the study recommendations would be finalized at the end of December and a WSDOT report on the study, called a route development plan or RDP, would be completed by the end of February 2003.

Key Items:

WSDOT is aiming for a February completion of the final report/ route development plan (RDP).

STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

Near Term Recommendations

Ms. Sowers explained that she would present the SR 99 North Corridor Study Near Term Recommendations in a slightly different manner than they have been presented previously. She explained that by state law the City is responsible for specific traffic operation improvements with the approval of WSDOT. Therefore the WSDOT report – the SR 99 North Route Development Plan - will present the type of improvement recommendations the City should consider for different types of safety and congestion problems but will not identify specific actions for specific locations since it is up to the city to decide what specific recommendations to implement at specific locations. Ms. Sowers explained the specific improvement actions to be undertaken by the City of Seattle would be presented in the next agenda item.

Mr. John Coney, Queen Anne Community Council, and Greg Hill, Wallingford Community Council, both stated that they did not understand why the specific near term actions were not being presented by Ms. Sowers. Mr. Coney explained that he did not want to see the same general list that staff has been providing since the beginning. Ms. Sowers said the City of Seattle would be providing the list of improvements for specific areas in the next agenda item.

Ellen Bevington, King County Metro, explained that up until now the study newsletters and presentations included specific near term recommendations for specific locations in order to provide a concise and comprehensive package of near and long term recommendations that the public could easily understand. Now that the study is being completed and the final report is being prepared, the specific near term actions that the City is still working on are being separated from the more general near and long-term recommendations that will be included in the final report.

Mr. Chris Picard, WSDOT, noted that the WSDOT report would be limited if it only stated specific recommendations for specific problem areas. Today's problem areas and the types of accident and congestion problems occurring in those areas may be different than tomorrow's problem areas. – That is why the report's near term recommendations are specific to the type of problem occurring not the specific location.

Safety Improvement Recommendations

Ms. Sowers reviewed high accident locations along the corridor and explained that the majority of accidents occurring involve rear ends, sideswipes, vehicles colliding with fixed objects or vehicles colliding at right angles. Several sections of the corridor also have a high number of accidents involving pedestrians and other non-motorized users.

Ms. Sowers presented the following actions to reduce accidents and improve safety on SR 99 North:

- Provide a safer place for pedestrian and other non-motorized users by improving crossings and adding sidewalks, curbs, and gutters along the length of the corridor.
- Provide a safer corridor for vehicles at accident hot spots by implementing one or more of the following recommendations as applicable:
 - restricting left turns in the center lane
 - widening narrow travel lanes
 - signal and channelization improvements
 - other applicable access management techniques.
- Reduce alcohol-related accidents by providing additional outreach and law enforcement.
- Increase law enforcement of posted speed limits and business access and transit lane (BAT) restrictions.

Ms. Sowers asked Toney Gomez, from the King County Traffic Safety Coalition (Coalition), to provide an update on the Coalition's activities on SR 99. Mr. Gomez reviewed his organization's efforts to decrease alcohol-related accidents along SR 99, including increased public education. Mr. Gomez presented the following key facts and activities:

- SR 99 is second only to I-5 in alcohol-related accidents
- The King County Traffic Safety Coalition is working with schools and law enforcement officials to educate the community on alcohol-related accidents
- The Coalition has data on the establishments that served drivers involved in alcohol-related accidents but the data is not public

Security Improvement Recommendations

Ms. Sowers noted that several sections of SR 99 North/ Aurora experience criminal activity. The public has expressed concern about security traveling on foot both along and across Aurora.

The study recommends improving security and reducing crime by providing additional lighting and by recommending security improvements at key areas along the corridor to local law enforcement.

Signage Improvement Recommendations

Ms. Sowers explained that the public has expressed a variety of concerns regarding inadequate signage in SR 99 North. The following recommendations from corridor users have been adopted as study recommendations:

- More understandable signage for the existing and future BAT lanes
- Additional signage for pedestrians and vehicles on where to enter, exit, and cross Aurora

Congestion Improvement Recommendations

Ms. Sowers noted that traffic congestion levels on SR 99 North are high and are expected to get worse. Ms. Sowers explained that since the existing built-up environment does not provide room to add significant new road capacity, the following improvements are recommended to ensure long-term mobility:

- Provide three lanes north and southbound during peak periods of traffic congestion
- Continue traffic light operational improvements
- Continue transit speed and reliability improvements

SAC Questions, Comments, Requests:

- Mr. Hill asked for documented public feedback regarding staff recommendations per specific areas. Ms. Casper said SDOT has documented feedback, but did not bring it to the meeting. Ms. Sowers stated that the study team is keeping track of comments received for recommendations in an access database and will be summarizing them in the RDP.
- Mr. Hill asked for a map detailing HACs, HALs, etc. locations
- Ms. Garneau requested the King County Traffic Safety Coalition break out their data by highway section instead of tagging the whole route as a high alcohol accident area. She also requested the list of establishments that served alcohol to drivers involved in alcohol-related accidents.
-

REVIEW OF RECOMMENDED LONG TERM IMPROVEMENTS

Ms. Sowers explained the with the exception of the proposed long term improvements for Queen Anne access, all of the long term improvement recommendations were the same as presented in the October 24, 2002 Open House and are included in the SAC information packet.

Ms. Sowers explained that a number of comments were received at the October 24, 2002 Open House, and afterwards, opposing the proposed safety and congestion improvements for Queen Anne access. Based on the comments received, the SR 99 study team went back to the drawing board and developed the following revised set of recommendations:

A. Queen Anne Access

Raye Street Intersection

Recommendation

Barrett Hanson, Entranco explained that the long-term improvement recommendations for the Raye Street intersection are presented as a staged approach incorporating multiple improvement options. The main benefit of the staged approach is that it minimizes impacts to nearby residents for as long as possible, until congestion and accident problems require action. There is no timetable set for implementing each stage, as a reevaluation of the area would be needed after every improvement to determine its effects. The stages presented could be modified in the future to address changes in traffic patterns or the effects previous improvements have on accidents and traffic congestion in the area. The four stages of the Raye Street recommendation are:

Stage 1:

Stage 1 of the recommendation would be to improve the Queen Anne Drive/4th Avenue/Raye St. intersection. This intersection was identified as the contributing cause for much of the traffic congestion in the area and therefore would be the first hot spot to be improved. The recommendation is to add a traffic signal and reduce the number of approaches to the intersection. By closing some of the approaches to this seven-leg intersection, a traffic signal could be installed and improvements to traffic flow and queue reduction could be realized. The closed streets could still access this intersection through other routes. The City of Seattle has jurisdiction over this location and has agreed to take a detailed look at ways to implement these changes.

Stage 2:

Stage 2 of the recommendation would be to add a new outside deceleration lane approaching Halladay Street and to relocate Halladay Street to the south in conjunction with private property redevelopment. This option would allow vehicles to be removed from the through traffic before slowing to exit. Another benefit of this option would be the increased distance between the Canlis restaurant driveway and the Halladay Street intersection. There would be right of way impacts associated with this alternative as additional width on the east side of the SR 99 is necessary to add a new lane and shift Halladay Street to the south.

This set of options was recommended, however it would be a long-term solution as property redevelopment would likely be necessary to obtain the needed right of way.

Stage 2 of the recommendation would include adding a signal to the Halladay Street/ Sixth Avenue intersection. The operation of this signal will be determined by the City of Seattle, but it will need to balance the 6th Avenue traffic volumes with the northbound SR 99 existing volumes.

As part of this recommendation, new signs warning of slowing, exiting, or entering vehicles to the Queen Anne Drive/Halladay Street intersection are recommended.

Stage 3:

Stage 3 would reconstruct the Raye Street intersection with SR 99 as well as add an acceleration / deceleration lane between the Raye Street on-ramp and the Dexter Way off-ramp. A new ramp bridge would be constructed to allow vehicles to exit southbound SR 99 at a greater speed, reducing the risk of rear-end accidents and improving the traffic flow of SR 99. Work along Dexter Avenue North would include signalization of two intersections (with Dexter Way North and with Sixth Avenue North) and some rechannelization between the intersections. The existing bike lane along Dexter Way would remain as it is today. Sixth Avenue North would also be reconstructed between the Stage 2 work and the intersection with Dexter Avenue to improve the intersection alignment and to allow larger vehicles to utilize the intersection.

Stage 4:

Stage 4 of the recommendation would only be constructed as a last resort if the previous stages did not significantly improve traffic flow and reduce accidents within the Queen Anne area. This stage would remove the Raye Street off-ramp bridge constructed in Stage 3 (making Raye Street a one-way street onto SR 99 southbound) and rerouting westbound Queen Anne traffic to take the Dexter Way North off-ramp. Queen Anne traffic would then travel on Dexter Avenue, 6th Avenue, and Queen Anne Drive to get to the Queen Anne Drive/4th Avenue/Raye Street intersection. Stage 4 would also modify the 5-legged intersection and signal built in stage 1 to accommodate a one-way eastbound Raye Street.

The traffic signal timing at the intersection of Halladay Street and Queen Anne Drive will need to be revised with the change in traffic patterns caused by the rerouting. The timing of this signal will be determined by the City of Seattle, but will need to balance the rerouted traffic volumes with the northbound SR 99 exiting volumes. The projected 2030 a.m. and p.m. peak LOS for this location are B and D respectively.

This new route is estimated to take 4.5 minutes to travel during the p.m. peak period and will continue to operate at this level up to year 2015. The 2030 LOS at the Queen Anne Drive/Fourth Avenue/Raye St. intersection will be F in both the a.m. and p.m. peak hours. This intersection will however have significantly less queuing than the no action option.

Without the improvement, the PM peak traffic projections show traffic would be queued across the entire length of the Aurora Bridge by 2030.

The details associated with all stages of this modification will need to be refined as they go forward as actual improvements. Specifics regarding signal operations, specific roadway geometrics, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities will be determined at that time.

The estimated cost to construct all the improvements associated with Queen Anne access is \$19.8 million. The largest cost is the construction of the new ramp at Raye Street. The cost estimate is in 2002 dollars and estimated at mid point of construction (year 2017). No specific timeframe has been determined, but this year was used to be consistent with the cost estimates in other areas of the corridor.

Key Items:

- Staff has revised the Queen Anne Access recommendation, the only new long-term recommendation not presented at the open house. This is in response to negative public feedback regarding the proposed closure of Raye St.

SAC Questions, Comments, Requests:

- Mr. Coney suggested staff remove loop graphics from Stage 1 presentation map to avoid confusion among the community.

- Mr. Coney asked what the timeline is for the Stage 1 recommendation. Mr. Meredith said staff would like to get started on it as soon as possible.

B. Remaining Long Term Recommendations

Ms. Sowers reiterated that the other long-term recommendations to be included in the SR 99 RDP are the same as presented at the Open House and SAC information packet. Ms. Sowers asked if SAC members have any comments or concerns about these long-term recommendations.

SAC Questions, Comments, Requests:

- Mr. Hill said he opposes the removal of housing for expanded ROW. Ms. Sowers said that housing removal is not a staff recommendation – the improvement recommendation for northbound between N. 38th Street and North 39th Street would be done in conjunction with private property redevelopment.
- Mr. Hill said he does not support removal of parking northbound around North 38th Street. He said he might support peak hour restrictions. He would like staff to consider an acceleration right-hand bus lane for transit and for exiting cars. Ms. Sowers said this option does not address the problem of side-swiping due to narrow lanes and parked cars.
- Mr. Hill said he does not think buses need more lane width. Ms. Sowers said currently buses are often straddling the curb and center lane because of parked cars northbound between North 38th Street and North 50th Street. At times buses are able to use one lane, but only if cars are parked up on curbs.
- Mr. Hill said parking provides the best buffer between traffic and pedestrians.
- Mr. Hill said the City committed to providing on street parking with the new development that has recently been constructed on the eastside of SR 99 in the North 38th Street area. Mr. Meredith said the City would look into possibly beginning with only a peak period parking restriction northbound between North 38th Street and North 59th Street.
- Ms. Garneau said there is no justification for eliminating parking in the 72nd – 110th area and that the Aurora Merchants Assn. is opposed to the recommendation. She said southbound traffic flows do not equal northbound traffic flows.
- Mr. Coney asked if a sign for southbound traffic to Seattle Center is included in the recommendations. Ms. Sowers said it would be considered.

Key Items:

- Remaining Long Terms Recommendations are the same as those presented at the open house
- City of Seattle staff are considering a.m. peak period parking restrictions southbound between North 38th Street and North 50th Street.
- City of Seattle staff is currently working with the community groups and businesses on options to address parking restriction impacts.

REVIEW OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE'S NEAR TERM ACTIONS

Therese Casper and Rich Meredith from the City of Seattle presented the near term actions the City was currently working on.

Transit and Pedestrian improvements

Problem

- Congestion
- Bus travel time variability
- Gaps in sidewalk

Existing Conditions

- All-day Business Access and Transit (BAT) lane northbound N. 110th - N. 145th
- Shoulder N. 145th - N. 110th southbound
- Parking N. 50th - N. 38th southbound
- No sidewalks or curb southbound N. 145th - N. 110th
- Gaps in sidewalk northbound N. 145th - N. 110th

Proposed Improvement Actions

- Build BAT lane southbound from N. 145th - N. 110th to improve transit speed & reliability
- Build sidewalk, curb, gutter and drainage from N. 145th - N. 110th southbound as well as from northbound N. 110th - N. 145th, where needed
- Re-stripe and restrict parking in the a.m. peak period southbound from N. 62nd - 38th to create a.m. peak period BAT lane for improved transit speed & reliability
- Install bus shelters, lighting, and litter receptacles to make Aurora safer and cleaner for transit riders

Next Steps

- N. 145th St. - N. 110th St. -- *City of Seattle-led design and environmental review in 2004*
- N. 62nd St. - N. 38th St. -- *City of Seattle will work with businesses to address their parking and storage needs. If feasible, the a.m. peak period parking restrictions for the a.m. peak period BAT lane would be implemented in one to two years*

Congestion Recommendations

Problem

Congestion during the p.m. peak period, southbound and northbound

Existing Conditions

- Parking allowed all day except:
 - during the a.m. peak period southbound

- during the p.m. peak period northbound

Proposed Improvement Actions

- Restrict southbound on-street parking during the p.m. peak period from N. 110th - N 72nd to allow for three general purpose travel lanes to benefit vehicles and transit

Next Steps

- City of Seattle will work with businesses to address their parking and storage needs, including shared parking with neighboring businesses -- *Where appropriate, the City of Seattle will install short-term time limit signs on the east-west streets off of Aurora*

Safety Recommendations

Problem

High number of accidents occurring along corridor: sideswipe and angle accidents, as well as pedestrian accidents.

Existing Conditions

- Center two-way left-turn lane
- Raised median or jersey barrier
- Left-turn restriction at N. 87th and N. 88th

Proposed Improvement Actions

- Left-turn restrictions from N. 123rd to N. 135th and N. 140th - N. 145th to reduce accidents
- No parking northbound from N. 38th to N. 50th to provide wider lanes and improve safety
- Left-turn phase at N. 90th traffic light to decrease accidents
- Pedestrian crossing improvements at N. 95th and N. 140th to improve safety

Next Steps

- Evaluate left-turn restriction at N. 87th and N. 88th for 6-12 months to see if accidents decrease
- Determine best method of implementing left-turn restrictions on remainder of corridor
- Work with the adjacent communities to determine how to best address potential impacts of the left-turn phase at N. 90th traffic light

Key Items:

- City staff reviewed Near Term Actions to address safety and congestion problems
- City staff emphasized that they are currently working with the adjacent communities regarding options for parking restrictions and improvements, including shared parking lots

SAC Questions, Comments, Requests:

- Ms. Garneau said new and existing sidewalk widths should match for a consistent look

- Mr. Coney asked what barriers would be implemented to protect pedestrians from traffic. Ms. Casper said staff is still looking at this. Mr. Meredith said that City staff is recommending 10 ½ ft. sidewalks that will provide at least a 5 ft. buffer.
- Ms. Garneau said shrubs should not be in the amenity area because property owners will not take care of them. Mr. Meredith said the amenity area will likely be a paved area, but staff is still discussing.
- Mr. Coney emphasized the need for an efficient pedestrian buffer.
- Mr. Hill said trees make the best buffer and also serve as a visual cue for drivers to slow down. He also suggested pedestrian scale lighting at intersections as visual cues. Ms. Casper said staff would likely get into design details in 2004, dependent on funding. Mr. Meredith said trees are not a part of the study.
- Mr. Hill suggested trees in the median. Mr. Meredith said this is not likely because trees are considered a fixed object and open the department up to lawsuits. Ms. Garneau said trees are a potential safety problem and hiding place for crime. She suggested low shrubbery instead.
- Eugene Wasserman, Neighborhood Business Council, said the facility operator should have signed agreements with property owners regarding who is in charge of landscape maintenance.
- Mr. Wasserman said staff should improve northbound bus lane instead of making a new southbound bus lane. He said the current northbound bus lane is already a problem with no good lighting or sidewalks. Staff should try and fix what's already there instead of creating a new issue. Ms. Garneau agreed. Mr. Meredith said staff wants to implement turn restrictions.
- Ms. Garneau said mobility in the northbound lane is causing accidents because drivers think the BAT lane is a GP lane. She emphasized the HOV lane is dangerous and should be removed. She said staff is just trying to accommodate a transit increase that may or may not ever come. She said staff recommendations are not addressing mobility and safety. Mr. Meredith said the problem stems from having three lanes of traffic, not from the bus lane.
- Mr. Wasserman said he does not think there is a congestion problem in the p.m. peak period southbound.
- Ms. Keegan said there is a much higher level of congestion in the northbound lane than the southbound lane during the p.m. peak hours. She said there is not enough congestion in the southbound lane to constitute restricted parking.
- Ms. Keegan said short-term parking on side streets is not acceptable. She said this would upset residents.
- Mr. Wasserman said taking away parking would take away the pedestrian safety barrier on both sides of Aurora.
- Ms. Keegan said staff should not recommend to take away parking without widening the sidewalks.
- Ms. Garneau said shared lots would put pressure on owners who have to pay taxes for the lots. She said this action would not be supported.
- Mr. Hill said a consistent approach for the whole corridor is better than the confusion produced by restrictions in some areas or times of day and not in others.
- Mr. Wasserman said he does not support the staff's effort to turn Aurora into a freeway. He suggested making improvements intersection by intersection rather than universal changes along the whole corridor. Ms. Casper emphasized that staff is still working on recommendations and community outreach.
- Mr. Wasserman said it is unclear as to if the parking restriction recommendation will be in WSDOT's final report. He said it should not be in the report if it is not an official recommendation. He said it is also unclear as to if the recommendation is from WSDOT or SDOT.
- Mr. Hill said Aurora residents and businesses would not support efforts to turn Aurora into a freeway. He asked staff to note that all SAC members are against parking restrictions.

He noted that a primary reason Referendum 51 failed was because the public is not satisfied with WSDOT's performance.

ADJOURNEMENT

Ms. Sowers adjourned the meeting at 9:07 p.m.