

Point Defiance Bypass Project Technical Advisory Team – Meeting Notes

Date: January 20, 2011

Attendees: Jeff Gonzalez, City of Lakewood
Dan Penrose, City of Lakewood
Chris Larson, City of Tacoma
Peter Zahn, City of DuPont
Jodi Mitchell, Sound Transit
Jason Suzaka, Sound Transit
Mike Galizio, Pierce County
Delphie Nielsen, Clover Park School District
Michael Forsythe, Clover Park School District
Minh Vo, Camp Murray
Steve Kim, WSDOT Olympic Region
WSDOT Project Team: Ron Pate, Dave Smelser, Larry Mattson, Melanie Coon, Kevin Jeffers, Dan Lewis, Dianna Lahmann

Program Update

WSDOT executives are working in D.C. to finalize agreements with BNSF and FRA. These agreements are for the original \$560 million awarded to Washington. We will continue to work through separate agreements on the other grant funding and the new \$161 million awarded to Washington after Ohio and Wisconsin rejected their funds.

Project Update

The technical team reached concurrence and signed off on an operating plan for the group. WSDOT will post to the web.

Traffic modeling is being calibrated right now. More detailed information to come at the next meeting.

WSDOT hopes everyone on the team saw the January 12th e-mail from Ron Pate requesting that “any and all comments that you have received from the public regarding the Point Defiance Bypass” be sent to him. Ron also asked that you indicate if the comment requires a response or you have a response pending. The comments will become part of the project record and also help the project team identify areas of concern that may need a closer look.

The project team is conducting aggressive outreach, including meeting with city councils, neighborhood groups and doing radio and TV interviews. In the spring and summer as the weather improves, the team plans to be more involved in local activities.

Traffic & Transportation Study

This information is shown in graphs within the PowerPoint presentation. It is numerical data represented in traffic counts from 2006 and late 2010.

Annual growth & total growth (intersections near I-5)

Between 2006 and 2010 the JBLM Main Gate shows notable growth but Bridgeport Way showed a decrease in traffic volumes for both morning and evening peaks.

Annual growth & total growth (Intersections away from I-5)

Morning traffic volumes at 74th appear flat, but data shows an evening decrease.

Comments and questions were taken after presenting the data.

2030 assumptions

WSDOT seeks concurrence from the group for two assumptions in the EA:

- a) Cross-base highway will not be built
 - a. If this highway is assumed to be built, impacts from the Point Defiance Bypass project will be minor and therefore proposed mitigation measures will be negligible in the Thorne Lane area, as Cross-base highway proposes several improvements already, including a grade separation.
 - b. Most regional traffic studies DO assume Cross-base will be built.
 - c. At this time Cross-base highway lacks funding and plans to secure any are unknown.

Reactions to this assumption were mixed. WSDOT will continue analysis using the worst-case assumption (relative to local transportation system impacts) that the Cross-base highway is not constructed by the 2030 design year.

- b) Camp Murray Gate will remain unmoved
 - a. Since the final design of the gate relocation is undecided, it is problematic to model any impacts and related mitigation based on an unknown gate location.

This assumption achieved concurrence from the group with no expressed dissent.

Greenfield Technical Memo

WSDOT previewed a map with six different “greenfield” alternatives. Like the Shoreline Technical Memo, this documents the reasons why or why not the greenfield alternatives should be carried forward into the EA for detailed analysis. Each alternative is evaluated against the purpose and need of the project – meaning increased frequency of service and improved efficiency and reliability. They are also evaluated by their environmental impacts. All but two of the alternatives have impacts on endangered species, as well as other environmental impacts and design constraints.

WSDOT is still completing this technical memo. It will be completed within the next month and then sent to the Technical Advisory Group for review. The memo will then be discussed at the March Technical Advisory Group meeting.

EA Schedule & Risks

Mattson promised to update the group on the EA schedule at every meeting from here forward. The EA schedule was shown to the group. The delivery of the EA has been extended roughly 9 months from the earlier preliminary schedule published last summer. The EA is now scheduled to be issued in the late fall/early winter of 2012. The schedule was expanded in order to accommodate:

- Additional public outreach efforts;
- Additional discipline reports (e.g., grade separation), and;
- Additional quality assurance/quality control of the EA.

The group looked at risks to the EA. Risks will be continually reexamined throughout the project.