SR 164 Corridor Study
Corridor Working Group Session
Meeting Summary

Meeting date: Tuesday December 13, 2005
Location: Muckleshoot Indian Reservation
Philip Starr Center – Cougar Room (39015 172nd Avenue SE, Auburn, 98092)

Attendees:

Partners in attendance:
Dennis Dowdy, Laura Philpot – City of Auburn
Steve Taylor, Woody Ward – Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
Chris Searcy – City of Enumclaw
Mike Cummings – Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
Ann Martin – King County
Seth Stark – WSDOT, Urban Planning Office
Don Sims– WSDOT

Partners not in attendance:
Ron Paananen – WSDOT, Northwest Region

Others in attendance:
Councilmember Rich Wagner – City of Auburn
Chris Picard, Richard Warren, Nancy Boyd – WSDOT
Cathy Higley, Steve Sindiong – Parsons
Kristine dos Remedios – 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 Steve Taylor for hosting the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and shared the name of the organization or jurisdiction they were representing.

Seth reviewed the session agenda and distributed a packet of materials at the meeting. An email was sent to the partners the week prior to the meeting to provide the partners with electronic versions of the documents. The group will review the previous meeting summary, October 2005 open house summary, and the benefit-cost methodology and results. The discussion will then move on to next steps as the team finalizes the SR 164 Route Development Plan (RDP) document.

Comments on Previous CWG Meeting and Open House Summaries

Seth asked for comments on the September CWG meeting summary and the October open house summary. He noted that a log of all comments from the SR 164 open house events was attached to the open house summary. The partners asked if the log only included comments written on the comment forms. Kristine dos Remedios, EnviroIssues, said that the log included all comments recorded on the comment forms, flip charts, and verbally by Seth and other CWG partners. No changes were made to the meeting or open house summaries.

Benefit Cost Analysis Methodology

Seth reviewed the benefit cost analysis methodology with the group. Craig Helmann, the WSDOT modeler who developed the methodology, has since left WSDOT. The team will be sure to respond to further questions on the benefit-cost analysis methodology.

Based on the comments from the Corridor Working Group meeting in late September, 30 potential projects were carried forward for additional analysis and inclusion in the SR 164 RDP. Another 20 projects were identified for further study and consideration and 17 projects were eliminated. The 50 projects were grouped into two corridor options and four bypass possibilities which include:

- Option #1: Six lanes from SR 18 to M Street and three lanes from Poplar Street to Farrelly Street.
- Option #2: Six lanes from SR 18 to M Street, five lanes from Dogwood Street to Academy Street, and three lanes from Academy Street to Farrelly Street.
- Bypass #1: R Street Bypass
  SR 164 to SR 18 via R Street to a new SR 18/R Street Interchange with Option #2 above.
- Bypass #2: Riverwalk Bypass
  SR 164 to SR 18 via Riverwalk Drive to R Street to a new SR 18/R Street Interchange with Option #2 above.
- Bypass #3: Noble Court to R Street Bypass
  SR 164 to SR 18 via Noble Court with a raised structure off the Enumclaw Plateau along the hillside to a new SR 18/R Street Interchange and with Option #2 above.
- Bypass #4: Noble Court to Auburn Black Diamond Road Bypass
  SR 164 to SR 18 via Noble Court to Auburn Black Diamond Road with a raised structure off the Enumclaw Plateau along the hillside, clearing preserved farmland and curving back to a new SR 18/Auburn Black Diamond Road Interchange and with Option #2 above.

A benefit-cost analysis was performed on each of the proposed options and bypass possibilities. The first step in the benefit-cost analysis was to develop *planning level cost estimates* for each option. The second step was to estimate the benefits of each option in terms of savings in travel time and reduction of accidents (increase in safety). Because the analysis was a benefit cost analysis, a ratio over 1.0 indicates that the project had more benefit than cost.

Discussion:

- The partners asked why one could not use the cost figures provided on the SR 164 Cost Benefit Summary Chart to calculate the benefit-cost ratio. Cathy said that adjustments were made in order to account for Seattle area construction costs. The group also consulted Gary Westby, at WSDOT via a conference phone call, who said the costs were also adjusted in order to account for the benefits that will be realized beyond the 20 years that the analysis was based on. In order to do this, right-of-way costs were multiplied by .55, structure costs were multiplied by .57,

and drainage and grading costs were multiplied by a factor of .60.

- The partners asked why the figures were adjusted in terms of costs (reduced costs) instead of adjusting the benefits (increased benefits). Gary and Chris Picard explained that adjusting the costs was a standard methodology to account for a change in costs or benefits.
- The partners asked the team to clarify if the analysis was a cost-benefit analysis or a benefit-cost analysis, as the ratio definition is inconsistent throughout the summary. Seth said that the analysis was a benefit-cost analysis and the team will make this consistent throughout the document to avoid confusion. Because the analysis was a benefit cost analysis, a ratio over 1.0 indicates that the project had more benefit than cost. . Since the benefit/cost ratios were similar and relatively low, between 0.97 and 1.38, the results of the analysis alone may not be helpful for choosing a preferred option. Other types of criteria should be used to distinguish the projects from one another, such as safety.
- The partners asked the team to clarify the project costs that are included in the "Other" cost category. Gary gave examples of "Other" costs including landscaping and illumination. This category should be labeled as "Other Construction Costs." The majority of the project costs are related to structures, drainage and grading, and right of way, which are why the other costs were combined into one category. A footnote will be added to detail what the "Other" cost category includes.

Benefit Cost Analysis Results

The project team provided a final tallied cost for the different options for the corridor instead of each individual project. The project team provided the partners with a summary of the benefit-cost analysis results with attached maps and schematics of the corridor's existing conditions and proposed options.

The results of the analysis were explained. The benefit-cost ratio for the two options and the bypass possibilities were all above one except for Bypass #3 (with Option #2). Since the benefit-cost ratios were very similar, between 0.97 and 1.38, the results of the benefit-cost analysis alone may not be helpful for choosing a preferred option. Other types of criteria should be used to distinguish the projects from one another, such as safety.

The project team asked the partners to review the segment maps of the existing and proposed improvements before discussing the benefit/cost analysis results. The partners were asked to give the following feedback:

- Verify the existing conditions of the roadway;
- Indicate projects that are currently under construction or included comprehensive plans; and
- Review the proposed projects and maps for effectiveness and accuracy.

Discussion:

- Dennis Dowdy asked why both Option #1 and Option #2, shows six lanes from SR 18 to M Street when the interchange of SR 18 and SR 164 is at capacity. This would just increase congestion at this

interchange, if interchange capacity is not also addressed. The bypass options may provide some relief to the interchange.

- Laura Philpot said that the roadway widening, synchronization of traffic signals, intersection improvements at F Street and modifying the traffic signal and intersection at M Street should all be shown as existing conditions. These improvements are currently under construction.
- One partner noted that on the existing conditions map for the Auburn segment, there is no sidewalk east of M street. There are sidewalks on the R Street Bridge, but there are no sidewalks before or after the bridge. It was pointed out that the sidewalks on the bridge would have to be improved to meet current ADA standard widths.
- Ann Martin noted that there might be areas along SR 164 that do not need to be widened to three lanes as shown in both options. The description of the options should change in order to allow the pavement to narrow to two lanes where there is no side friction or access. This would also bring the price of the project down.
- Laura Philpot said that the three lanes might be necessary as the urbanized areas expand along SR 164. The three-lane width pavement will allow room for access management and necessary left turn pockets.
- Mike Cummings suggested that instead of the three lanes, the options should state that center turn lanes, medians, access management or turn pockets will be provided to increase safety where warranted. The partners agreed to this change.
- Chris Picard noted that, due to the route's access classification, state law may not allow a two way turn lane for the identified stretch of the corridor, but left turn pockets may be warranted. Nancy Boyd agreed that unless volumes warrant a left-turn lane, it can become ineffective and unsafe.
- Rich Wagner asked why bike lanes were added to the entire length of the corridor. Don Sims said that bike lanes and wider shoulders often get intermixed. Much of SR 164 has a non-standard shoulder width. In non-urban areas, he recommended showing the bike lanes as a wider shoulder instead of both a bike lane and a wide shoulder. The urban areas should designate bike routes that connect to SR 164.
- Laura Philpot asked why a pedestrian crossing was recommended at Chinook Elementary School. The school has made it very clear that they do not want a school crossing there, since there are no sidewalks on either side. If a crossing is installed there, sidewalks should also be installed. She suggested installing a pedestrian crossing, with a pedestrian refuge, east of Dogwood near the QFC.
- Ann asked if other users would use the pedestrian crossing near the school. If so, the reference to the school should be taken off of the crossing in order to address the school's concerns about children using the crossing, but the crossing should still be provided.
- The partners asked for cross sections of the different segments with the lane and shoulder widths called out.

- Laura Philpot noted that there is not an existing signal at D Street, but a signal on F Street. Another new signal will also be added at R Street and Riverwalk.
- The maps should show existing signals as well as where signals are recommended, in order for the group to keep an eye on signal spacing.
- Chris Searcy said that there is a center turn lane between 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue in Enumclaw, which should be shown on the existing conditions map.
- Dennis Dowdy asked if a solution to bus traffic had been proposed. Bus pullouts will only be effective for Metro bus traffic, as it is still illegal to pass a school bus on the left when it is stopped, even in a bus pullout.
- The partners also changed the trail from 380th Street to 392nd Avenue to a multi-use path.
- Chris Searcy asked that each option be described in detail and differentiate between short-term and long-term projects.
- Laura Philpot asked the project team to name the R Street Bypass possibility to a new Highway 18 interchange or something more vague. She recognized that the R Street name was used to show proximity, but the public will think that the bypass alignment will go right over their homes.

Next Steps

Action Items:

- The project team will revise the benefit-cost analysis summary to show details about the pricing methodology, what is included in the "Other" project costs and to reflect the changes discussed by the partners at the meeting.
- The City of Auburn will provide a map with alternative bike routes to SR 164 through Auburn that connect to SR 164 outside of the urban area, including Academy Drive as a route.
- The project team will add cross section diagrams to the final RDP.
- The project team will explain why the reversible lane concept was removed from the RDP.
- The project team will make the necessary changes to the segment maps showing the existing conditions and proposed improvements.
- Seth will plan on meeting with the partner's city councils or commissions by request when the final draft of the RDP is ready for public review.

Upcoming Meetings

The study team agreed to make the changes above and disseminate the information to the study partners. The partners would then be polled as to whether an additional meeting or a conference call would be preferred to discuss the final preferred option recommendations.

The Corridor Working Group will meet again to discuss the internal draft of the RDP approximately a month after it is distributed to partners.

Handouts

- CWG Session Agenda
- SR 164 October 2005 Open House Summary and Comment Log
- SR 164 Route Development Plan Benefit-Cost Analysis Results Summary
- SR 164 Options Maps
- SR 165 Existing and Proposed Improvement Maps