

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Stakeholder Vision

In April 2005, a committee of transportation stakeholders representing a variety of interests convened to learn about Route Development Planning, its purpose and the proposed study that the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) was to conduct in their community along SR 7. The following vision statement and goals were endorsed during the course of the study:

### *SR 7 Vision Statement*

*SR 7 is a safe, easily maintainable, year- round gateway to the Washington Cascades that serves transportation needs and addresses the wildlife, cultural and economic needs of the unique areas it serves.*

### *SR 7 Goals*

*To promote safe operation, preserve scenic quality, provide excellent service to all traffic, address local community needs and protect wildlife (all species, including fish).*

State Route 7 is an important north-south connector that serves local, commercial, trucking, and recreational traffic. The town of Morton, which is the third largest town in Lewis County, is the major commercial center in the study area.

## The Study Process

The WSDOT's Southwest Region and Olympic Region staff worked together to conduct a *Bi-Region* Route Development Study on SR 7. This document covers Phase 1 of that effort, which is located within Southwest Region between Milepost 0.00 and Milepost 16.82. When completed, Phases 2 and 3 of the SR 7 Route Development Plan (RDP) from SR 706 to SR 507 will be studied.

The study process involved technical review and analysis, such as current and forecasted traffic conditions and the accident history of the study area. Extensive public outreach entailed meetings with several area-interest groups, four stakeholder meetings and three public meetings that generated a great deal of community interest. Using technical analysis and public comments received throughout the public process, the Stakeholder Committee endorsed recommendations to address deficiencies within the study area.

## The Recommendations

A traffic analysis and traffic forecast of the facility was developed for the purpose of this study. The technical analysis and the expected traffic volumes provided a level of service (LOS) measurement. Future volumes indicated a LOS C. In the areas where climbing lanes

are warranted a drop in LOS to D is expected for climbing volumes. Common themes heard from the public were concerns for safety, shoulder improvements, icy road conditions and the need for vehicle turnout locations. Using the criteria developed by the Stakeholder Committee throughout the process, safety solutions were identified within the study area.

### **Morton Urban Growth Area (UGA)**

Within the town of Morton’s UGA, safety improvements included enclosing drainage ditches, narrowing the shoulder, constructing curb and sidewalk, reshaping an embankment and increasing loading zone curb markings. See Table S-1 for recommended solutions within Morton’s UGA.

**Table S-1 Morton Urban Growth Area Recommendations**

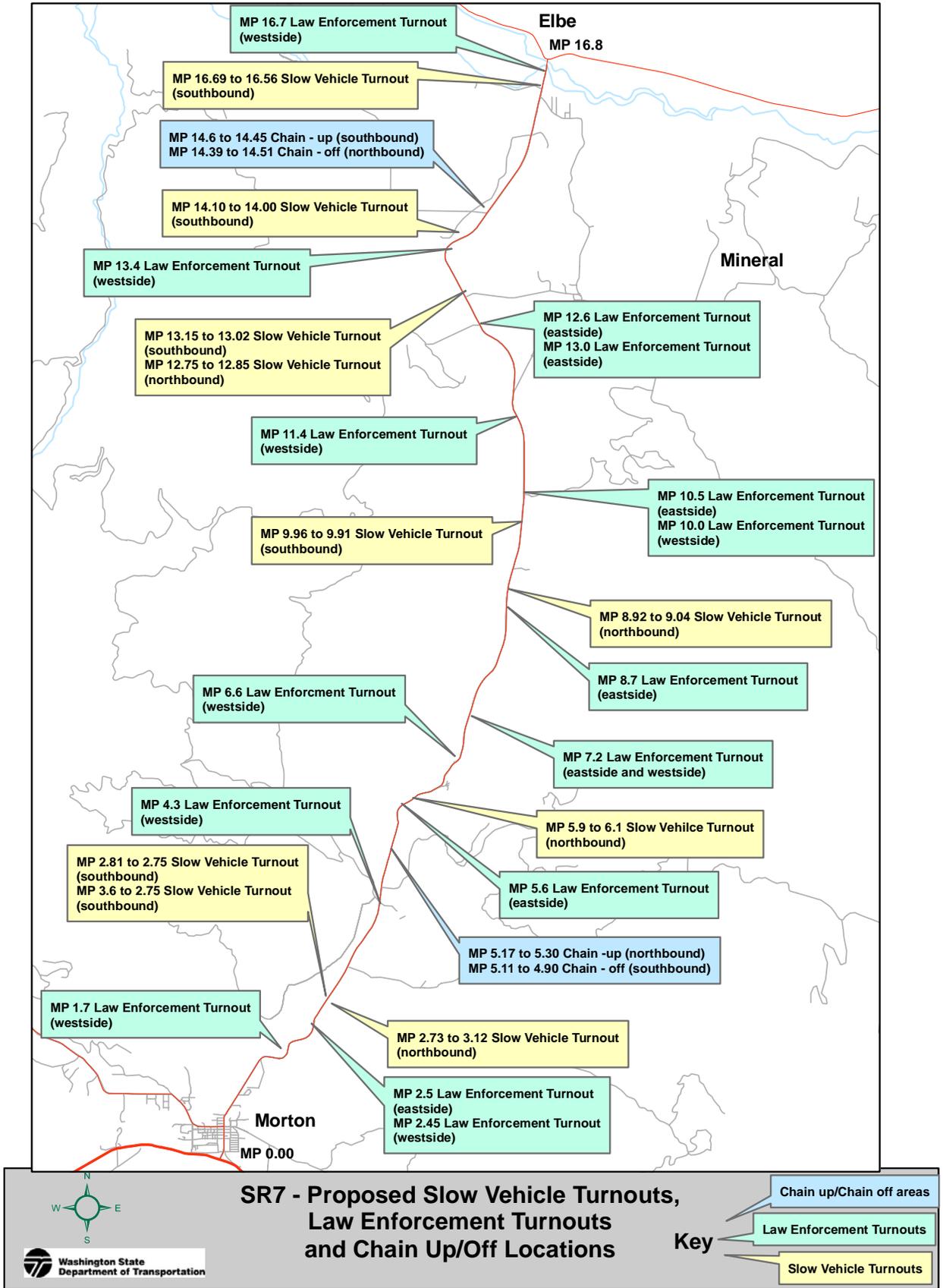
<b>Location</b>	<b>Milepost</b>	<b>Solution</b>
Westlake & SR 7	MP 0.11	Construct curbs and sidewalks, leaving an eight-foot shoulder (consistent with current shoulder widths at this location) on the west side of SR 7.
Adams Street & Westlake	MP 0.30	Enclose drainage ditches; continue sidewalks from Adams Street to Westlake Ave. Construct sidewalks to connect Morton’s downtown area to the community’s school, which is located on the eastside of SR7 near Westlake Avenue.
SR 7 & SR 508	MP 0.45	Increase the loading zone curb markings of the intersection from the existing 26 feet to 76 feet.
SR 7 & Fairhart Way	MP 0.59	Reshape the embankment in the southeast quadrant of this intersection to improve sight distance

The stakeholder committee for the US 12 White Pass Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is considering a gateway treatment for the town of Morton at the intersection of Westlake Avenue and SR 7. The WSDOT owns approximately 200 feet of right-of-way just north of Westlake Avenue at Milepost 0.11. It appears that this is enough space for an island, sufficient lane width, and the required clear zone to accommodate this improvement. The island would make it easier for pedestrians to cross, help define the roadway, and provide better access control. The WSDOT is willing to work with the community if this gateway treatment is advanced.

### **Outside Morton Urban Growth Area**

Outside of Morton’s UGA, potential safety improvements include developing slow vehicle turnout locations, identifying law enforcement turnout locations, identifying chain-up/chain-off areas, widening shoulders, installing rumble strips, and various road improvements. See Figure S-2 for proposed slow vehicle turnouts, law enforcement turnouts and chain-up/chain-off locations identified within the study area.

Figure S-2 Potential Recommendations



Sixty-nine percent of all accidents that occurred outside the town of Morton’s UGA were run-off-the-road accidents. Six miles of roadway within the study area have shoulders that are less than the 3-foot WSDOT Design Standard for this route. Therefore, we recommend addressing shoulder widening in those areas that show high accident histories and have solutions that prioritize on a benefit-to-cost basis statewide or region wide.

Intersection improvements are recommended at Murray Road, Mineral Road South and Mineral Road North. See Table S-3 for additional information about the road improvements recommended at these locations.

**Table S-3 Intersection Improvement Recommendations**

Location	Milepost	Solution
Murray Road	3.32	Raise the elevation of Murray road
Mineral Road South	11.66	Create a new standard radius curve and tangent section so that Mineral Road South arrives at SR7 at a 90° angle from the existing acute angle of less than 30°.
Mineral Road North	13.17	Locate a left turn pocket to improve sight distance.

Wildlife signing is recommended along SR 7. Deer removal data shows a low number of doe and buck mortality reported, however, increasing wildlife awareness is important with this community. Therefore, deer crossing signs are recommended along the route.

During the 2005 Legislative session, the state legislators set aside \$1.7 million for roadside safety improvements on SR7. Those improvements can include such things as installation of guardrail, slope flattening, and removal of obstacles near the roadway to reduce the severity of run off the road accidents. Thirty-seven locations with run-off-the-road accidents were identified. The RDP process identified eight locations for possible guardrail installation and one location for chevron signing from the accident analysis. Those locations are shown in Figure S-4. The actual locations and specific improvements that will be constructed in the upcoming project will be determined by a more thorough evaluation of the specific sites based on the best benefit/cost for each location.

**Figure S-4 Potential Safety Improvement Locations**

