SECTION 2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

What is the intent of the Tukwila to Renton Project?

The I-405 Corridor Program Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Preliminary Section 4(f) Evaluation (August 2002) analyzed four build alternatives and the No Build Alternative. The alternatives analysis found that no other feasible and prudent alternative is more effective than the Preferred Alternative in minimizing potential harm to Section 4(f) resources.

This Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation is a follow on document to the I-405 Corridor Program and analyzes effects to Section 4(f) resources at the project level for the Tukwila to Renton project, which is a phase of the I-405 Corridor Program.

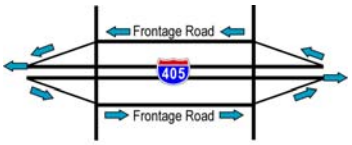
WSDOT is proposing to construct the I-405, Tukwila to Renton Improvement Project (I-5 to SR 169 – Phase 2), referred to as the Tukwila to Renton Project, to relieve congestion. Relieving congestion would benefit the public by:

- Lowering the number of accidents thus improving safety.
- Increasing overall speeds through this section of freeway.
- Improving response times for emergency service vehicles using I-405.
- Improving access to and from I-405 and local circulation.

The Tukwila to Renton Project extends approximately four and one half miles along I-405, from I-5 to SR 169, and approximately two miles along SR 167, from I-405 to SW 43rd Street. The project adds capacity to both I-405 and SR 167; improves the SR 181 and SR 169 interchanges; reconstructs the SR 167 interchange consisting of a split-diamond interchange at Lind Avenue and Talbot Road with connecting frontage roads, general-purpose direct-connector ramp from I-405 to SR 167 southbound, and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) direct-connector ramps from SR 167 northbound to I-405 northbound and from I-405 southbound to SR 167 southbound. These improvements are detailed in the following section.

What is a split-diamond interchange?

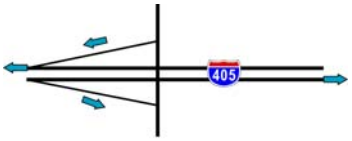
This interchange type consists of two half-diamond interchanges at arterials. These are connected by two, one-way frontage roads. Traffic enters and exits the freeway at the two arterials, creating an elongated diamond configuration as shown.



Split Diamond

What is a half-diamond interchange?

It is an interchange where traffic exits or enters the freeway in one direction. This creates a triangular or half-diamond configuration as shown.



Half Diamond

What are the details of the Tukwila to Renton Project?

The Tukwila to Renton Project improvements are described from west to east (northbound) along the study area on the following pages. These improvements are also illustrated on Exhibits 2-0 through 2-15. Exhibit 2-0 illustrates how the project length has been divided for discussion and is a larger version of the inset on the full page maps.

Exhibit 2-0: Sheet Layout along Project Length

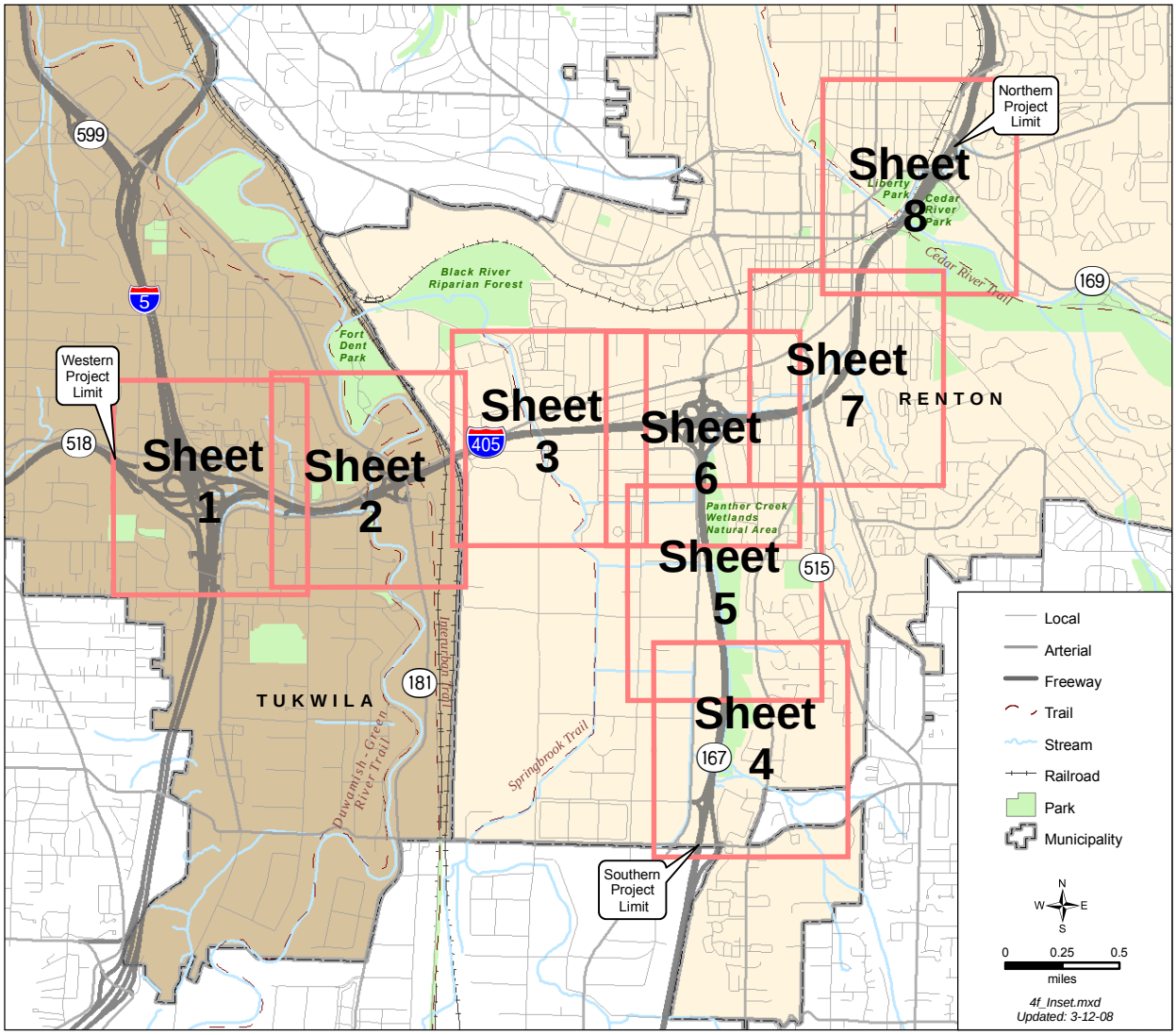
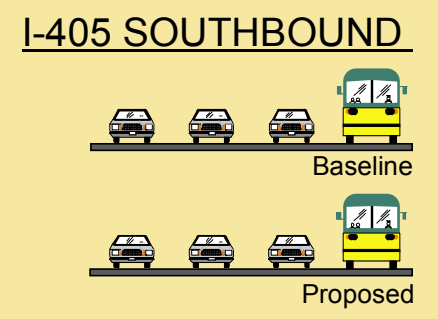


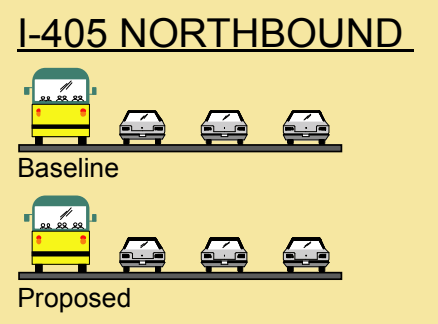
Exhibit 2-1: Project Features, Sheet 1

I-405 from I-5 to East of SR 181

For this portion of the project, WSDOT would:

- Remove the existing northbound I-405 Tukwila Parkway on-ramp. See Exhibits 2-2 and 2-3 for where the project would provide a new on-ramp.
- Realign I-405 mainline slightly to the south beginning just west of the existing northbound I-405 Tukwila Parkway on-ramp to the SR 181 interchange as shown in Exhibits 2-0 and 2-2.





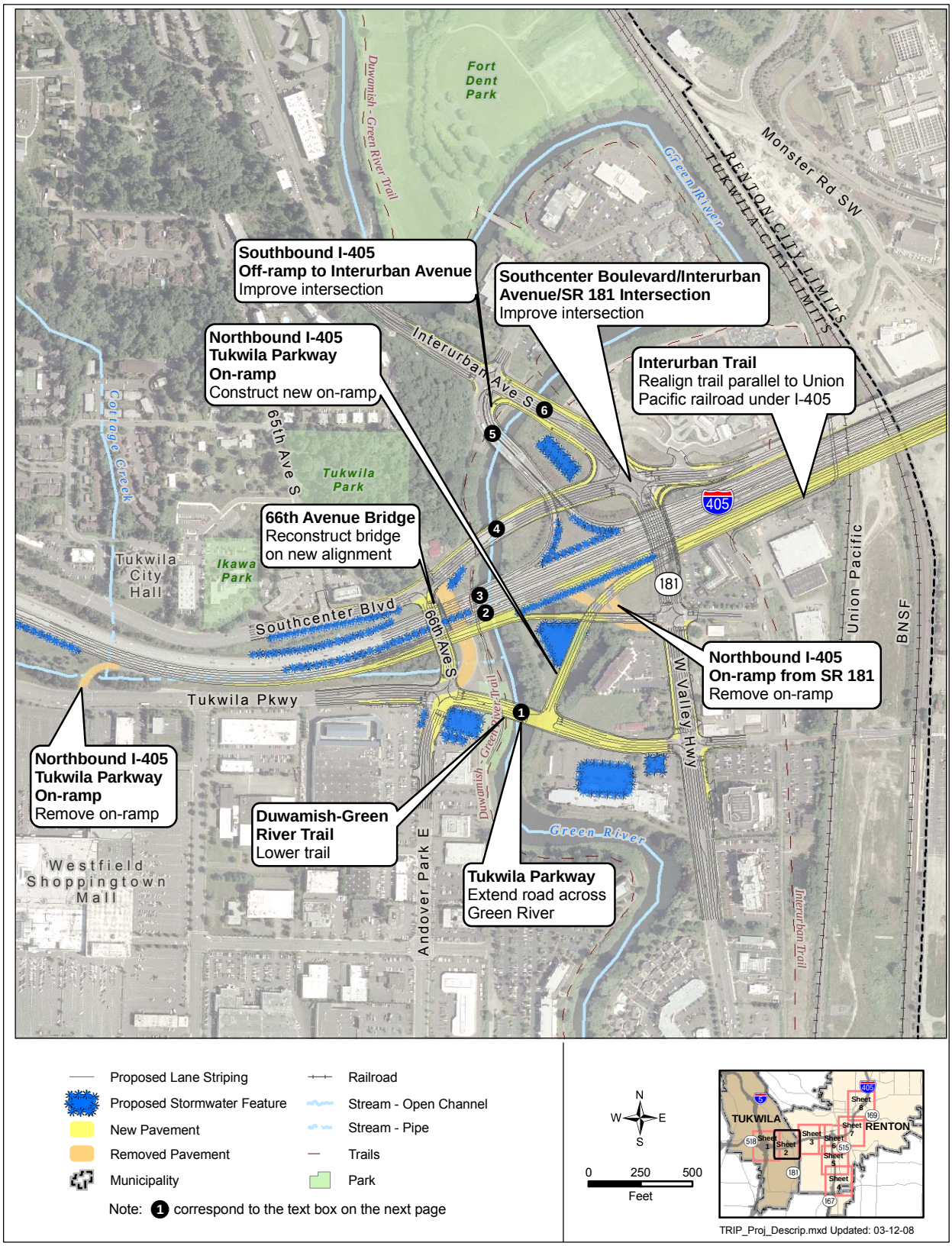
The project would not change capacity along this section

What are baseline conditions for this project?

Baseline conditions describe the site conditions just before construction of the project begins. This can include the build conditions of earlier phased projects that are already approved and funded and expected to be complete before the next project begins. Baseline provides an important point of comparison for understanding the effects of the proposed build alternative.

For the Tukwila to Renton Project, the baseline condition assumes that the Renton Nickel Improvement Project has been completed.

Exhibit 2-2: Project Features, Sheet 2



I-405 at SR 181 Interchange

WSDOT designed the improvements in Exhibits 2-2 and 2-3 to improve freeway and local travel in this area. WSDOT would:

- Improve the SR 181 interchange:
  - Remove the existing SR 181 on-ramp to northbound I-405.
  - Extend Tukwila Parkway from the intersection with 66th Avenue east over the Green River to SR 181.
  - Construct new northbound I-405 on-ramp from Tukwila Parkway just east of the new crossing over the Green River (replaces the two existing on-ramps).
  - Reconstruct the 66th Avenue S bridge over I-405 on a new alignment to the west and reconstruct the intersections with Southcenter Boulevard and Tukwila Parkway.
  - Reconstruct the off-ramp from northbound I-405 to SR 181.
  - Improve local arterials within the interchange area such as Southcenter Boulevard and Interurban Avenue.
- Reconstruct five bridges and build one new bridge over the Green River.
- Lower the Duwamish-Green River Trail.
- Reconstruct the I-405 structures over SR 181.
- Realign the Interurban Trail.

What bridge construction would occur over the Green River?

❶ Tukwila Parkway Bridge (new)

❷ Northbound I-405 Bridge

❸ Southbound I-405 Bridge

❹ Southcenter Boulevard Bridge

❺ Off-Ramp Bridge from southbound I-405.

❻ Interurban Avenue Bridge

See Exhibit 2-2 for the bridge locations.

Exhibit 2-3: SR 181 Interchange Improvements

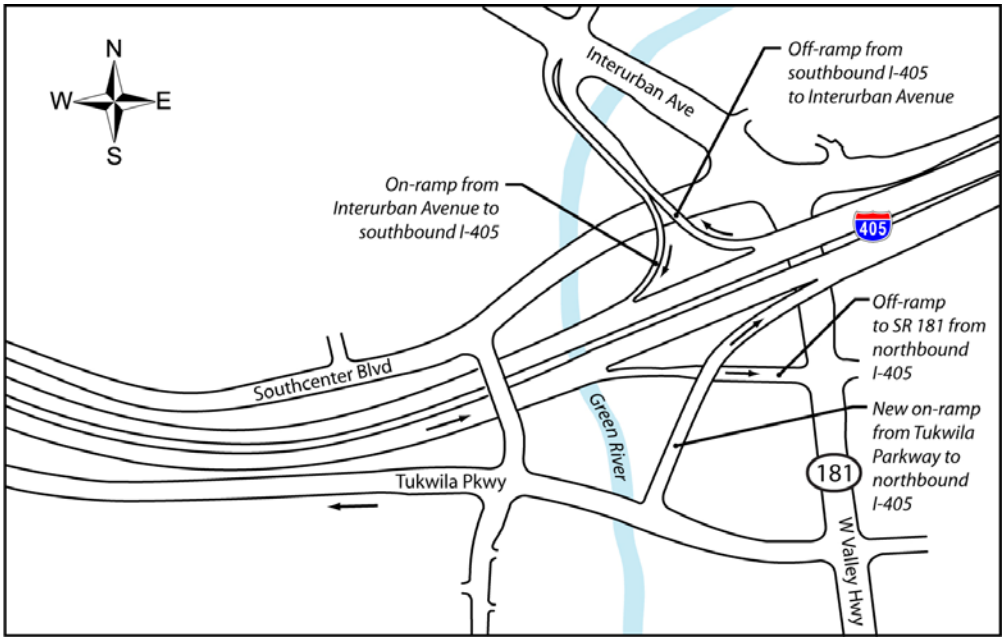
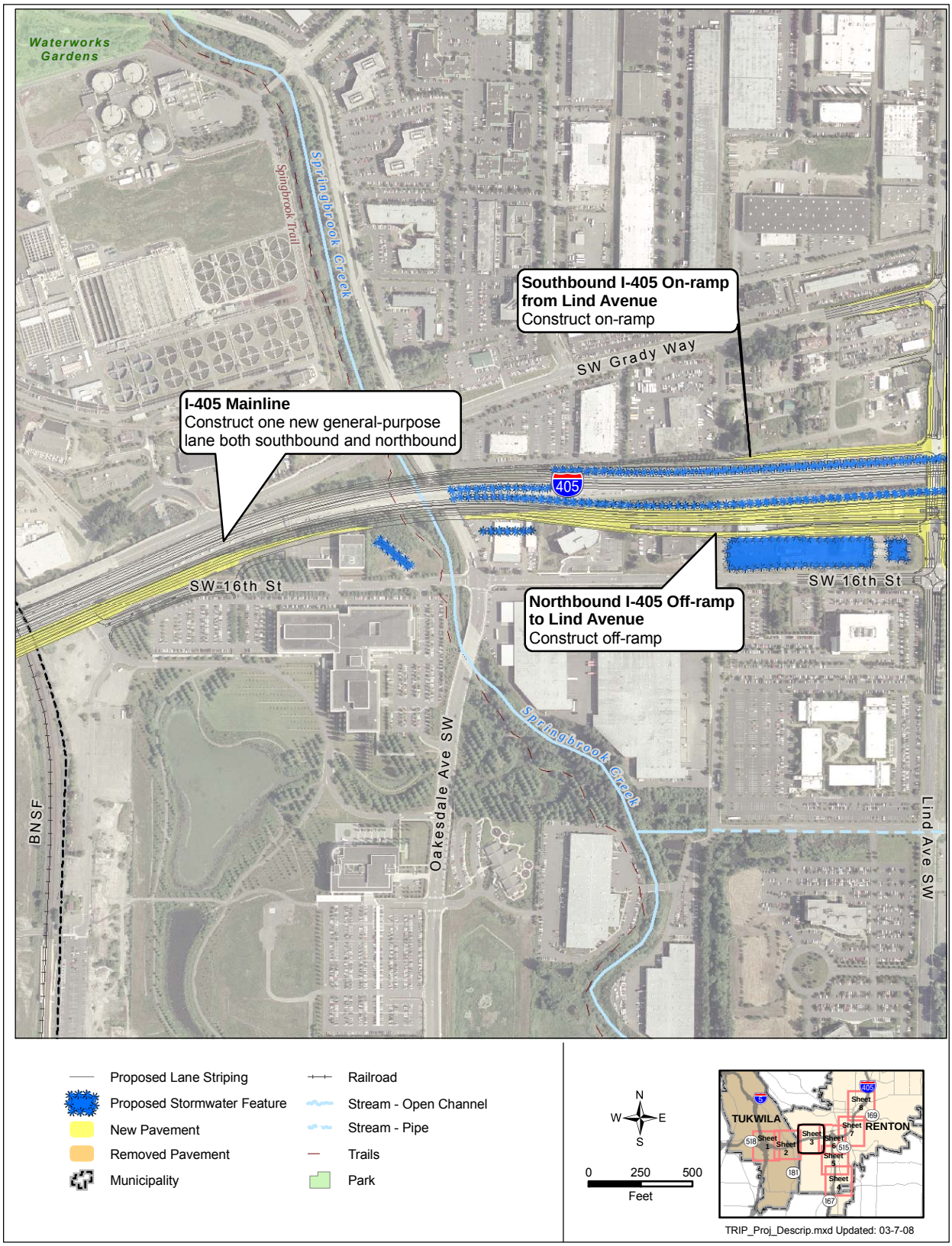


Exhibit 2-4: Project Features, Sheet 3



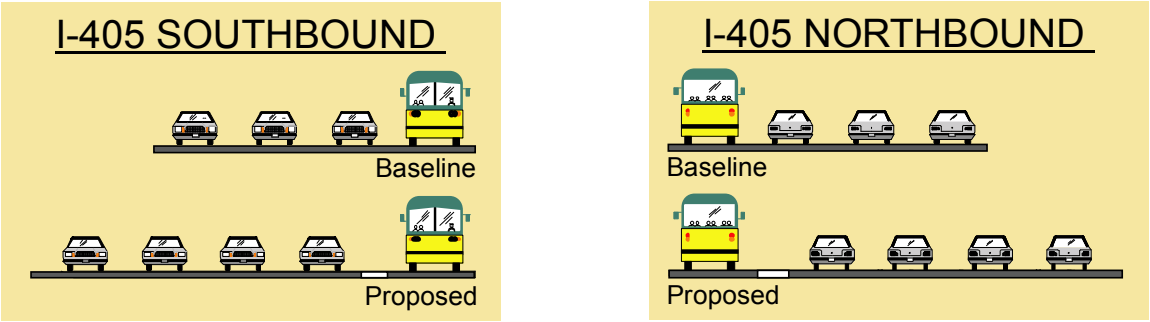
I-405 from East of SR 181 to SR 167 Interchange

From the SR 181 interchange east, WSDOT would realign I-405 to the south. This would:

- Provide a smooth transition onto the new Springbrook Creek/Oakesdale Avenue bridge that was constructed under the Renton Nickel Improvement Project.
- Minimize effects on SW Grady Way and businesses north of I-405.

In addition to realigning I-405, WSDOT would:

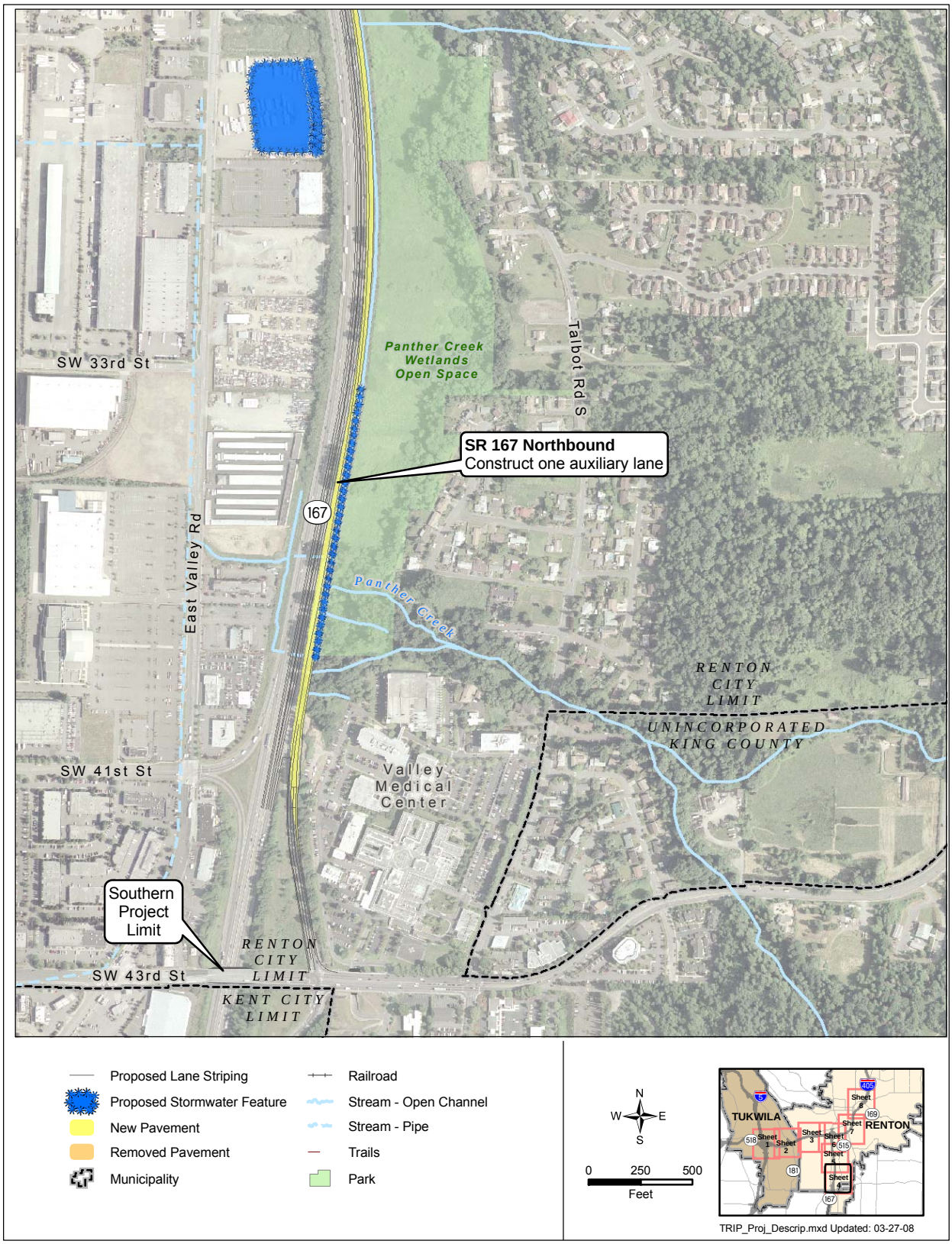
- Construct one additional general-purpose lane in both directions on I-405 from SR 181 through SR 167.
- Stripe lanes to provide a buffer between HOV and general-purpose lanes along I-405.



Project improvements would add capacity to I-405 for both southbound and northbound traffic and would provide a buffer between the HOV lane and the general-purpose lanes

- Stripe the bridges over Springbrook Creek/Oakesdale Avenue to provide five lanes in both directions.
- Reconstruct I-405 structures over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and Union Pacific railroads.
- Construct a half-diamond interchange at Lind Avenue (see sidebar on page 2-1).

Exhibit 2-5: Project Features, Sheet 4



SR 167 from SW 43rd Street On-ramp North to SW 27th Street

In this area, WSDOT would:

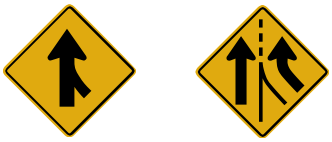
- Construct an auxiliary lane on northbound SR 167 from SW 43rd Street to SW 27th Street.
- Stripe lanes to provide a buffer between HOV and general-purpose lanes along northbound SR 167.

As shown on Exhibit 2-5, the new northbound lane would be added north of the SW 43rd Street on-ramp. This would improve the ability of traffic to merge onto SR 167 and increase capacity along this stretch. To minimize effects on the streams and wetlands along SR 167, WSDOT has used retaining walls instead of fill slopes.

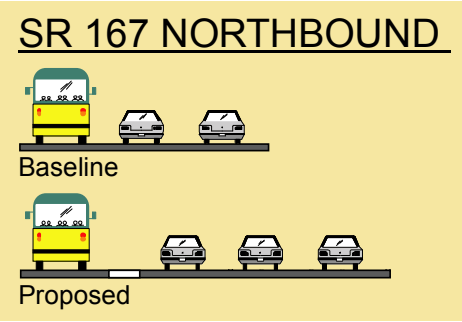
What is an auxiliary lane?

An auxiliary lane is a lane added between interchanges—from one on-ramp to the next off-ramp. It is dedicated to traffic entering and leaving the freeway and provides motorists with more time and extra room to accelerate or decelerate and merge when getting on and off the freeway.

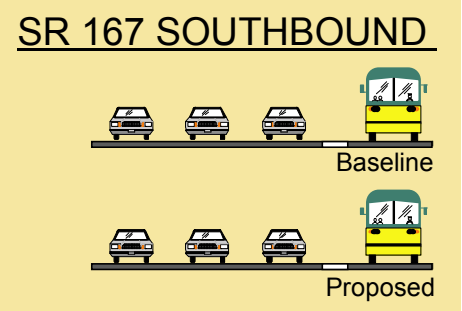
The signs below show how an auxiliary lane changes how an on-ramp operates.



Existing Proposed

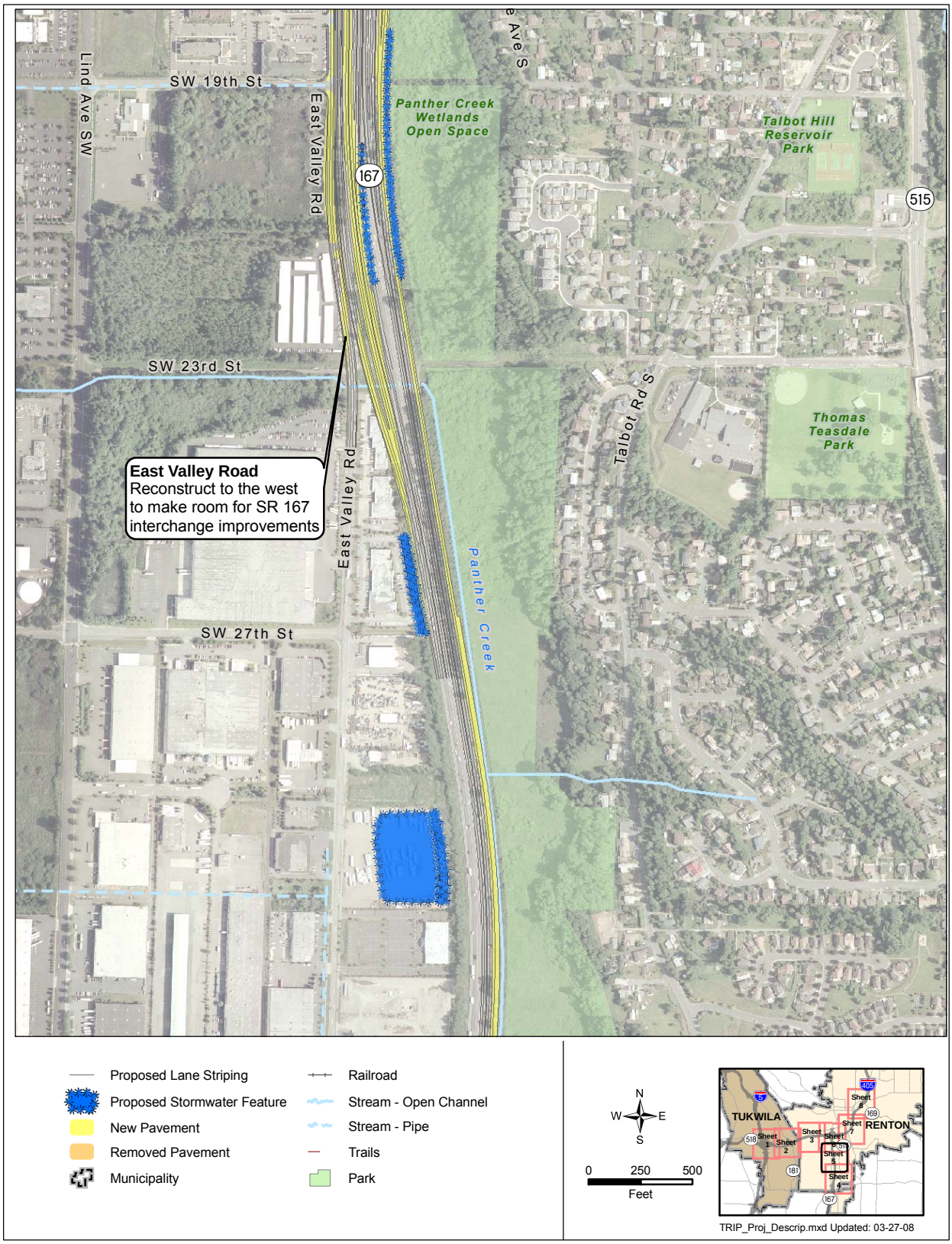


Project improvements would add capacity to northbound SR 167 and would provide a buffer between the HOV lane and the general-purpose lanes



The project would not affect the southbound lanes of SR 167

Exhibit 2-6: Project Features, Sheet 5

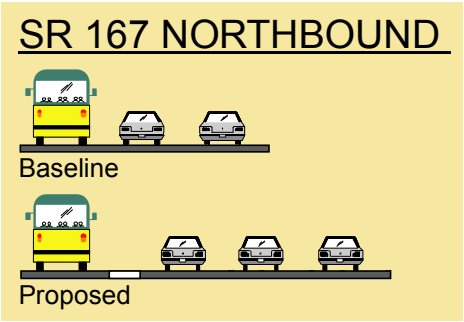


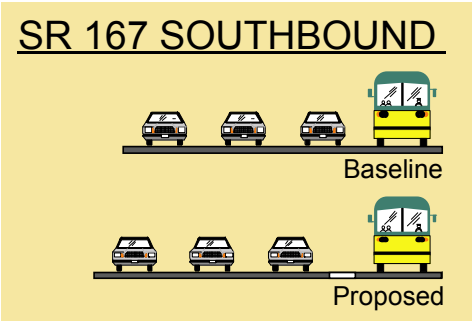
SR 167 from SW 27th Street to I-405

Along this section of SR 167, the project would:

- Reconstruct SR 167 between SW 27th Street and I-405 to accommodate the reconstructed SR 167 interchange as shown on Exhibits 2-7 to 2-9.
- Reconstruct East Valley Road to the west of its current alignment between SW 23rd Street and SW 16th Street to accommodate the reconstructed SR 167 interchange.
- Stripe lanes to provide a buffer between HOV and general-purpose lanes along SR 167.
- Construct an auxiliary lane on northbound SR 167 from SW 27th Street to I-405.

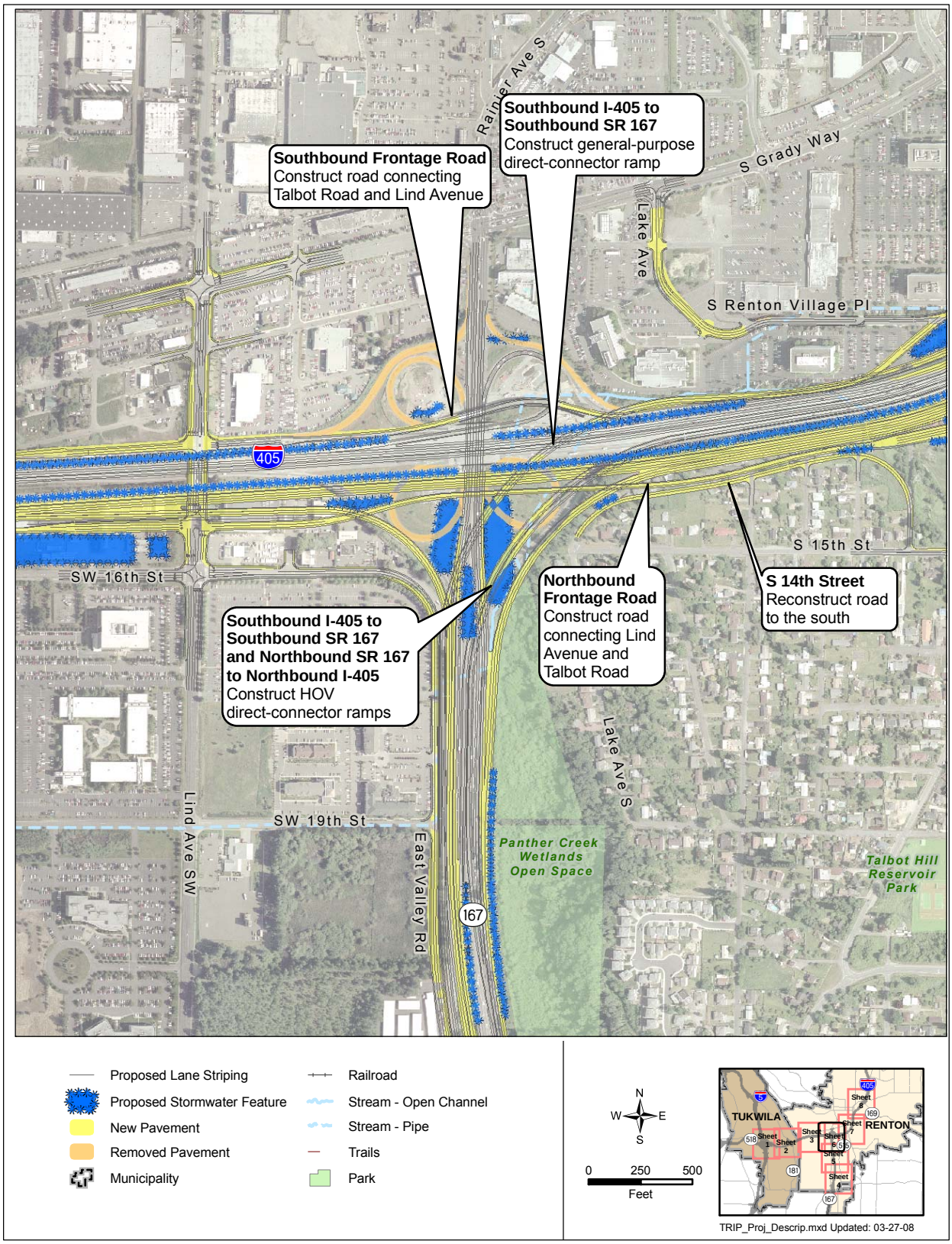
WSDOT has designed the improvements in this area to the west as much as possible to minimize effects on the Panther Creek wetlands while also limiting the effects on businesses west of SR 167. To further minimize the area needed to accommodate the improvements, the new southbound I-405 to southbound SR 167 direct-connector ramp would be built over local street and freeway improvements as shown on Exhibit 2-9. WSDOT also used design features such as retaining walls to minimize the area needed for improvements.





Project improvements would add capacity to northbound SR 167 and would provide a buffer between the HOV lane and the general-purpose lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions of SR 167

Exhibit 2-7: Project Features, Sheet 6



I-405 Interchange with SR 167

Within the I-405/SR 167 interchange, the project would improve freeway to freeway access and local access.

Freeway to Freeway Access

To improve access, WSDOT would:

- Construct a general-purpose direct-connector ramp from southbound I-405 to southbound SR 167, replacing the existing loop ramp.
- Reconstruct exterior ramps from northbound I-405 to southbound SR 167 and from northbound SR 167 to northbound I-405, replacing the existing ramps. This project would also add a general-purpose lane to both ramps.
- Construct HOV direct-connector ramps from southbound I-405 to southbound SR 167 and from northbound SR 167 to northbound I-405.
- Maintain existing loop ramp from northbound SR 167 to southbound I-405.

Exhibit 2-8 focuses on the freeway to freeway interchange improvements and Exhibit 2-9 presents how these improvements would look.

Exhibit 2-8: Freeway to Freeway Ramps in Reconstructed I-405/SR 167 Interchange

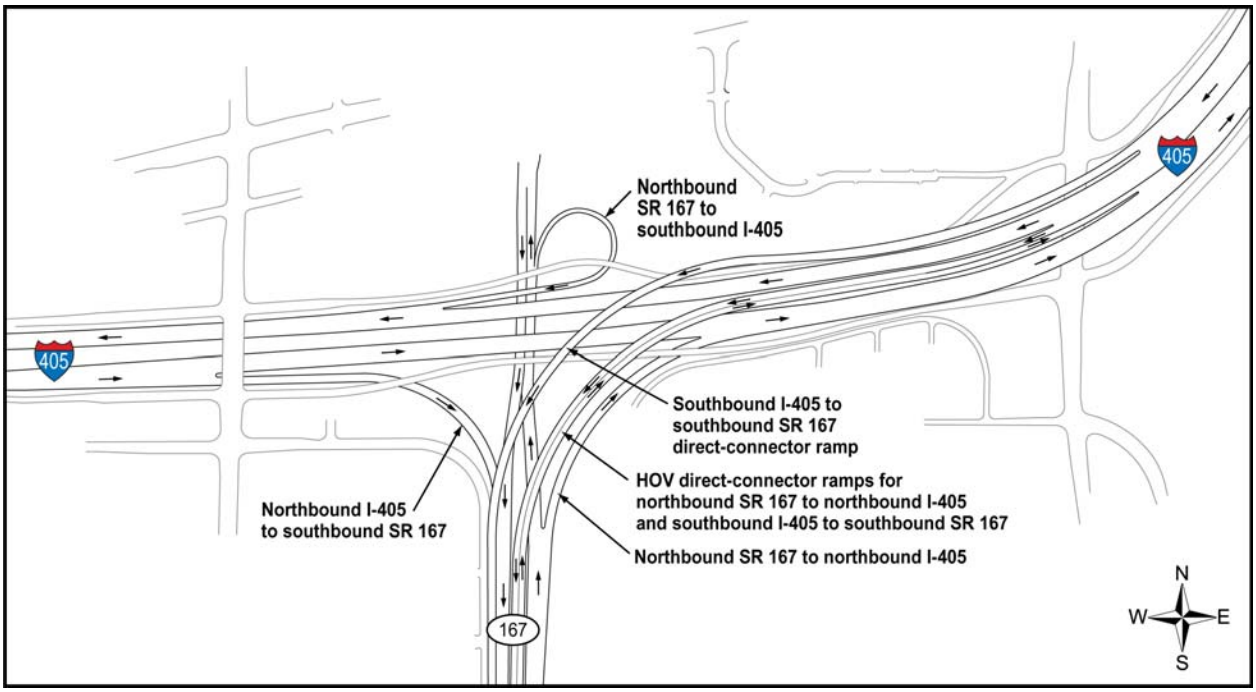


Exhibit 2-9: Rendering of I-405/SR 167 Interchange Improvements

Local Access

WSDOT would improve local access at the SR 167 interchange. The improvements would:

- Construct a split-diamond interchange at Lind Avenue and Talbot Road (SR 515). See Exhibits 2-10 and 2-11.
- Construct southbound and northbound frontage roads connecting Lind Avenue and Talbot Road. The southbound frontage road would reuse the existing I-405 to SR 167 southbound bridge.
- Reconstruct the Lind Avenue bridge over I-405.
- Reconstruct the I-405 structures over Talbot Road.
- Improve local street intersections.
- Provide new connection to Grady Way from S Renton Village Place.

Exhibit 2-10: Split-diamond Interchange at Lind Avenue and Talbot Road

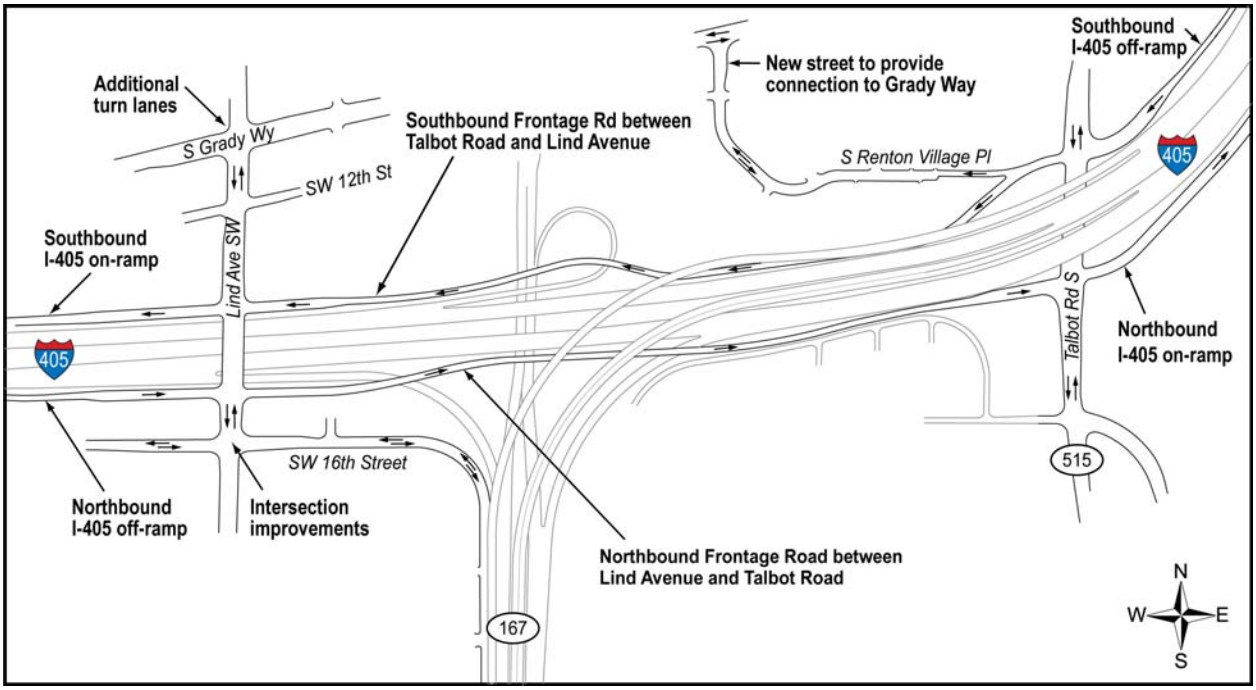
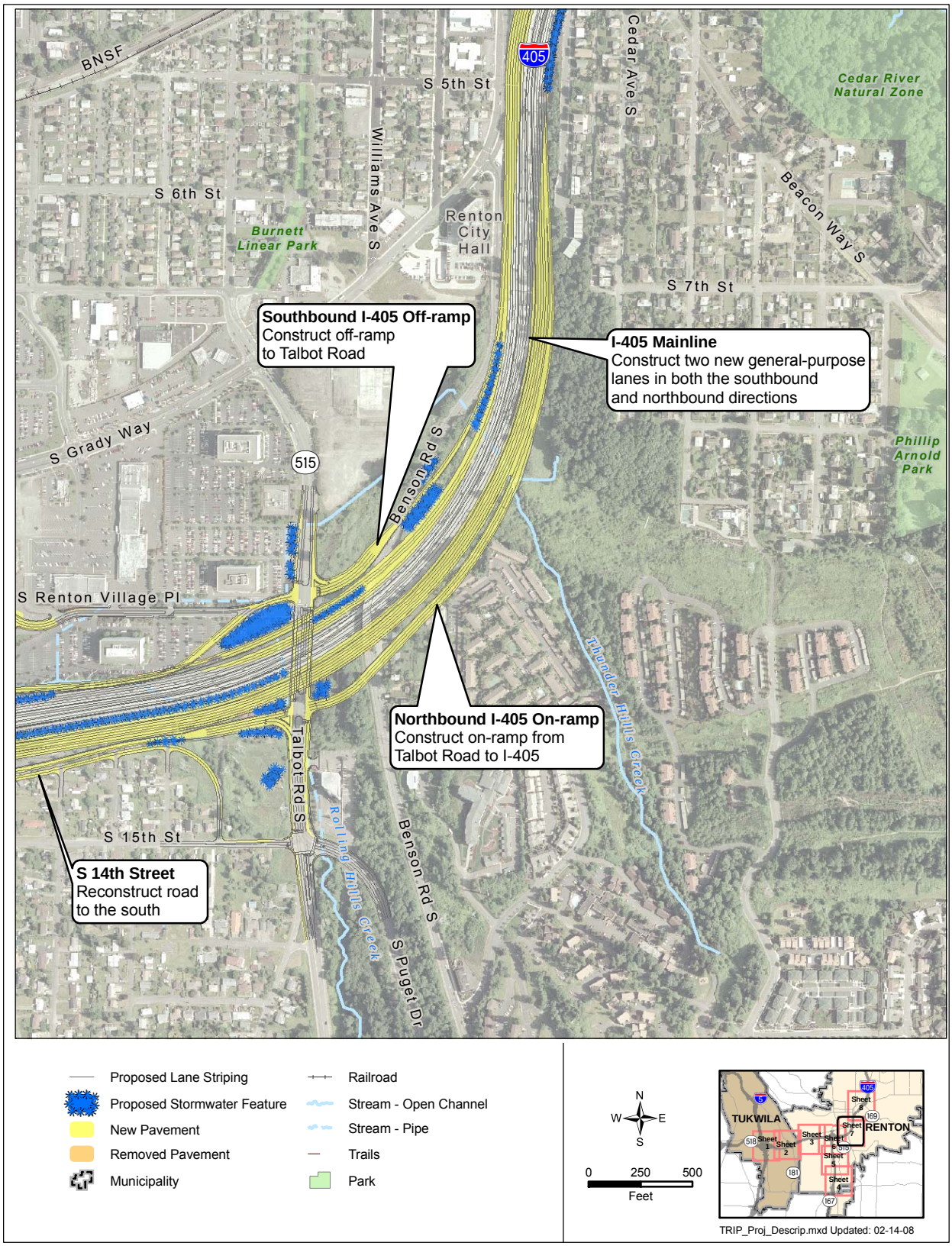


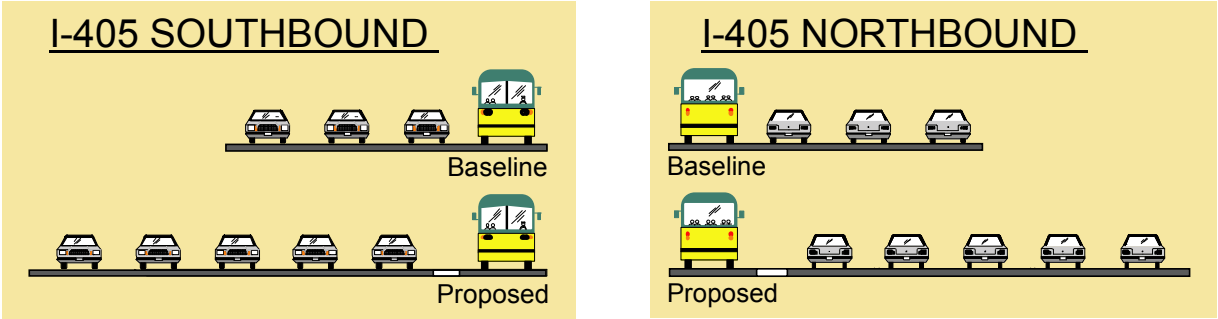
Exhibit 2-11: Project Features, Sheet 7



I-405 from East of SR 167 Interchange to North of S 5th Street

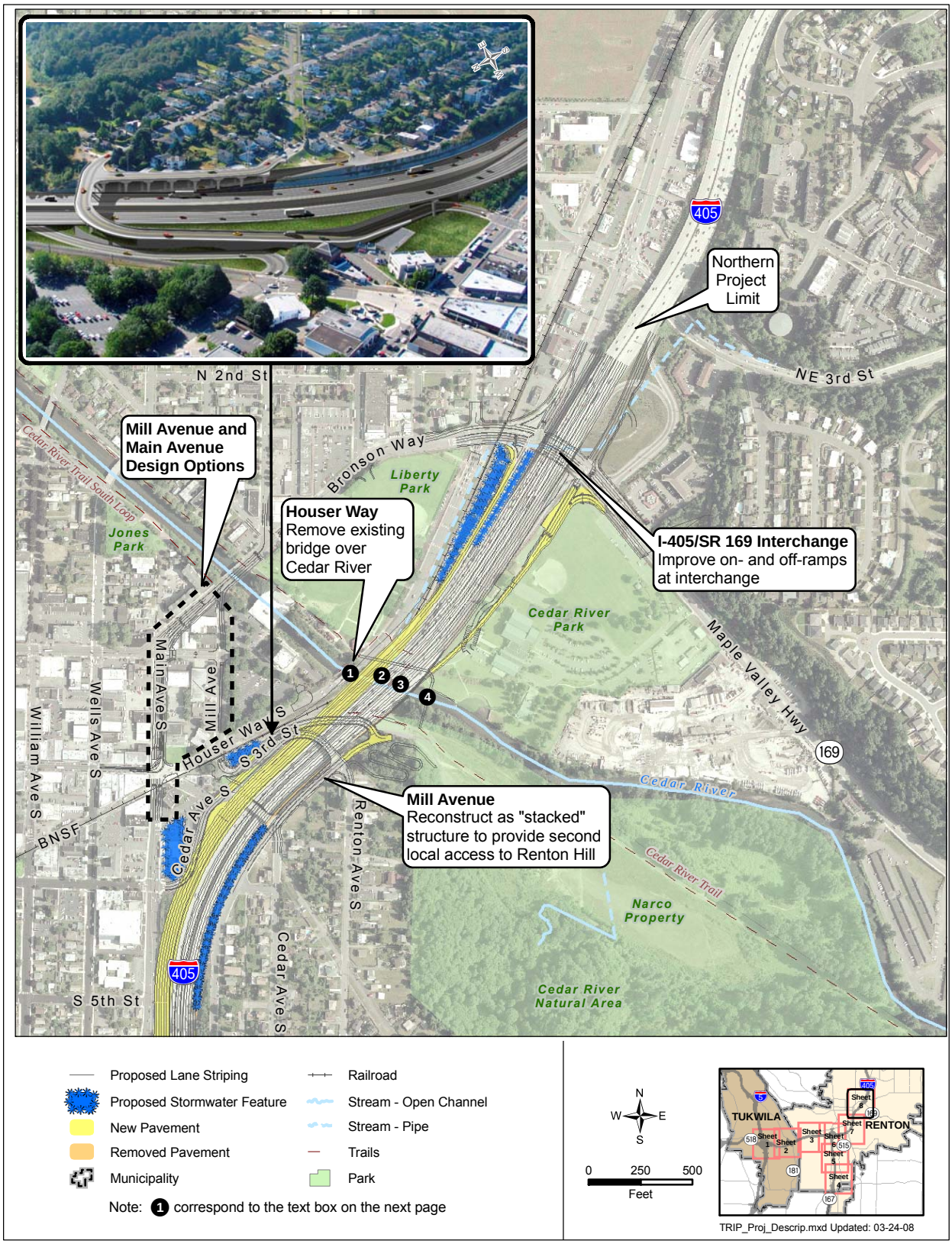
For the section of I-405 that extends from the SR 167 interchange past Renton City Hall as shown on Exhibit 2-11, WSDOT would:

- Construct two additional lanes in both directions on I-405 from SR 167 through SR 169.
- Stripe lanes to provide a buffer between HOV and general-purpose lanes along I-405.
- Construct a new half-diamond interchange at Talbot Road as shown on Exhibit 2-10.
- Reconstruct S 14th Street south of its existing location.



Project improvements would add capacity to I-405 for both southbound and northbound traffic and would provide a buffer between the HOV lane and the general-purpose lanes

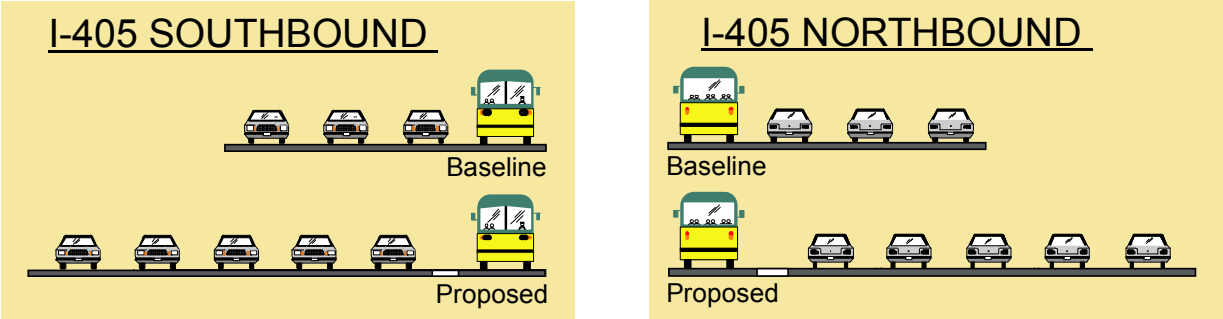
Exhibit 2-12: Project Features, Sheet 8



I-405 from S 5th Street to SR 169

This last portion of the Tukwila to Renton Project crosses the Cedar River to the SR 169 interchange. In this section, WSDOT would:

- Construct two additional lanes in both directions on I-405 from SR 167 through SR 169.
- Stripe lanes to provide a buffer between HOV and general-purpose lanes along I-405.



Project improvements would add capacity to I-405 for both southbound and northbound traffic and would provide a buffer between the HOV lane and the general-purpose lanes

- Cantilever the I-405 structures over Main Avenue.
- Reconstruct three bridges over the Cedar River: southbound I-405, northbound I-405, and a pedestrian bridge.
- Relocate the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad bridge.
- Close Houser Way south of the Cedar River north to Bronson Way and remove the bridge over the Cedar River.
- Reroute northbound traffic to Bronson Way, which would be striped to accommodate the new traffic pattern.
- Reconstruct two local street accesses to Renton Hill.

To accommodate the I-405 improvements, the Tukwila to Renton Project also required rerouting traffic from Houser Way and changing access to Renton Hill. These improvements are discussed on the following pages.

What bridge construction would occur over the Cedar River?

❶ Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Bridge

❷ Southbound I-405 Bridge

❸ Northbound I-405 Bridge

❹ Pedestrian Bridge

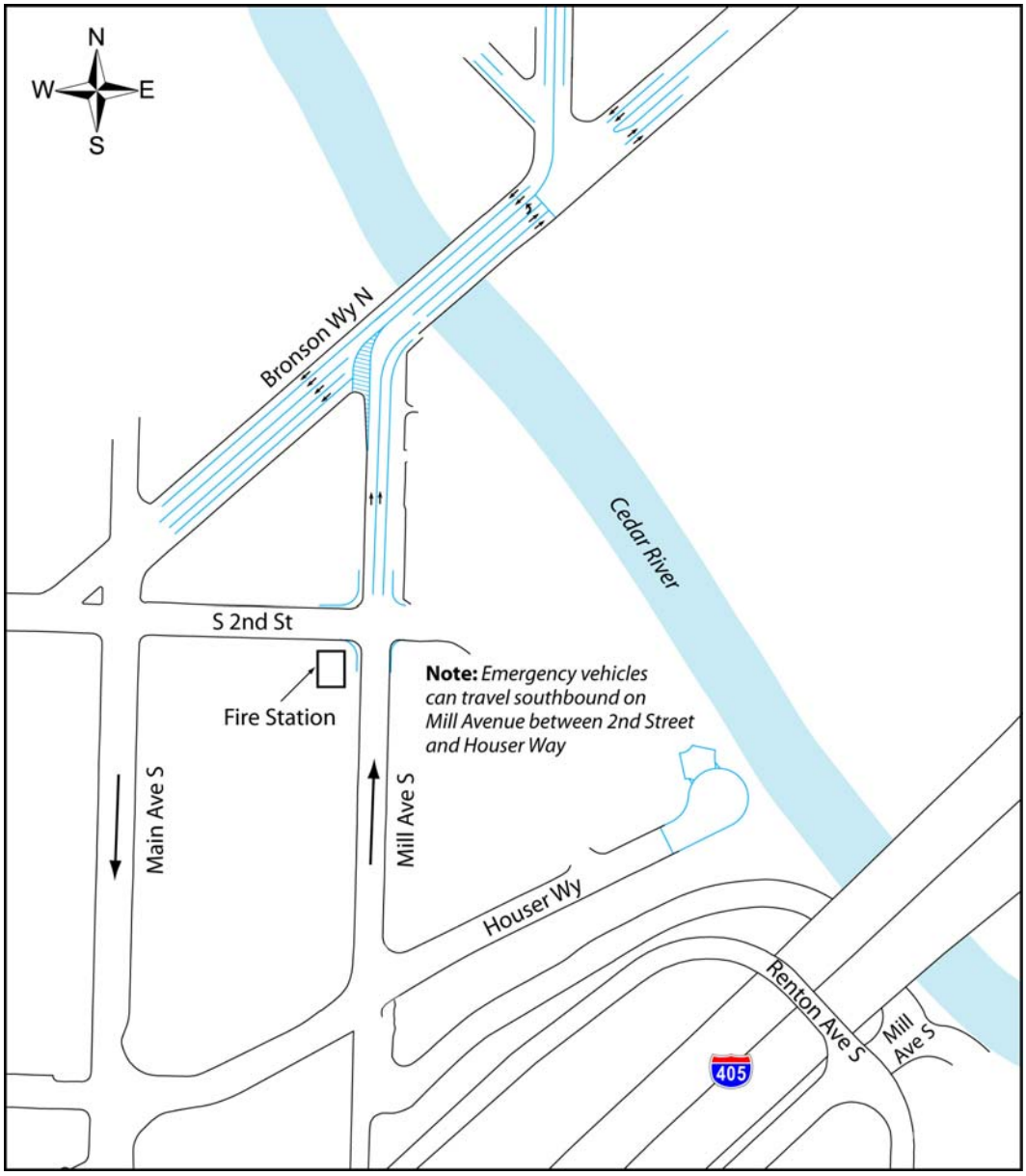
See Exhibit 2-12 for the bridge locations.

Mill Avenue and Main Avenue Design Options

To accommodate widening I-405 over the Cedar River, the Houser Way bridge would be closed. WSDOT worked closely with the City of Renton to develop the most acceptable and feasible solution for redirecting traffic coming from south of Houser Way. For northbound traffic within Renton south of the Cedar River, two design options are being considered:

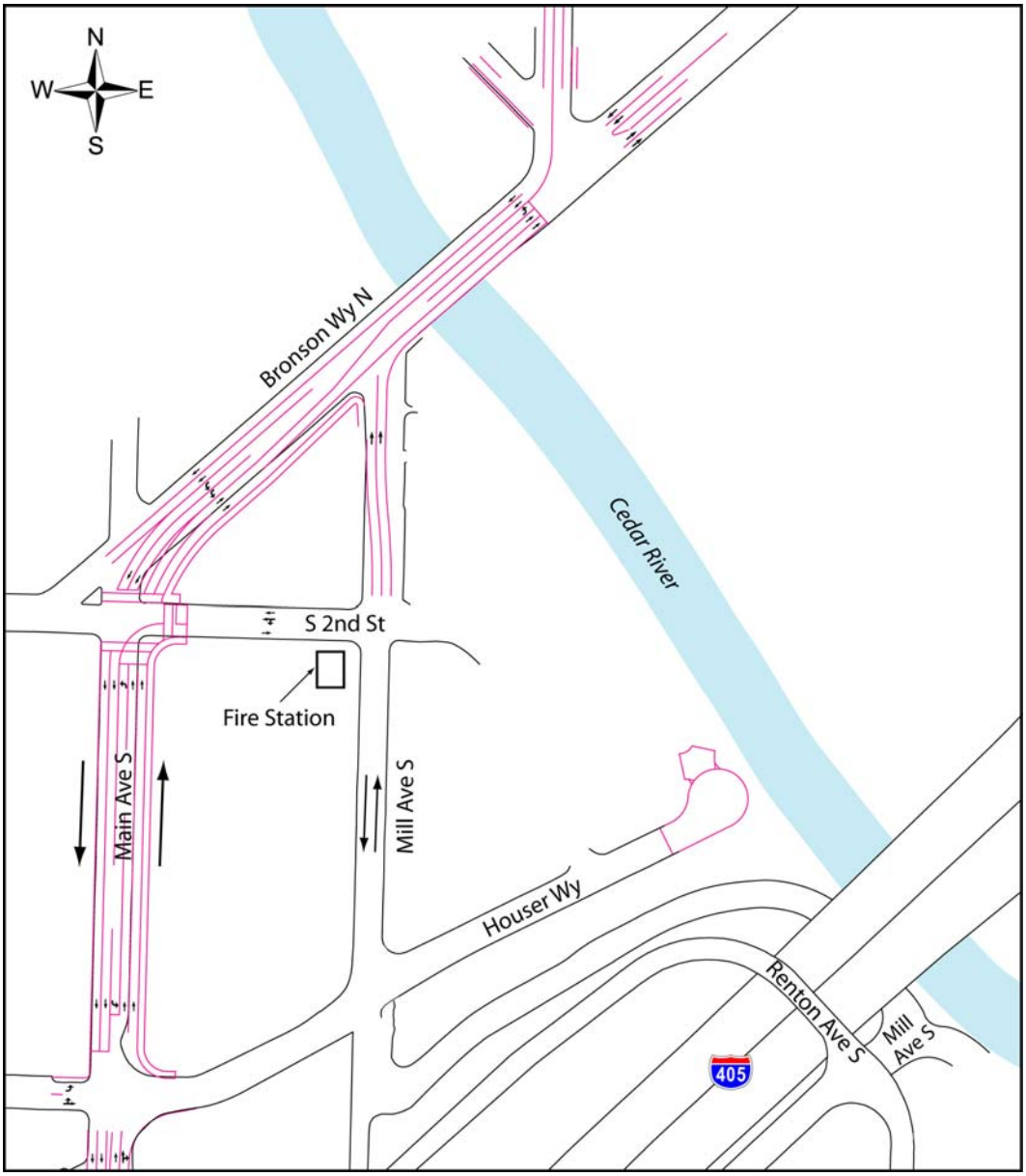
- The first option stripes Mill Avenue as a one-way street to provide two lanes northbound from the intersection of Houser Way and Mill Avenue to Bronson Way (see Exhibit 2-13).

Exhibit 2-13: Mill Avenue Design Option for Local Access to Bronson Way



- The second option leaves Mill Avenue as a two-way street up to the intersection with 2nd Street where it would be striped for one-way traffic northbound and reconfigures Main Avenue, a one-way street southbound, to provide two-way traffic. Main Avenue would be widened and striped for two-way traffic to provide access from the south to Bronson Way (see Exhibit 2-14).

Exhibit 2-14: Main Avenue Design Option for Local Access to Bronson Way

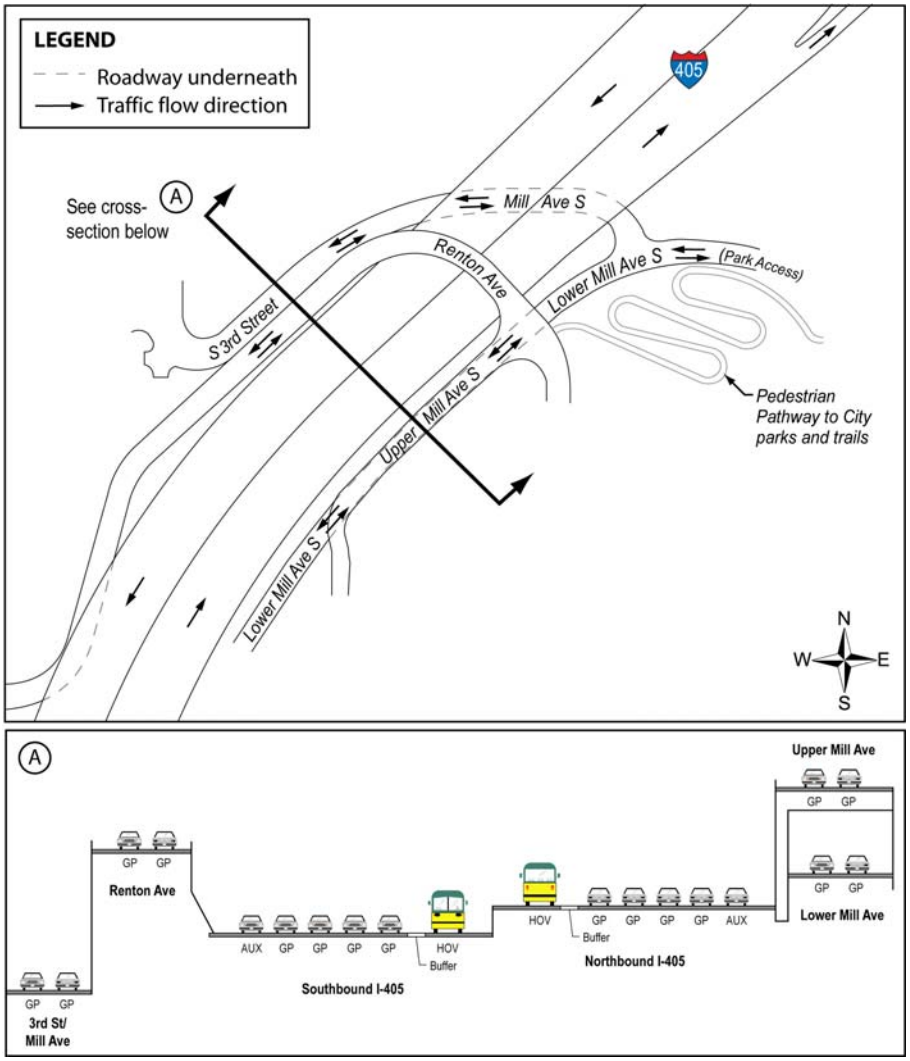


Changes to Renton Hill Access

As shown in the inset on Exhibit 2-12, the Renton Hill Access would be changed to accommodate the widening of I-405. These changes are detailed in Exhibit 2-15 below. WSDOT would:

- Reconstruct the Renton Avenue bridge over I-405 and realign the north end to intersect with Main Avenue rather than Houser Way as it currently does.
- Reconstruct Mill Avenue as a stacked structure that also provides access to Renton Hill as shown in Exhibit 2-15.
- Remove the existing Cedar Avenue bridge.
- Construct a pedestrian pathway connecting residents on Renton Hill to the City's parks and trails.

Exhibit 2-15: New Local Access for Renton Hill



What are the construction methods and schedule for implementation?

Construction Methods

The Tukwila to Renton Project would use different methods to construct the various project elements. The main approaches to construction for this project are described below.

At-grade Construction

At-grade construction, which occurs on the same elevation as the existing lanes, would be staged to minimize traffic delays and detours. One method would shift lanes toward the median. WSDOT then would place a concrete barrier to provide a work zone outside of the roadway. A second method would build the entire new section, then shift traffic to the new portion and reconstruct the existing section. Staging allows construction to occur safely without closing lanes for the duration of construction.

Bridge Construction

Bridge construction would generally occur in multiple stages to minimize traffic delays and detours. The following describes a typical staging approach for bridge construction on I-405 that would be used where practicable. As the first step, traffic is shifted toward the I-405 median, and the existing lanes and shoulders are narrowed slightly. This approach allows widening of the existing structure or construction of the new bridge, depending on the design, to occur on the outside of the roadway. Next, traffic is shifted onto the new bridge area. If the bridge is being replaced rather than simply widened, the old structure is demolished after traffic is shifted to the new bridge.

Road Closures

Some road closures would be necessary to construct various improvements. WSDOT would notify local agencies, public services, utilities, and the general public prior to any temporary road closures and would clearly mark detour routes. As much as possible, closures would be scheduled during times that would have the least impact on the traveling public.

Traffic Control

WSDOT would work with local agencies to develop detours as needed during construction. Prior to starting construction, WSDOT would develop a traffic control plan. The plan's primary objectives would be to provide a safe facility, to streamline the construction schedule, and to minimize reductions to existing traffic capacity. To lessen effects on traffic, the duration of activities would be minimized and reductions in capacity would be limited and would be targeted to a period when they would have the least effect.

Schedule

Because the I-405 Corridor Program master plan configuration is very expensive, WSDOT would implement the improvements in phases as funding becomes available. The Tukwila to Renton Project represents Phase 2 for this section of I-405. This discipline report assumes a baseline condition where the Phase 1 improvements, Renton Nickel Improvement Project, have been completed prior to the start of Phase 2.

Construction of the entire Tukwila to Renton Project is expected to be spread over several years as funding becomes available. For this reason, construction activity would not be constant throughout the entire study area and the duration would vary depending on the improvement being constructed.

The first element of the Tukwila to Renton Project that is proposed for construction is the SR 515 Interchange Project. This portion is funded through the 2005 Transportation Partnership Account (TPA). This Tukwila to Renton project element would construct a half-diamond interchange on I-405 at Talbot Road (SR 515). Construction of this element is scheduled to begin in autumn of 2008. The remaining elements of the Tukwila to Renton Project are unfunded at this time.

To complete the master plan for I-405 from I-5 to SR 169, additional work would need to be accomplished in this area.

Does this project relate to any other improvements on I-405 or connecting highways?

The Tukwila to Renton Project is part of a comprehensive program to address the congestion problems in the I-405 corridor. WSDOT worked with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration, Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, King County, and local governments to develop strategies to reduce traffic congestion and improve mobility along the I-405 corridor. The I-405 Corridor Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD), published in 2002, document these strategies. The selected alternative has become known as the master plan.

WSDOT is constructing the master plan as funding becomes available. For the southern end of I-405 extending from I-5 to SR 169, the Renton Nickel Improvement Project was Phase 1. This phase was largely funded by the statewide transportation-funding plan called the "nickel package," which was approved by the Washington State Legislature in 2003. In 2005, the legislature passed a second funding package, TPA. It also provided funding for the Renton Nickel Improvement Project. Construction of the Renton Nickel Improvement Project began in 2007 and would be completed by 2011.

The other I-405 projects that relate to the Tukwila to Renton Project address the sections north of SR 169 to the end of I-405 at I-5 in Lynnwood. Of these projects, the first stage for the Kirkland area of I-405 has been completed. The first stage for Bellevue, SE 112th Street to SE 8th Street, began construction in 2007. As each successive project becomes operational, the public would benefit from the improved traffic movement, safety, and capacity along the I-405 corridor.

Another related project is the HOT Lanes Pilot Project on SR 167. This project would convert the existing HOV lanes to High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes between Auburn and Renton. HOT lanes would better manage the SR 167 corridor traffic demand through tolling. The Tukwila to Renton Project would tie into the HOT lanes project.

In addition, some local agencies are working on projects that would tie into the work on I-405. For example, the City of

Renton is proposing to reconstruct Rainier Avenue S, in particular, improving local access and circulation to the interchange with I-405 and SR 167.

As well as the road projects discussed above, WSDOT and the City of Renton are constructing the Springbrook Creek Wetland and Habitat Mitigation Bank. This project would create a large wetland complex that would provide mitigation credits to multiple projects including the Tukwila to Renton Project.

What is the No Build Alternative?

The No Build Alternative and baseline condition assumes that the improvements associated with the Renton Nickel Improvement Project are constructed. Only routine activities such as road maintenance, repair, and safety improvements would be expected to take place between 2014 and 2030. This alternative does not include improvements that would increase roadway capacity or reduce congestion beyond baseline conditions. For these reasons, it does not satisfy the project's purpose to reduce congestion on I-405 between I-5 in Tukwila and SR 169 in Renton.

The No Build Alternative has been evaluated in this discipline report as a comparison for the effects associated with the Build Alternative.