

SR 169 Corridor Study

Corridor Working Group Session

Meeting Summary

Meeting date: February 8, 2005

Location: Green River Community College – Enumclaw Branch (1414 Griffin Avenue– Enumclaw, WA)

Attendees:

Partners in attendance:

Jason Paulsen – City of Black Diamond
Chris Searcy, Mayor John Wise – City of Enumclaw
Mark Melroy, Doug Johnson – King County
Allison Dobbins – Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
Barbara Briggs – Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Northwest Region
Seth Stark – WSDOT, Urban Planning Office

Partners not in attendance:

Nick Afzali – City of Renton
Dave Zielinski – City of Maple Valley
Ann Martin – King County

Others in attendance:

Joan Burlingame – Friends of Rock Creek Valley
Kamuron Gurol – WSDOT, Urban Planning Office
Ron Paananen – WSDOT, Northwest Region
Nancy Boyd – WSDOT, Headquarters Region
Keith Sabol, Pamela Arora – Parsons Transportation Group
Kristine dos Remedios – EnviroIssues

Welcome and Goals for the Day

Kamuron Gurol, WSDOT, welcomed the partners and thanked them for taking the time to attend the Corridor Working Group (CWG) session. Attendees introduced themselves and shared the name of the organization or jurisdiction they were representing.

Kamuron reviewed the session agenda and contents of the packet passed out to the group. Seth Stark, WSDOT, reminded the group that getting consensus on the Evaluation Criteria was the most important step of the day, as this document will be important to present at the upcoming public open houses in March and to maintain the project schedule.

Keith Sabol, Parsons, suggested an agenda amendment in order to go through an example exercise using the evaluation criteria before reviewing and approving the most recent version. Partners agreed to this change.

Brief Project Update

Comments regarding the December CWG meeting minutes were solicited from the partners. There were none and the minutes were subsequently approved.

The project list including immediate-, short-, and long-term improvements for the corridor is still in the process of being updated. The Maple Valley Highway Coalition did go to the legislature to present some of the immediate-term projects and it is unknown how that process went.

**RDP Planning
Process and
RDP
Terminology**

Vision Statement

The project team drafted a Vision Statement in order to guide the purpose and future goals for the corridor and give a framework for all of the products and recommended projects resulting from the study. Feedback on the statement was solicited from the partners. Joan Burlingame, Friends of Rock Creek Valley, suggested that there was no emphasis on the movement of people across the highway, which is important to ensure that the highway does not divide communities and activity centers in the future. The absence of this in the vision statement may make it difficult to convince legislators to fund a project that is not specifically indicated in the vision for the corridor. Partners agreed to incorporate a statement to emphasize the crossing and use of the corridor by non-motorized users.

Partners had a question about the tone of the vision statement, which can be confusing to the reader. It currently reads in the past tense, as if you were observing the corridor after improvements guided by the corridor study had been implemented. Partners agreed that the statement should be re-worded to read in the present tense, in order to acknowledge that the corridor is currently an asset to the communities, but at the same time, actions need to be taken to ensure that the highway will continue to provide the same level of service, if not an enhanced level of service, as it does today.

RDP Terminology

The project team also drafted a “glossary” of Route Development Plan (RDP) terminology in order to make sure the group can stay consistent, avoid mixing and matching terms, and use terms such as “alternative,” or “project,” that really mean something in the RDP and to the public.

PSRC suggested that the definition of “preferred alternative” be expanded to include something about addressing and accounting for the agreed upon evaluation criteria, to show that the preferred alternative is a balance of all criteria.

Partners asked whether or not the “No Build” alternative assumes that all immediate-term or programmed projects are still implemented. WSDOT staff clarified that yes, the “No Build” alternative does include such projects, so it is in fact not completely a “No Build” scenario but it does not include projects that are not fully scoped or funded.

RDP Flowchart

The project team also developed an RDP Flowchart to be presented to the public, based on a much more detailed planning process flowchart. WSDOT staff agreed to send a more detailed flowchart to the partners who were interested. Kamuron reviewed the steps in the flow chart, explaining that the steps outlined were meant to show the public where the first round of Open Houses is in the RDP process and what the next steps are.

Partners suggested that some more detail be added to guide the public as to what input WSDOT and the partners are looking for at the first round of open houses as

opposed to the second round of open houses. WSDOT agreed that this might be helpful, but that the flowchart would be accompanied by a more detailed “instruction” sheet to guide the public through the purpose of the open houses and the type of comments requested.

Partners also agreed that the open houses should focus on soliciting feedback from the public on whether or not the problem statements developed for each segment had been characterized correctly, and on gathering their ideas about what needs to be done along the corridor.

Partners also suggested that the other processes that happen after the RDP is implemented, on a project-specific basis (i.e., further public involvement, environmental reviews, etc.) should be included in the flowchart. It should also be clear that implementing the RDP is dependent on funding.

Arrows between the bubbles that include more detailed steps under that timeline should be added to show the sequence of events.

Partners approved the RDP Flowchart, pending any necessary changes as identified by the CWG partners at the meeting.

RDP Table of Contents

A draft RDP Table of Contents was distributed to the partners in order to give the group an idea of what will be included in the RDP document and how the plan will be presented. The table of contents was developed by incorporating a number of different RDPs that were reviewed. The SR 169 RDP may or may not include all of the components currently outlined in the table of contents and sections may be added during the planning process. WSDOT is committed to producing a user-friendly document, moving the more technical information to the back of the document or in the appendices and moving the most relevant information to the front. An Executive Summary will also be developed as a ‘stand alone’ piece that can be easily reproduced and distributed.

Partners observed that there were two chapters including Transit Facilities (2.2.4 and 2.2.5) and they should be combined into the 2.2.4 chapter on Non-motorized and Transit Facilities.

Partners suggested that Chapter 2 also include the corridor segment concept, as readers may want to focus on the existing characteristics by segment.

Chapter 5.2 should also include consistency with the MPO Transportation Plans and Congestion Management System.

Partners observed that a commitment page or signature page was absent and a section on adoption, jurisdiction commitment, and implementation should be added.

Partners agreed that a separate non-motorized section in each segment description in Chapter 3 be added in order to address the non-motorized concerns that are unique to each segment. If this issue is not treated or addressed separately, partners were concerned that non-motorized improvements would get lost.

RDP Relationship to WTP/HSP/STIP

WSDOT staff wanted to review the relationship between the SR 169 RDP and other state and regional transportation plans. WSDOT is in the process of updating the

Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), which includes the Highway Systems Plan (HSP). The HSP is essentially a wish list of all proposed highway improvement projects ranging from signal improvements to bypasses. The projects identified in an RDP fall into the HSP list. Top priority projects will then be funded via the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). Groups can also lobby the legislature at the state or federal levels to solicit funds for specific projects that are not currently funded by the STIP. The directly funded projects are typically not large cost projects but smaller improvement projects. This is where partnerships pay off, as specific funding sources are more likely to be found when there is a lot of support for a project. WSDOT staff still commits to putting together a document to describe this process, in order to include such a description in the RDP.

PSRC shared that, in light of their federal review cycle, they are revamping the region's congestion management system, which is a regional requirement. There are eight steps that need to happen for this, one of which is to identify congestion locations. SR 169 has been identified as one of these locations. Projects that get into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which is a financially constrained document and has a shorter list than the HSP, are eligible for federally managed flexible funds.

**SR 169
Segments and
Draft Segment
Problem
Statements**

Kamuron went over the SR 169 Segment Map and description of the segments with the partners. The project team developed draft problem statements for each segment. The public will have an opportunity to comment on these statements at the open houses.

Comments regarding the draft problem statements were solicited from the group.

At the north end of the Black Diamond segment, the cross street should read 291st Street, not 241st Street.

For the Enumclaw segment, a phrase should be added to the problem statement to suggest that there are safety and traffic backup issues due to turning movements. Chris Searcy, Enumclaw, agreed to email a phrase to the project team that is more specific.

Partners agreed that non-motorized concerns unique to each segment should be added. They also agreed that it is important to clarify that segments may include HACs or HALs but are not entirely a HAC or a HAL.

WSDOT staff asked that any additions are amendments to the problem statements be sent to the team by Thursday, February 10th. It is important to not get too voluminous with the statements or include too much detail. The team is looking for a statement that captures the main issues for each segment. If there are non-motorized issues, those will be added. The public will have a chance to provide feedback on these statements as well.

**Example
Screening
Process Using
Evaluation
Criteria**

Keith Sabol, Parsons, then lead the partners through an example screening process of alternatives using the draft Evaluation Criteria. The Evaluation Criteria would be applied on a segment-by-segment basis. The projects would be categorized by type of improvement (i.e., safety or mobility), which reflects the goals and objectives for the corridor. The metrics used were kept to an intuitive level and then a rating was

provided, using a “Consumer Reports” -type method, in order to directly compare alternatives. It is important to the project team not to create too complicated of a system and get weighed down in the evaluation process. The team asked the partners for some feedback on the process.

Partners asked how this evaluation process relates to the fatal flaw analysis. Keith clarified that the fatal flaw analysis will use a selection of “fatal flaw,” not necessarily more important, criteria. Once this preliminary screening is done, the long list of alternatives will be screened of projects that are not feasible due to certain prohibitive factors (i.e., project cost is too high, there is too large of an impact to sensitive habitat, etc.). The criteria to be used in the fatal flaw analysis are indicated with an asterisk (*) in the Evaluation Criteria document.

Partners agreed that the sheet was easy to understand. They suggested that an inclusive rating for each major goal category also be included. With that, you can then go to the detailed sections for more information. Partners also suggested that the metrics stay consistent with the metrics identified in the Evaluation Criteria document.

Review and Approve Evaluation Criteria

The project team has revised the Evaluation Criteria per comments received at the December 14th CWG meeting and via email from the partners. Comments received were generally complimentary. Included in the draft version distributed to the partners is an explanation of how the Evaluation Criteria will be used in the fatal flaw and then detailed screening processes. The asterisk (*) indicates the criteria to be used in the initial screening/fatal flaw analysis. These criteria currently include:

- Historical/Cultural/Architectural Resources
- Natural Environmental Effects
- Project Costs and Benefits

Partners suggested that safety be added to the list of criteria used in the fatal flaw analysis. Projects that would worsen pedestrian or vehicle safety should be thrown out. Crossings for transit stops should be specifically called out in the Safety criterion as well, just as crossings for school children are. Partners agreed that safety would be added to the fatal flaw analysis.

Partners were uncomfortable using 2001-2003 data as the baseline for safety improvements. Developments that have been built since 2003 have brought more people and, as a result, more traffic to the area. WSDOT staff recognized the partners’ concerns but more recent data is not available. Increases in accident data between years may help predict the increase in accidents for 2004.

Under the Land Use and Policy Consistency criterion, partners questioned the definition of designated agricultural land, whether this meant zoned agricultural land, land under the Farmland Protection Program or land in agricultural districts. King County committed to clarifying this, as they are very sensitive to the loss of designated farmland and exceptions are difficult to get from the County Council.

Under the third bullet under the Transit/HOV Use and Functionality criterion, ‘transit dependent areas’ should be changed to ‘transit service areas.’

Under the Pedestrian and Bicycle Access criterion, ‘access’ should be changed to ‘mobility’ and ‘crosswalks’ should be changed to ‘crossings.’

Under Project Costs and Benefits, the metric for cost effectiveness is person-hours saved, but it should also consider the accidents avoided, as that is a benefit that can be had from any improvement as well.

Partners approved the SR 169 Evaluation Criteria, pending any necessary changes to be made by the project team to the document as identified by the CWG partners at the meeting.

**Public
Comment**

No additional public comments were given at this time.

Next Steps

The next CWG meeting will be held following the March Public Open House Series. A date and time has not been established.

Action Items:

- Partners are to send Seth Stark, WSDOT all additions/revisions to the draft Segment Problem Statements by Thursday, February 10th.
- Partners will send Kristine, EnviroIssues, what dates they plan to attend the Open Houses.
- WSDOT will send the revised Evaluation Criteria for final review and approval.
- EnviroIssues will write a meeting summary for the Chartering Session and send it to the partners for review.

**Upcoming
Meetings**

- Public Open House: March 1st, 5:30-8:30pm, Lake Wilderness Lodge, Maple Valley
- Public Open House: March 3rd, 4:30-8:30pm, Enumclaw High School, Enumclaw

Handouts

- CWG Session Agenda
- December 14th SR 169 CWG Meeting Summary
- SR 169 Vision Statement
- SR 169 RDP Key Definitions
- SR 169 RDP Process and Schedule Flowchart
- SR 169 RDP Draft Table of Contents
- Map of SR 169 Segments
- SR 169 Draft Segment Problem Statements
- Example Screening Matrix using Evaluation Criteria
- SR 169 Revised Draft Evaluation Criteria