

Executive Summary

1 What is the US 101 Regional Circulation Project?

The US 101 corridor and connecting highways, US 12 and State Route 109, function as the major transportation routes through the cities of Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and Cosmopolis. This highway network provides a critical economic link between the region and the rest of Washington State. These highways serve as the primary route to Pacific Ocean beaches and the western Olympic Peninsula for visitors, the most direct route for moving freight and goods, and the “main street” for local residents. Congestion on these routes, either from high vehicle volume or from bridge openings and railroad crossings, negatively affects the movement of people and goods to and from the region. These roads are crucial to the economic vitality, growth, and sustainability of the region. The US 101 Regional Circulation Project was initiated to identify and prioritize transportation projects to improve mobility in the region.

During the 2005 Washington State Legislative Session, \$500,000 was earmarked for a regional planning study to reduce congestion on US 101 in the vicinity of Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and Cosmopolis. These funds were used to develop a list of prioritized transportation projects that would improve congestion and traffic issues in the area. A stipulation of this prioritized list required that projects improve the community as a whole, not just one local jurisdiction.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), in partnership with the Grays Harbor Council of

Governments (GHCOG) and two consulting firms, worked with a stakeholder committee consisting of local jurisdiction staff and elected officials, business leaders, local Native American tribes, Grays Harbor Transit and the Port of Grays Harbor to develop this prioritized project list. Using corridor studies completed over the last 14 years as a starting point, WSDOT and the stakeholder committee developed an initial list of projects that would be evaluated for further consideration.

2 How were projects evaluated?

From over 150 individual projects recommended in the previous studies, the project team narrowed the list of projects down to 29 projects. Through project team meetings and an initial evaluation process with the stakeholder committee, 23 projects remained on the list. WSDOT further refined this list through an evaluation process providing an overall rank for each of these projects. This evaluation process ranked each project based on three primary goals:

- Promote Regional Solutions
- Promote Economic Vitality and Growth
- Support Multi-modal Solutions

Each goal was subdivided into specific criteria that further refined the evaluation process. The final product of the evaluation was an initial ranked list of the top 10 projects. This list was brought forth to the stakeholder committee for input and consensus.

3 What were the final recommendations?

Stakeholder committee members confirmed the top 10 projects recommended by the project team. Further discussion to develop an even shorter high-priority project list occurred, and the stakeholder committee decided to prioritize five projects and a separate top maintenance priority project. The final recommendation from the stakeholder committee is summarized in Exhibit ES-1 below.

Exhibit ES-1
Stakeholder Committee Project Priority List

Full Truck Route Alternative - \$386M

The Stakeholder Committee has identified the Full Truck Route as the top priority project. As an alternative to funding the entire Truck Route, the Stakeholder Committee recommends moving forward with the project in increments and pledges their support to carry forward this process. Their recommendation is as follows:

1a. Funding for re-evaluation of the NEPA EIS – re-evaluation of the EIS is needed to begin any construction. Funding for early engineering, including phasing analysis - \$5M

1b. Funding for environmental documentation, based on results of phasing analysis - \$3M

1c. Funding for preliminary engineering and construction of Truck Route segments based on phasing analysis results - \$4M to \$378M

(Priority 1a and 1b must be done first)

**Maintenance Priority
 Seismic Improvements - \$20M**

The regional highway system in the tri-city area is connected by five aging bridges, two of which require funding for seismic upgrades. Completion of this project is necessary to maintain access to regional hospitals, and fire and police protection in the event of a natural disaster. The estimated costs for these repairs are listed below:

- Chehalis River Bridge - \$10M
- Wishkah River (Heron Street Bridge) - \$10M

Tri-City Operational Improvements - \$10M

The Tri-City Operational Improvements project provides more than 20 needed and visible improvements that can be implemented in the short term. The Stakeholder Committee recommends full funding for this project.

Wishkah Mall Access Improvements - \$4M

To alleviate identified traffic problems caused by access issues at this regional destination, the Stakeholder Committee recommends funding the project in two phases.

3a. Funding for emergency vehicle access, turning movement and access revisions, signal interconnection, and re-striping the internal parking area - \$500K

3b. Funding includes an investigation of constructing an alternate access road on the north side of US 12. The project would include public involvement, right-of-way acquisition, preliminary engineering and construction - \$3.5M

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) - \$9M

This project would install changeable message signs, photo enforcement cameras, closed circuit television, and Highway Advisory Radio. Actual locations and configurations would be determined during design.

Improve Port Industrial Road - \$4M

This project would improve capacity, traffic flow, and safety by providing right and left turn lanes at key intersections and other improvements as identified in the Port Industrial Road Strategic Analysis.

Cost estimates for each of the top ranked projects include all project phases and activities, including initial project studies, preliminary engineering and design, environmental documentation, right-of-way acquisition, construction, construction management, and sales tax. All project costs were estimated using 2006 dollars. Exhibit ES-2 summarizes the preliminary cost estimates for each project.

**Exhibit ES-2
Preliminary Cost Estimates**

Project	Total Cost
1. Full Truck Corridor	\$386,000,000
2. Tri-City Operational Improvements	\$9,887,000
3. Alternate Access to Wishkah Mall	\$4,000,000
4. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)	\$9,280,000
5. Improve Port Industrial Road	\$3,598,000
Maintenance Priority-Complete Seismic Upgrades to Area Bridges	\$20,000,000

4 What are the next steps?

This prioritized project list will be circulated to the stakeholder committee members, the Coastal Caucus, the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization, and community members of the cities of Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and Cosmopolis. The list will provide direction to local elected officials and other community leaders and will provide a blueprint for transportation improvements over the next several years. The list has also been provided to the Washington State House and Senate members representing Grays Harbor County for the upcoming 2007 legislative session.

While the project list was recommended as the top priority for the region at this time, it should not be considered a static list. The stakeholder committee members with direction and involvement from GHCOG and WSDOT agreed to reevaluate the prioritized list every couple of years to ensure the project cost estimates have not significantly changed, to add or delete projects from the list, and to continue to seek funding for each of the top projects.