

SR 7 Route Development Plan (Phase 1)

Stakeholder Committee Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: July 28, 2005

Location: Bob Lyle Community Center, Morton WA

Attendees:

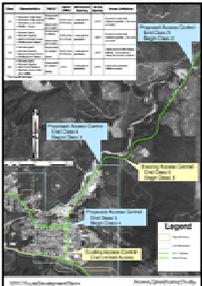
Stakeholder Committee

Christie Greiter, Morton Chamber of Commerce
Tim Johnson, Hampton Lumber Mill
Dean Lokken, Historic Society
Albert McCaughan, Mineral
J. P. Hicks, Washington State Patrol
Danna Hadley, US Forest Service
Jim Gerwig, City of Morton
Mark Cook, Lewis County
Steve Bell, WDFW

Staff

Lynn Hakes, WSDOT Olympic Region
Karyn Anderson, WSDOT Southwest Region
Vicki Steigner, WSDOT Olympic Region
Yvette Liufau, WSDOT Olympic Region
Mike Clark, WSDOT Southwest Region
Seth Gallant, WSDOT Southwest Region
Craig Robbins, WSDOT Southwest Region
Ed Gilda, WSDOT Southwest Region
Craig Broadhead, WSDOT HQ Environmental Office

**Access
Management**



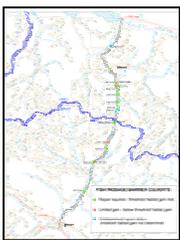
Lynn Hakes opened the meeting, and introduced Vicki Steigner from WSDOT's Olympic Region to present information about Access Management. Access Management preserves capacity, promotes safety and helps the scenic quality. Vicki asked the committee to consider a proposal to change the current highway class of SR 7. A detailed description of access management and the proposed changes was outlined in the access management handout. The same information will be provided to the public for their input at the August 4th public meeting. The stakeholder committee will be asked to vote on this at the next stakeholder meeting in September.

Note: In response to Albert McCaughan's question, WSDOT staff will find out how or if the recent Supreme Court Decision on property acquisition affects Washington highways.

Right-of-Way and Surplus Property

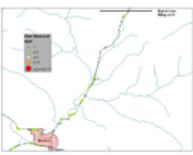
Vicki introduced Ed Gilda from the WSDOT Southwest Region Real Estate Services Office. Ed talked about right-of-way the Department owns in the study area and the Department’s process for selling property. In the 1960’s plans were developed for a bypass route near SR 7. During that time WSDOT bought some of the property along with limited access rights. This plan was abandoned in the 1980’s and a resolution to vacate limited access in this area occurred in the 1990’s. Since that time, the Department has sold back most of the parcels and there are only 7 parcels that remain. If someone is interested in buying any of the remaining parcels, they need only send a letter to Ed to start the process. Approval to sell a piece of property goes through the Southwest Region offices and WSDOT Headquarters. Mark Cook asked who would be entitled to buying the parcel first. Ed mentioned parcels are first offered to abutting property owners and then to others for purchase.

Fish Passage Barrier Inventory

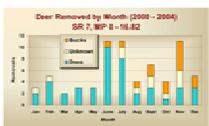
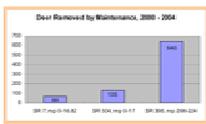


Lynn provided information to the committee about fish passage in the SR 7 study area. She explained that in 1991 WSDOT and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) inventoried fish passage barriers along state highways throughout the state. In 1998 WSDOT and WDFW began to re-inventoried fish passage barriers because criteria had changed. Lynn informed the committee that a culvert at MP 5.5 is scheduled to be replaced in the year 2012. Steve Bell mentioned eight more culverts have been added to the inventory. Replacing these culverts will open up 6.3 miles of habitat for fish.

Wildlife and Habitat Connectivity

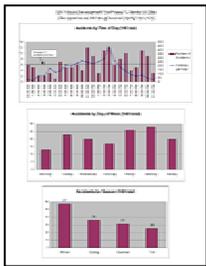
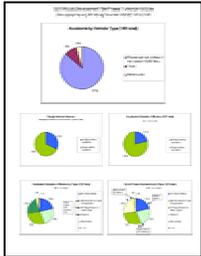


Craig Broadhead from WSDOT’s Headquarters Environmental Affairs Office presented information about wildlife and habitat connectivity. Craig explained to the group that his office maintains a database of deer and elk killed along Washington State highways. The database has over 58,000 records, but not everything is reported and level of reporting varies. The area of SR 7 from MP 0 to MP 16.82 from the years 2000 to 2004 showed 69 reported animals killed. The months of June and July showed the highest kill rate. Craig informed the committee that Washington State’s deer highway mortality rate is low compared to other states.



Some of the methods used to prevent wildlife from being killed while crossing highways are fencing, vegetation manipulation, reflectors, crossing signs and crossing structures. Fencing is the most effective method and is also very expensive to build and maintain. Fencing costs about \$40,000 per side per mile. Craig talked about the possibility of installing special crossing signs along the highway to warn tourists who are not familiar with the area. He mentioned crossing structures as another method of protecting wildlife. An example Craig gave was the I-90 project. Crossing structures create a safe corridor for animals to cross. This type of structure requires a lot of planning and can be very expensive. WSDOT is currently working on establishing a statewide policy to make sure habitat concerns are addressed. Also, the Department is looking at ways to educate the public such as information kiosks, and partnership opportunities with adjacent landowners.

Traffic and Accident Data



Seth reported that the first of the summer traffic counts are done. The second count and analysis will be completed in August. The results will be presented at the next stakeholder meeting.

Seth completed the analysis of the WSP accident data on SR 7 for January 2000 through December 2004 between US 12 and Elbe. The most frequent cause of accidents is exceeding safe speeds. Of the 57 exceeding safe speed accidents, three indicated they exceeded the posted speed limit. The highest number of accidents occurs during the winter season. The cause of accidents and time of year they occur means vehicles are traveling too fast for snow and icy road conditions, and are sliding off the roadway. Some solutions that might lessen the severity of accidents in winter snow and ice are clearing trees out of the clear zone, slope flattening, and adding guardrail treatment at specific locations. The most common cause of accidents in the town of Morton is failure to yield right of way. Seth pointed out the information he analyzed shows a higher number of serious accidents have occurred between MP 1.80 and MP 2.02. Seth concluded that this area of SR 7 would be a strong candidate for guardrail treatment. More detailed information was included in the handout showing the different percentages on graphs.

Brainstorm Solutions for SR 7

Karyn led the committee through a brainstorm exercise to come up with solutions for ways to improve the study area on SR 7. The list of brainstorm ideas gathered at this meeting will be taken to the August 4th public meeting where they will have an opportunity add to the list.

List of Brainstormed Solutions:

- Increase maintenance budget to increase manpower, equipment and supplies
- Intelligent Transportation System (weather information system) warnings for icy conditions
- Warning signs for inclement weather
- Signs indicating “lights on” or “icy conditions” strategically located
- Sign summit area as “Mountain Pass”
- Remove tree canopy
- Outreach to adjacent land owners regarding removing tree canopy
- Truck climbing lane approximately MP 5 to MP 7
- Truck chain-up area before climbing lane
- Minimize elevation difference between edge of asphalt and gravel shoulder area
- County could look at sight distance enhancement opportunities on their right of way at Murray Road
- Change elevation of Murray Road
- Modify rail of bridge located at MP 3.3 (East Fork Tilton River)
- Reduce speed southbound at MP 2

- No parking on right of way near Lindberg houses
- Move parking for Lindberg houses to back or central lot
- Signing about congestions in vicinity of Lindberg houses
- School bus pull off area in vicinity of Lindberg houses
- Roundabout at Westlake and SR 7
- Remove right turn lane southbound onto Westlake
- Improve sight distance at SR 7/SR 508 by removing parking at corners
- Traffic signal at SR 7/SR 508
- Four-way stop at SR 7 and Westlake
- Upgrade railroad crossing at Fairhart Way
- Add crosswalks across Adams Street
- Add sidewalks and enclosed drainage along SR 7 south of Adams Street
- Move truck parking from in front of the Chevron station at Westlake on SR 7 to in back of the Chevron station
- Place flags on each side of the crosswalk at SR 7 and Westlake so pedestrians can carry them as they cross for more visibility
- Construct pedestrian refuge in SR 7 at Westlake
- Educate drivers
- Informational kiosks at rest areas
- Need guardrail and chain-up area at MP 14 – MP 15
- Need more shoulder area
- WSP can enforce roads better with more shoulders
- Replace bridge at Murray Rd. and increase sight distance (MP 3.33)
- Need slow vehicle turnout in Lindberg area
- Property acquisition at Westlake
- Four-way stop sign at SR 7 and SR 508 Intersection
- County forces to proceed with upgrades to Fairhart Way
- Add barrier in place of turn lane at SR 7 and Westlake
- Widen shoulders in ¼ mile sections no more than one mile apart (1/4 mile gives proper safe distance to maneuver)

**Next Meeting
Date**

The stakeholder committee set the next meeting for Thursday, September 29, at 6:00 pm at the Bob Lyle Community Center.