

# SR 164 Corridor Study

## Corridor Working Group Session

### Meeting Summary

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**Meeting date:** Thursday, June 15, 2006

**Location:** Auburn City Hall  
Council Chambers (25 West Main Street, Auburn, 98001)

**Attendees:** ***Partners in attendance:***  
City of Auburn: Dennis Dowdy, Laura Philpot  
City of Enumclaw: Chris Searcy  
Muckleshoot Tribe: Steve Taylor  
Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC): Mike Cummings  
WSDOT, Urban Planning Office: Seth Stark  
WSDOT, Northwest Region: Rick Roberts

***Partners not in attendance:***  
King County: Jennifer Lindwall

***Others in attendance:***  
City of Auburn: Councilmember Rich Wagner  
CSE: D. Brent Warwick, Dennis Swanson  
Transpo Group: Jon Pascal  
White River Amphitheater: Lance Miller  
WSDOT, Urban Planning Office: Richard Warren, Gary Westby  
WSDOT, Headquarters Design Office: Nancy Boyd  
Envirolssues: Kathlyn Kocher

**Welcome and Goals for the Day** Seth Stark, welcomed the partners and thanked them for taking the time to attend the Corridor Working Group (CWG) session. Seth also thanked Laura Philpot and Dennis Dowdy for hosting the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and shared the name of the organization or jurisdiction they were representing. Seth announced that Jennifer Lindwall has replaced Mark Melroy as the King County representative.

Seth reviewed the session agenda and distributed an updated packet of traffic analysis and benefit-to-cost materials at the meeting. The original packet had been emailed out on April 28, 2006. This updated version incorporated the CWG partners' comments. The agenda called for a review the goals for the day, the benefit cost analysis, traffic analysis and next steps.

Seth explained that after going through the materials, the study team would like to reach consensus today on the recommendations to move forward and finalize the Draft Route Development Plan.

**SR 164 Bypass  
Feasibility  
Study**

Seth reminded the CWG that funding has been secured for an SR 164 Bypass Feasibility Study. Given that the CWG had not previously been able to narrow down the options to less than four options, those four options would move forward to the SR 164 Bypass Feasibility Study. The new study would look at more detailed engineering analysis and refine cost estimates in an effort to further reduce the options considered, before moving into the environmental analysis and preliminary design.

Rich Wagner, City of Auburn, expressed concern about using the \$500,000 efficiently with four different bypass options. The group decided to spend the first half of the meeting narrowing the number of bypass options for the feasibility study.

The group deliberated on the four SR 164 to SR 18 Bypass options described below:

- Option #1 – R Street  
Bypass connecting SR 164 to SR 18 via R Street
- Option #2 – Riverwalk  
Bypass connecting SR 164 to SR 18 via Riverwalk Drive and R Street
- Option #3 – Noble Court to R Street  
Bypass connecting SR 164 to SR 18 via Noble Court and R Street
- Option #4 – Noble Court to Auburn-Black Diamond Road  
Bypass connecting SR 164 to SR 18 via Noble Court to SR 18 at Auburn-Black Diamond Road

*Discussion:*

- Steve Taylor, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, reminded the group that the Tribe recommended options three and four.
- Seth noted that there seems to be consensus from the group on removing options two and four from further consideration. Seth asked Steve what the reaction of the Tribe would be. Steve responded that the Tribe would find that reasonable if WSDOT had an in-depth explanation of why options two and four were removed.
- Seth reminded everyone that King County, although without a representative at the meeting, was still very much opposed to Option #4.
- Brent Warwick, CSE, noted that he thought the original purpose of the bypass was to have direct access to the casino, and any option that does not have a direct connection to the casino would be a waste of time. Brent wanted to note that the bypass should take into account the casino and provide direct access since it generates a lot of traffic.
- Steve replied that the other purpose was to bypass the White River Amphitheater traffic.
- Richard Warren, WSDOT, asked if the group had consensus on removing options two and four. The group expressed approval.

- Steve clarified that the group has decided to recommend options one and three to move forward for further study. The Route Development Plan will note that the SR 164 Feasibility Study will gather more information, perform preliminary design, and cost estimation on options one and three and specific routes for a bypass.
- Brent asked if there were other projects in the Auburn area that were part of the Route Development Plan. Seth replied that the City of Auburn has a project on M Street that would be noted in the final plan.
- Nancy asked about the distance between the SR 18/SR 164 interchange and the SR 18/Auburn-BlackDiamond Interchange. State regulations require at least a mile between interchanges on a limited access State highway. The distance is roughly two miles.
- Brent asked if option three plans to have an interchange at SR 164 or a "T" intersection. Seth explained that the modeling was done with a "T" intersection.
- Laura inquired about how involved the partners will be in the feasibility study. Seth replied that he will contact the partners to ask them about their expectations for the feasibility study and would seek their review of the draft scope of work.
- Rich Wagner noted that the last time they estimated the budget to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) it was very high. Rich wondered if the cost estimates would be less expensive now that the bypass options were narrowed down to two and if the plan would include a cost estimate for an EIS. Seth replied that he was unsure about the cost and did not see information about an EIS budget in other plans.
- Richard thanked the group for their great questions and help with narrowing down the options. The discussion shows why a feasibility study is necessary and the study will try to address the concerns from this group.

**Final  
Recommendations to Move  
Forward**

The group also felt comfortable making a decision on improvement options one and two. Seth asked the group to turn to Exhibit F (Page 29), Exhibit G (Page 34), and Exhibit N (Page 65) in their packets to review options one and two.

Improvement option one would make several corridor and intersection improvements. Improvement option two would encompass the same corridor and intersection improvements, but adds capacity by widening SR 164 to five lanes from Dogwood Street to Academy Drive SE.

*Discussion:*

- Seth reminded the group that the original goals of the group are to improve safety and ease traffic congestion.
- Laura Philpot, City of Auburn, pointed out that Exhibit N and F do not show center turn lanes between Dogwood Street and Academy and was worried that the modeling reflects what is shown in the diagrams.
- Jon Pascal, Transpo Group, reaffirmed that he modeled three lanes throughout the corridor. Seth added that they would fix the diagrams in Exhibit N and F to reflect the center turn lanes.

- Steve expressed the Tribe's concern with option two because WSDOT would need to expand the existing right-of-way, which is owned by families who may be reluctant to sell their land. The group would have to show the Bureau of Indian Affairs why the project would be in the best interest of the Tribe and the reservation. Seth estimated that the current right-of-way is 60 feet and another 36 feet would be needed.
- Steve noted that these are large plots of land with many owners.
- Rich Wagner asked if putting a sidewalk only on one side would make a difference. Seth explained that the sidewalks are recommended on both sides for to increase the safety of children when getting on and getting off of school buses.
- Seth noted that the modeling shows the traffic count in the eastbound PM peak being higher than the westbound AM peak.
- Laura asked to see specific cost estimates, since they were updated last year.
- Rich would like to see a more detailed explanation of the methodology for the benefit cost analysis.
- Seth summarized the discussion by noting that there doesn't seem to be a problem extending the five lanes from Dogwood Street to Poplar Street, but there may be some issues east of Poplar Street, within tribal lands, in obtaining the necessary right-of-way for widening the road up to Academy Drive SE.
- Nancy Boyd pointed out that WSDOT Design regulations would not permit a center turn lane given the traffic volumes and highway classification in the proposed 5 lane section. Nancy suggested wording to suggest that the improvement would include a center median with left turn pockets at appropriate sites along the segment. The application of access management tools would be called for in this area.
- Laura suggested that the group recommend widening SR 164 to five lanes as far east as possible up to Academy Drive SE, but with an understanding that this may or may not be feasible because of available right-of-way and impacts to tribal land. Chris Searcy, City of Enumclaw, also suggested that the plan leave room for different options by not specifying whether the lanes are through lanes or center turn lanes.
- The group agreed with Nancy, Laura, and Chris' recommendations and using the suggested language in the Route Development Plan.

**Reversible Lanes**

- Lance Miller asked what happened to the proposed use of reversible lanes as an improvement along the corridor up to the Amphitheater.
- Seth explained the project team looked at this issue, but WSDOT Design and Traffic offices do not approve of this as a tool on state highways. He explained that reversible lanes require a lot of traffic controls; they are very costly; confusing for drivers; and would require a number of personnel on-site to manage the process.
- Seth added that the bypass and shuttles to the amphitheater from park and rides would be more effective and can provide utility beyond amphitheatre events.

*Discussion:*

- Lance Miller, White River Amphitheater, noted that they are shuttling 15 to 25 percent of their visitors now.
- Nancy Boyd, WSDOT, explained that the team looked at the option of reversible lanes and weighed the trade offs between corridor access, traffic flow, and the infrastructure needed.
- Rich asked that an explanation of the reversible lanes be included in the final plan.

**Public Outreach  
Materials**

*Discussion:*

- Steve asked if WSDOT would provide the partners with materials explaining the recommendations when the partners lobby for funding for these projects. Richard replied that the team would be happy to give presentations to the various transportation councils. The group agreed that presentations would be helpful.
- Dennis said that it would be helpful to have a workshop to explain how the group arrived at their recommendations and a PowerPoint presentation that the partners could use as a tool to introduce the Route Development Plan.
- Seth replied that they would like to and will try to provide materials for the partners, but the budget for the Corridor Study is quite low. He said materials would possibly be incorporated into the work for the feasibility study.
- Chris would like the partners to have any materials in advance to go over it with their city staff and council before WSDOT gives a presentation.
- Richard asked the group what kind of information the materials should include and suggested materials that described the group's decision making process, what the recommendations are, and why they arrived at the final recommendations. The group liked those suggestions and agreed that an executive summary would be helpful.
- Steve expressed that the materials should help the reader understand the issues and draw the same conclusions.
- Mike Cummings added that when writing the final Route Development Plan, the team should put it in the context as a locally preferred option.
- Rich wants to keep the momentum on this project, since the feasibility study would not be completed until after the next legislative session.
- Mike offered the idea of creating a folio on the project, which will include a summary of the group's progress and next steps.
- The group noted that a folio would be helpful to have by September or October.

## Next Steps

### *Discussion:*

- Richard reviewed the action items from today's meeting.
  - o The group reached consensus on moving bypass options one and three forward, with full explanations of why options two and four were removed.
  - o The group also recommended adding capacity to the corridor by widening SR 164 to five lanes as far east as Academy Drive SE, but understand that this may or may not be feasible due to potential project impacts from expanding the right-of-way.
- Brent asked about the process to carry out these improvements and whether the recommendations on the list would be treated as one project or independent projects. Brent also asked about how the projects were prioritized for funding purposes.
- Seth responded that the projects are listed as short-term or long-term projects. Seth explained the Route Development Plan is a list of projects that are agreed upon by the local jurisdictions, but not tied to each other. There is a variety of ways to seek funding for the different projects individually or as packages.
- Brent expressed some concern that the bypass might be overlooked through this process.
- Seth explained that if a project has advocates, then it has the potential to move forward. The partners have done a tremendous job advocating for improvements on the corridor and there is enough community concern to make legislators notice the corridor.
- Seth explained the schedule to finalize the Route Development Plan. The team has been moving on a parallel track of writing the draft RDP as the CWG was considering the final recommendations. The plan will be available for review at the end of July. The funding to do further analysis ends in June. The partners will be able to download the draft RDP from WSDOT's ftp site and will have three weeks to make their final comments.
- Richard added that he does not anticipate the need for another meeting, unless the partner's believe it is necessary. The partners have agreed on the recommendations and Richard expects that further comments will be on the wording and format of the report.

### *Action Items:*

- The team will correct the diagram on Exhibit N
- The team will revise the benefit cost analysis to explain the methodology in more detail
- WSDOT will finalize the plan with the recommendations agreed upon by the partners:
- Seth will contact the partners to gather feedback on items to include in the scope of work for the bypass feasibility study
- WSDOT will send the draft Route Development Plan to the partners at the end of July for their last comments

- WSDOT will plan on presenting to various groups and providing outreach materials for the partners
- The final RDP should be published this fall.

## **Handouts**

- CWG Session Agenda
- Memorandum which includes:
  - Table of contents
  - Adjusted Benefit-to-Cost Analysis for the SR 164 Improvement Options
  - Summary of Traffic Analysis for the SR 164 Improvement Options
  - Proposed Recommended Improvements