

## Who do I contact to learn more about this project?

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# Alternative Fuels Corridor Project

From the Office of Public/Private Partnerships

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## What is an Alternative Fuels Corridor?

One of the greatest challenges preventing the market transition from petroleum based vehicles to cleaner/renewable energy sources is a lack of a reliable fuel supply network. An Alternative Fuels Corridor would serve as a distribution backbone for alternative fuel retail sales along the Interstate 5 Corridor. The Corridor would consist of a series of evenly spaced alternative fuel distribution sites conveniently located for the traveling public to meet the emerging need for such fuels.

## Why is WSDOT working on this project?

In Washington, motor vehicles produce more than half of all air pollutants, and contribute nearly half of the greenhouse gas emissions in the state. As owners and operators of the state transportation system, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is committed to strategies that can help mitigate these adverse environmental impacts.

To help incubate the acceptance of alternative fuels and stimulate private infrastructure investment, WSDOT is exploring opportunities for partnerships with the private sector and other public agencies to establish and promote alternative refueling facilities along the major interstate highways in Washington, but particularly along Interstate 5.



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## How will WSDOT know where to locate alternative fueling stations?

The 2007 Legislature directed WSDOT, through its Public/Private Partnerships Office to analyze the feasibility of distributing alternative fuels along state Department of Transportation rights-of-way. The Alternative Fuels Corridor Economic Feasibility Analysis fulfills this Legislative mandate.

The primary goal of the analysis is to explore and suggest one or more strategies for creating effective public/private partnerships for the retail distribution of alternative fuels and other new propulsion technologies. *It is WSDOT's intent to partner with private operators to fill the void in the current availability of alternative fuels along the I-5 corridor.* Therefore, the analysis will consider the station spacing necessary to provide alternatively fueled vehicles sufficient fueling opportunities to travel the length of the I-5 corridor. Additionally, the analysis will take into account the current retail locations of alternative fuels so as to not directly compete with existing sales of the fuel.

## When will WSDOT have the results of the study?

The study is scheduled to be completed by December 2008.

## What kinds of fuels will be offered?

The study is examining which alternative fuels are economically viable, but it is WSDOT's intent to focus offerings on cutting-edge technologies and fuel sources not commonly found in the marketplace. The fuels offered at any one location will depend in large part on the private/public partners, but could include: high-blend contents of biodiesel and ethanol; hydrogen fuel cell technologies, fast-charge electric/emerging battery technologies, and various forms of compressed and liquefied gasses.

## What will this cost the taxpayers?

The purpose of the study is to examine what non-monetary contributions (such as land) the state may provide to a private partner to incent the development of an alternative fuels corridor. Currently, no funds have been appropriated for the deployment of alternative fueling stations along I-5. A primary goal of the project is to build the alternative fuel distribution network at no cost to the taxpayers.

## Does WSDOT intend to compete with existing fuel & retail businesses?

*It is not the state's intention to become the operator of alternative fuel stations*

The study's main goal is to determine whether government can help incubate infrastructure investment in emerging alternative fuel technologies, where none (or little) exists, by providing assistance in a partnership type format. It may be that the study finds biodiesel, ethanol, or other types of alternative fuels do not need any assistance from the state.

In that vein, while the study is examining all alternative fuels, it is likely that the state will be looking at emerging technologies not currently sold at existing fuel stations. Such technologies may include fast-charge electric units, hydrogen, solar and other next-generation fuel sources that may not be ready for deployment at this time. WSDOT is conducting this study to better understand where future public investments make the most sense.

## Will this allow other commercial development at safety rest areas?

The states are requesting a narrow exception to the prohibition of commercial activity at safety rest areas, and other locations along the state owned right of way. It is WSDOT's intent to restrict commercial activity to only that necessary to make the sale of alternative fuels economically feasible.



## Is Washington working with any other states or countries on this project?

### Corridors of the Future: Tri-State Alt Fuels Initiative

Both Oregon and California have joined with Washington to promote Alternative Fuels.

In September of 2007, USDOT announced that I-5 had been designated as a Corridor of the Future. The purpose of the Corridors of the Future Program is to develop innovative national and regional approaches to reduce congestion and improve the efficiency of freight delivery. Part of the application submitted by Washington, Oregon and California included the development of alternative fuels distribution along the corridor as a possible interstate initiative for a future focused, sustainable transportation corridor.

In furtherance of this interstate initiative, Washington, Oregon and California signed a tri-state Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in September, 2008. The three states have agreed to work together to foster the use of alternative fuel vehicles by developing

the distribution network for alternative fuels throughout the I-5 Corridor. The MOU lays out common goals, a work plan and activities designed to further the development of this alternative fuels corridor.

The three states filed a joint SEP-15 application to the Federal Highway Administration on October 6, 2008. SEP-15, or Special Experimental Project

Number 15, is a new experimental process for FHWA to identify, for trial evaluation, new public/private partnership approaches to projects.

### International Agreements/Efforts

Washington and British Columbia signed an MOU in June, 2008. The State and Province have agreed to work together to develop a strong and viable alternative fuels network that will benefit both the environment and the economies of the State and Province, supporting projects or programs within their respective jurisdictions that advance the goal of the Highway 99/I-5 Corridor as an alternative fuels corridor.

## What are the next steps?

The states are awaiting FHWA approval of the joint SEP-15 application. If the application is approved, the states may issue a Request for Information in the spring to identify interested private partners (fuel providers, developers, solar power providers, and other partners).

The WSDOT Office of Public/Private Partnerships will report the findings of the Alternative Fuels Corridor Economic Feasibility Analysis to the Legislature during the 2009 session.



Solar powered hydrogen fueling station in Sacramento, California. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Municipal Utility District.



A hybrid-electric car charging at a station in Portland, Oregon. Photo courtesy of Portland General Electric.