

SR 169 Corridor Study

Corridor Working Group Session

Meeting Summary

Meeting date: August 31, 2005

Location: Renton City Hall – Renton (1055 S. Grady Way, Renton, WA 98055)

Attendees: ***Partners in attendance:***
Nick Afzali – City of Renton
Dave Zielinski – City of Maple Valley
Chris Searcy – City of Enumclaw
Ann Martin – King County
Mike Cummings – Puget Sound Regional Council
Seth Stark – WSDOT, Urban Planning Office
Ron Paananen – WSDOT, Northwest Region

Partners not in attendance:
Jason Paulsen – City of Black Diamond

Others in attendance:
Joan Burlingame – Friends of Rock Creek Valley, Backcountry Horsemen
Chris Picard, Nancy Boyd, Rick Roberts – WSDOT
Pamela Arora, Cathy Higley – Parsons
Kristine dos Remedios – EnviroIssues

Welcome and Goals for the Day Seth Stark, WSDOT, welcomed the partners and thanked them for taking the time to attend the Corridor Working Group (CWG) session. Seth also thanked Nick Afzali for hosting the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and shared the name of the organization or jurisdiction they were representing.

Seth reviewed the session agenda. An email was sent to the partners the week prior that provided information from the CWG session on August 10, 2005 and information for today's meeting. The group will review the previous meeting summary, review the evaluation criteria that was finalized in February 2005, discuss the initial screening analysis results and talk about how the projects have been packaged for the second round of analysis. The final dates, sites, and times for the open houses have also been set and are provided on the meeting's agenda.

Previous Meeting Summary At the CWG meeting on August 10, 2005, the project list was reviewed in preparation for the initial screening. WSDOT received comments from a number of the partners and the team has incorporated those into the updated project list. A PowerPoint presentation was given at the last meeting on existing traffic and safety conditions and potential improvements. There was some confusion on the traffic volume data that was displayed in this presentation, which has since been reviewed and corrected. An updated version of the presentation is available on WSDOT's FTP site sent to the partners.

Dave Zielinski, City of Maple Valley, noted that the presentation shows that it takes 4-5 minutes to travel through Maple Valley. This information may be misleading because many of the intersections in Maple Valley are operating at a level of service

D, increasing the travel time through Maple Valley. Cathy Higley, Parsons, said that she would check with Jon Pascal at Transpo, who did the analysis and provided these numbers, to see if the 4-5 minute travel time number was generated from observed or calculated conditions.

**Review
Evaluation
Criteria**

Seth directed partners to the first document in a stack of documents that were placed before them. The first document was a copy of the evaluation criteria that was finalized by the group in February 2005. The criteria were divided into 44 metrics. Cathy Higley, Parsons, explained that of the 44 metrics, 20 measure the benefits or the extent to which a project satisfies the goals and objectives of the study. The remaining 24 metrics focus on the potential costs, either financially or in terms of impacts due to the project.

Seth pointed out that, in the evaluation criteria document, an asterisk marks the four criteria that were used during the initial screening or fatal flaw analysis. The four criteria include safety, natural environment, historical, architectural and cultural resources, and cost.

Joan Burlingame, Friends of Rock Creek Valley/Backcountry Horsemen, said that she believed non-motorized transportation impacts should have been considered in the initial screening. Seth responded, that the initial screening was simply a fatal flaw screening. Other factors, like non-motorized transportation, would be considered in the detailed screening that will follow.

Ann Martin, King County, asked if design standards consider non-motorized modes of transportation. Seth said it is expected that WSDOT's design standards include safety measures for all road users, including bicyclists. Nancy Boyd, WSDOT, agreed with this statement.

Chris Searcy, City of Enumclaw, noted that the corridor should be designed to provide a safe space for bikes, and other non-motorized users of the road, in the shoulder. This is important even if the RDP calls for designing a formal trail as an alternative route along SR 169.

**Initial
Screening
Analysis**

Cathy explained the initial screening analysis work that had been completed to date. The team did a first cut of the projects based on the evaluation criteria identified as the fatal flaw criteria, including safety, historical, architectural and cultural resources, natural environment and project cost.

In regard to project cost, the team is not in a position to know the exact cost of each project. Based on the team's engineering experience, each project was labeled as a high, medium or low cost project. High cost projects were projects expected to cost more than \$3 million. Medium cost projects were projects expected to cost between \$1-3 million. Low cost projects were projects expected to cost less than \$1 million. Cathy explained that a higher level of analysis is needed to compare the costs and benefits.

For the other criteria, a negative (-), positive (+) or neutral (0) score was assigned to each metric. If a project received a neutral score, this does not mean that the project has no impact or no benefit. This score may indicate that more information is needed to make this determination. For example, information is still being gathered from the Muckleshoot Tribe on their cultural resource areas, since their usual and accustomed areas encompass the SR 169 corridor. Additionally, you may not know if your project is in a culturally sensitive area until excavation begins.

Cathy explained that three separate team members scored each project for every

metric in the initial screening. When scores were not in agreement, the team discussed the discrepancy and made a final decision on the rating, always leaning on the conservative side.

Cathy explained that the team did not recommend removing any projects from the list at this point. A more detailed analysis is required to make this determination.

Seth then directed everyone to the next document, a schematic map of the corridor by segment illustrating the location of each project. Seth also mentioned the environmental inventory map that was created based on the existing conditions report from Herrera Environmental Consultants, the environmental consultant for SR 169. This map was used to do the initial environmental screening. Seth asked the partners to review the maps and let the team know if something looks inaccurate, based on their local knowledge of the area.

Ann Martin asked if the areas designated as coal mine areas included the gravel excavation sites. This may be an important environmental feature to note, since this industry will likely continue or grow if the resource is still available along the corridor.

Joan Burlingame noted that project 74, which calls for widening the SR 169 over the Cedar River, would be difficult to implement. There are historic buildings, or at least perceived historic buildings, on each side of the roadway at this location.

Nick Afzali, City of Renton, noted that environmental justice issues would need to be considered for many widening projects along SR 169 in Renton.

Chris Picard, WSDOT, said it may be helpful to note what projects on the SR 169 project list are also included in the I-405 program, particularly projects that have already gone through an environmental review process or were identified as a preferred project in an Environmental Impact Statement.

Dave Zielinski asked whether the signal at 149th in Renton would be removed, due to the recent completion of the new bridge and new signal. Ron Paananen, WSDOT, said he believed the signal would stay, even though the new bridge was complete.

Seth asked for any additional comments on the analysis by September 12, 2005.

Project Packaging

Cathy explained that the Improvement Packages and Potential Transportation Project handout shows where the team is right now. In order to review the projects in a logical way, they were separated into the short-term or long-term packages of improvements for the SR 169 corridor. The short-term packages address existing deficiencies along SR 169, particularly identified bottlenecks and high accident corridors (HACs) and high accident locations (HALs). The long-term projects address forecasted deficiencies along SR 169 within the next 25-30 years, or projects with a scope that is so large that it will likely not be implemented within the next 6 to 10 years. The projects will then move through the detailed screening and be reviewed to make sure projects do not compete with each other or address the same safety or congestion issues.

Based on this analysis, projects will then be sorted into three categories:

- Projects which impacts, or costs, considerably out number the project benefits and are recommended for removal,
- Projects which impacts, or costs, are considerably lower than the project benefits and are recommended for inclusion in the final RDP, and

- Projects which need further detailed analysis where the project benefits may be very high, but project costs create a statistical anomaly and require further discussion.

If a project is balanced in terms of its costs and benefits, the project team will discuss this with the partners at the next CWG meeting in order to decide if the project should be included in the final RDP.

The project team then solicited comments from the partners on how the projects were separated into the two packages:

- Dave Zielinski commented that project 43 should be changed to a short-term project. If the gas tax is not repealed, this project will go to bid in April as a safety project to address a HAC.
- Dave also noted that project 73 should be divided into a short-term and a long-term project. Maple Valley is already working on funding for the trail down to 291st. This is also a part of the Four Corners project. Once that crossing is in place, the trail will then continue to 276th.
- Chris Searcy asked if the RDP document will include a description of how each project benefits the SR 169 corridor as a whole. Cathy said that the RDP would include such descriptions.
- Joan noted that there are main access points for boaters on the cedar river. Improvements should be made that are sensitive to these points. Chris Searcy also noted that during the summer months there is a parking problem near the access points to the river along SR 169. Motorists park on the side of SR 169, which can be very dangerous for motorists and pedestrians walking along the road to and from their cars.

Seth asked for any additional comments on the project packages by September 12, 2005.

New Open House Sites and Times

Seth noted that the final SR 169 open house dates and times are now set. All of the open houses were changed to 6:00pm – 8:00 pm, to make the event times consistent. The SR 167 and HOT lanes projects will also provide information at the Renton open house. The partners will again be expected to attend to support the project team and to be present to answer the public's questions. The final SR 169 open house times are as follows:

- Enumclaw - Thunder Mountain Middle School (October 11th, 6-8pm)
- Renton – Renton Community Center (October 13th, 6-8pm)

Next Steps

Action Items:

- Seth Stark is still in the process of contacting some of the partners about getting on schedules for the next round of City Council updates.
- Return to the CWG meeting in September with a graphic representation of projects that survive the detailed screening.
- Perform detailed screening and recommend projects for removal from, or inclusion in, the RDP and projects that need further discussion
- Joan Burlingame recommended that Seth meet with the Cedar River Council (contact: Nathan Brown) and the Greater Maple Valley Area Council (contact: Dick Bonewitz) before the next round of open houses.

Upcoming

- CWG Meeting: September 28, 2005 from 1:00pm – 4:00pm

Meetings

(Enumclaw – Green River Community College, Room 15)

- SR 169 open houses:
 - Enumclaw - Thunder Mountain Middle School (October 11th, 6-8pm)
 - Renton – Renton Community Center (October 13th, 6-8pm)

Handouts

- CWG Session Agenda
- SR 169 Project Location Maps by Segment
- SR 169 Existing Conditions Maps
- SR 169 Evaluation Criteria Technical Memorandum
- SR 169 Initial Screening of Short-term and Long-term Potential Transportation Projects
- SR 169 Corridor Improvement Packages and Potential Transportation Projects