Corridor Working Group Meeting – Meeting Summary

February 20, 2006
1:30 – 3:00 p.m.
WSDOT Kent Maintenance Center
26620 68th Avenue So, Kent

Attendees:

WSDOT
Ed Barry
Carol Hunter
Craig Stone
Mike Sallis

City of Algona
Thomas Reber

City of Auburn
Roger Thordarson

City of Kent
Steve Mullen

City of Pacific
Jay Bennett
John Welch

City of Renton
Keith Woolley

City of Sumner
Bill Shoemaker

King County
Paul Takamine

Pierce County
Cindy Bui

EnviroIssues
Amy Turner
Lynn Lefkoff

Perteet
Michael Booth
Jeff Lundstrom

Puget Sound Regional Council
Mike Cummings

I. Welcome and Introductions - Carol Hunter, WSDOT

Carol Hunter, WSDOT, welcomed the group and thanked them for coming. Attendees introduced themselves and the agency or organization they represent.

Carol suggested that partners take copies of the WSDOT-produced video, Rachel's Drive, to explain the High Occupancy Toll Lanes Pilot Project. The video is in draft form and WSDOT would appreciate any comments or feedback. She also encouraged everyone to consider using the video for public presentations, on local cable channels, in libraries and for other public outreach efforts.

Handouts provided:

- January 2007 meeting minutes and February 2007 agenda
- Stormwater Facilities Affects on Adjacent Property Owners
- Overview of SR 167 PowerPoint Presentation
- RTID Blueprint for Progress: Carol provided the revised blueprint for progress adopted by the Regional Transportation Investment District Board in January 2007. She mentioned that RTID is hosting five open houses with Sound Transit and soliciting feedback before approving the final package that will go to voters in November 2007.

II. Approve January 2007 Meeting Summary – Carol Hunter, WSDOT

Copies of the January 2007 meeting summary were e-mailed to the partners before the meeting and a hard copy was provided at the meeting. Carol approved the summary without additional comment.

III. Overview of SR 167 Corridor – Carol Hunter, WSDOT

Carol Hunter and Michael Booth presented the last year's efforts to study and develop the SR 167 Corridor Plan. The Corridor Working Group (CWG) was asked to endorse a plan that will be provided to WSDOT management. Carol also asked the partners to write a letter to David Dye at the Urban Corridors Office with thoughts and recommendations about the Corridor Plan within the next two to three weeks.

There are currently many projects being planned, designed or built on SR 167. The SR 167 Corridor Plan considered from South 180th Street in Renton to SR 161 in Puyallup, though the traffic modeling does include the SR 167 Extension. The goals of the SR 167 Corridor Plan project include:

- Support a vigorous state and regional economy
- Provide efficient, integrated, and multimodal transportation system
- Promote regional environmental values
- Anticipate and plan for regional growth
- Support livable communities along the corridor

The number of residents along the corridor is expected to increase by 115,000 by 2030. Regionally, another 1 million people will live here by 2030. Currently drivers experience six hours of stop-and-go traffic on the corridor and that will likely get worse, even with planned improvements, because of the tremendous growth.

SR 167 is also a major freight corridor with 12,100 trucks or 10% of the total volume every weekday. The Port of Tacoma is projecting major growth in truck traffic and containers by 2030 which will likely affect traffic.

IV. Findings of Traffic and Environmental – Michael Booth, Perteet

Four corridor options were studied with the ultimate configurations listed below.

- Option 2 – Eight Lanes: Three general purpose lanes with an HOV/HOT lane in each direction. (one new lane in each direction)
- Option 2a – Eight Lanes: Two HOV/HOT lanes and two general purpose lanes in both directions. (one new lane in each direction)
- Option 4 – Ten Lanes: Three general purpose and two HOV/HOT lanes in each direction. (two new lanes in each direction)
- Option 4a – Ten Lanes/Eight Lanes: Ten lanes north of SR 18 with three general purpose and two HOV/HOT lanes in both directions. Eight lanes south of SR 18 with two general purpose lanes and two HOV/HOT lanes. (two new lanes in each direction)

Traffic modeling and research found that HOV/HOT lanes provide more benefits to the corridor because the flow of traffic can be managed. Also, HOV/HOT lanes provide more predictable travel times which help transit as well. Even with additional general purpose lanes, the model indicates significant delays because new capacity fills up with traffic as vehicles move off local arterials, travelers shift travel times into the peak and population growth. By 2030, the travel times in the HOT lanes remain the same as today, but the travel times in the general purpose lanes more than double by 2030. WSDOT staff will recommend Option 2a as the most feasible alternative in the Corridor Plan given financial constraints.

Additionally, as part of the study, enhanced transit options were reviewed. With an unconstrained view, enhanced regional transit options from Sound Transit could create benefits for the corridor.

There will be environmental impacts no matter which option is selected. The corridor is largely flat and wet and WSDOT will have significant stormwater and wetland mitigation requirements for any projects. WSDOT is analyzing 64 pieces of 31 bridges to determine if the soil can support widening SR 167. Widening may also trigger retrofitting or replacing bridges which may be cost-prohibitive. WSDOT is assuming that with a 75-foot cross section, one additional lane could fit within the existing bridge structures, with some modifications.

The cost for one additional lane in each direction (options 2 and 2a) is between $1.5 and $2.2 billion. The cost for two additional lanes in each direction (options 4 and 4a) is between $3.6 and $5.5 billion.

The Corridor Plan for 2030 would propose that one additional lane be added in each direction for the Puget Sound Regional Council's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The addition of two lanes in each direction would be more appropriate for the longer-term illustrative list contained in the MTP. This would help local jurisdictions preserve right of way and express to the region that comprehensive plans need to preserve the plan and vision for the corridor. Implementation of this plan will require a concerted effort from cities, counties, Sound Transit and the state.

Discussion

- Representatives from the City of Pacific expressed concern that adding one additional lane wouldn't help ease congestion.
- Bill Shoemaker, City of Sumner, suggested needing additional Sounder routes that run in both directions regularly.
- Many partners expressed that no matter what improvements are made to the corridor, the travel times don't improve significantly. The partners also recognized that other solutions need to be discussed such as transit improvements or land use planning.
- John Welch, City of Pacific, asked what will be planned to help freight mobility. Michael Booth explained that on-ramps will be longer so trucks can get up to speed and interchange improvements may also help freight. The threshold for a truck only toll lane wasn't met on SR 167, but that has been studied and may be an option in the future. Carol also mentioned that cities are seeing a lot of trucks on local arterials because many warehouses and storage areas are located on local arterials and trucks try to avoid SR 167.
- Steve Mullen, City of Kent, asked how transit investments and getting people to use transit will happen. Carol will include recommendations to add transit options in the Corridor Plan.
- Roger Thordarson, City of Auburn, wanted to be clear that the public message for the Corridor Plan shouldn't be that we are solving traffic problems. Keith Woolley, City of Renton, mentioned that the public wants to see that agencies are doing something instead of doing nothing.
- Paul Takamine, King County, told the group that the SR 167 Corridor Plan is a step in the right direction. For years there weren't any basic assumptions about the corridor and now there will be a plan for jurisdictions to use.

- Mike Cummings, Puget Sound Regional Council, asked if Sound Transit and King County Metro would endorse the plan. Carol agreed that after the plan is developed, WSDOT will work to have the agencies endorse it.

V. Final Review Schedule and Process

In March, the CWG meeting will focus on building consensus around the Corridor Plan as well as reviewing the final summary and tech memos. Additionally, the group will discuss the future of the CWG.

Next steps: The PowerPoint presentation will be updated and then shared with the partners who can use it with city or county councils and other staff. Carol volunteered to provide local presentations as well and will also send the partners a letter soliciting feedback and endorsement of the SR 167 Corridor Plan.

Adjourn

Next Meeting: 3/20/07
WSDOT Kent Maintenance Facility
26620 68th Avenue South, Kent 98032