

CHAPTER 1

The Purpose of Corridor Planning

Corridor plans are a tool for addressing the long-range vision of how a highway should look and function in the future. A corridor plan takes a 20 plus year look into the future at highway and travel conditions. It involves collecting and analyzing facts and data about the study area and the communities that are served by the route. Information considered and analyzed during the study includes such things as operating conditions, environmental concerns, population and land use, right of way and other elements that affect the highway's development. It is important to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and its funding partners, such as the federal government, to know that any projects that are built as a result of the corridor planning effort will function well into the future to serve the increasing demands on our transportation system.

To ensure that the study recommendations are consistent with the vision and needs of local jurisdictions and communities located along the route, the corridor plan includes a public participation process. This process seeks public involvement on two levels; the creation of a corridor working group, and the hosting of meetings specifically designed to engage public participation.

The corridor working group committee's role is to inform WSDOT of community interests and concerns, create a vision for the route, determine decision criteria, and endorse route recommendations. During the public meeting process, community members can share their thoughts and ideas on the information presented.

The end result of a corridor plan effort is the corridor plan document. The document examines existing and forecasted deficiencies within the study area and proposes appropriate solutions.

1.1 How to Use this Corridor Plan

A corridor plan serves as a comprehensive plan for a state route(s). For WSDOT, the corridor plan provides detailed information for use in the Highway System Plan. It can also be used by transportation stakeholders such as local agencies, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) and others in their own planning process. The information provided in the corridor plan can be used to ensure that the local projects and programs are consistent with, and complementary to, the efforts of WSDOT within their jurisdictions.

The SR 19/SR 20 Corridor Plan is organized into five chapters:

- *Chapter One* is an introduction to the corridor plan and document, and includes a discussion about how the study findings are used by WSDOT and others.
- *Chapter Two* provides information about the existing highway facility and the surrounding area. This chapter includes information about the route, including the functional characteristics and the existing and forecasted traffic operations.
- *Chapter Three* is a review of the process used to determine the route deficiencies and recommended solutions. This chapter includes a description of the stakeholder and public processes.
- *Chapter Four* provides a focused discussion about the alternatives considered for the SR 19/SR 20 corridor/routes and specific study recommendations for future development.
- *Chapter Five* provides a discussion on plan implementation.

1.1.1 WSDOT Highway System Plan

The SR 19/SR 20 Corridor Plan advances and refines the vision and strategies contained in the WSDOT Highway System Plan (HSP) by providing a more in-depth analysis of current and future deficiencies along the corridor/routes. The HSP provides service objectives and strategies for maintaining, operating, preserving and improving state highways. It is the fundamental vehicle for prioritizing and funding highway improvements statewide, serving as the basis for the two-year state transportation budget, as well as the ten-year Capital Improvement and Preservation Program.

The funding process at WSDOT includes four major programs: Maintenance, Operations, Preservation, and Improvement. Corridor plans focus heavily on solutions associated with the Improvement program. This category of funding includes projects that contribute to congestion relief, as well as those that enhance traffic safety. Operational, Maintenance and Preservation solutions are not discussed in detail. These programs are prioritized by WSDOT using a different process, as they do not require the kind of public consensus used in developing corridor plans.

1.1.2 WSDOT Improvement Subprograms

The Improvement funding program at WSDOT has five subprograms: Highway Mobility, Highway Safety, Environmental Retrofit, Economic Initiatives, and Public/Private Partnerships. Projects requiring funding within the programs are identified and included in the HSP.

Mobility Subprogram

The Mobility Subprogram of the Highway System Improvement Program is intended to relieve congestion and improve operational efficiency. The focus is on moving people and improving intermodal connections. Typical strategies include access management, adding general purpose or high-occupancy vehicle lanes, and providing bicycle facilities and park and ride lots. Another series of operational strategies found in this subprogram seeks to optimize the existing facility capacity by influencing the patterns of usage on a route. Typical operational strategies include ramp metering (limited access highways), timely traveler information, incident response and signal synchronization.

Highway Safety Subprogram

The Highway Safety Subprogram is intended to increase highway safety. Every two years, the Collision Analysis Locations (CAL) and Collision Analysis Corridors (CAC) in each WSDOT region are addressed with the funds available for that purpose. Because of the primary role of this programming effort, the safety recommendations described in corridor plans are limited to more minor situations. The focus is on solutions that can be funded using operational dollars. Projects identified and funded through the Safety Subprogram may be discussed during the course of a study, but are not included in the corridor plan recommendations.

There is also an Intersection Analysis Location List (IALL). This list ranks intersections statewide using average societal cost per each target intersection, depending on the type of collision for the last five years. There is only one IALL location in the study area. The IALL location is at the intersection of State Route (SR) 104 and SR 19 (Beaver Valley Road).

Economic Initiatives Subprogram

The Economic Initiatives Subprogram targets those improvements to state highways that contribute specifically to economic development. Objectives include creation and retention of jobs, especially in rural areas. Tourism is of particular interest in this subprogram, where typical projects include safety rest areas and traveler support services.

Environmental Retrofit Subprogram

The Environmental Retrofit Subprogram addresses situations where existing conditions on a route do not meet current environmental requirements for highways. Typical projects address stormwater treatment, fish passage, noise reduction and air quality.

Deficiencies identified in the Economic Initiatives and Environmental Retrofit Subprograms are typically identified, prioritized and addressed by their own program managers. Therefore, these issues are not a major consideration of the Corridor Plan.