



**Corridor Program**

Congestion Relief & Bus Rapid Transit Projects

# **Appendix Y2**

## **Construction Communications Public Information Plan**

**Washington State Department of Transportation**

### **I-405/NE 6th St. to I-5 Widening and Express Toll Lanes Project**

**Request for Proposal**

July 25, 2011



**Washington State  
Department of Transportation**





600-108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Suite 405  
Bellevue, WA 98004

## **Draft - Bellevue to Lynnwood Project**

### **Construction Communications Public Information Plan Addendum to the I-405 Communications Plan**

Submitted to:  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
I-405 Congestion Relief & Bus Rapid Transit Projects

Prepared by:  
I-405 Bellevue to Lynnwood Public Information Team

**July 22, 2011**



## **Table of Contents**

---

<b>Key benefits .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Communication objectives .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Project goals .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Public relations risks and opportunities .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Communication strategies .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Key dates and milestones.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Key messages.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Target audiences.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Communication tools (tactics).....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Communication tactics checklist.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Other requirements specific to RFP .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Team members and affiliations.....</b>	<b>12</b>



# Bellevue to Lynnwood Project

## Construction Public Involvement Plan

---

WSDOT and its contractor will widen I-405 between SR 520 in Bellevue and SR 522 in Lynnwood. The new lane paired with the existing HOV lane will create a two lane express toll lane system from NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street in Bellevue to SR 522 in Bothell. The existing HOV lane from SR 522 to I-5 in Lynnwood will be converted to a one-lane express toll lane. WSDOT and its contractor will also build a grade-separated ramp system for the NE 160<sup>th</sup> Street on-connection to northbound I-405 from SR 522 and the northbound I-405 off-connection to SR 522. This system will eliminate the existing weave between the northbound off connection to SR 522 and the on-connection from NE 160<sup>th</sup> Street.

### Key benefits

- **Safety.** Improves safety by reducing congestion related collisions.
- **Congestion relief:** We will move more people and vehicles with the express toll lane system than adding a new general purpose lane.
- **Reliable choice:** In addition to improving transit speed and reliability, express toll lanes provide drivers a choice for a more reliable trip.
- **Revenue generation:** Express toll lanes provides revenue for future corridor improvements, funded by those who use the lanes directly.
- **Environment.** WSDOT's I-405 Corridor Program team is designing the project to avoid and minimize impacts to the environment. Several new noise walls are built with this project.

### Communication objectives

#### Support successful project delivery and inform the public about the project

- Provide information to individuals and entities directly affected by construction in as proactive, responsive and complete a manner as possible.
- Educate the public about express toll lanes
- Educate the public about environmental benefits and improvements associated with the project.

#### Provide information to set the project in context

- Provide information about the number of jobs created or saved by the project, and its benefit to stimulating the local economy



- Educate the public about the need, vision and context for the project, as determined by community processes.
- Reinforce positive WSDOT relationships with partner agencies, individuals, and groups.
- Increase understanding of the vital importance of the project to the mobility and economic vitality of the region, and the project's relevance to Washington State's transportation system.

## Project goals

- **Collaboration** – Collaborate and coordinate with the statewide Toll Vendor to facilitate construction of a successful Toll Collection System. Including close coordination with WSDOT project communications staff and WSDOT Toll Division communications staff.
- **Smooth Roll Out with Congestion Relief** – Balance providing congestion relief as early as possible with a smooth roll out of the Toll Collection System. Negative traffic impacts during roll out must be minimized.
- **Smooth Start-up and Close-out** – Implement a well-planned start-up that ensures efficient delivery of the Project, superior environmental performance, and excellent quality. Carry out a well thought out close out plan with strategies to ensure on-going tolling support.
- **Minimal Impacts** – Minimize impacts to the public, adjacent properties, adjacent projects, local agencies, the environment, and the I-405 Forward Compatibility Plans.

## Public relations risks and opportunities

These issues must be monitored, potential communication responses should be prepared, and issue-based communications plans developed on an as-needed basis. Many risks can and should be turned into opportunities.

- **Toll system roll-out.** Delays or problems with tolling statewide (vendor glitches, etc) may cause a skeptical public and media. An opportunity exists to be prepared and have a glitch-free roll out of express toll lanes.
- **Weather.** Inclement weather could delay the project or milestones
- **Relocation/existence of utilities.** Delays may be caused with utility relocation or challenges. The risk of utility delays is heightened because the tolling equipment relies on utilities.
- **Environmental** - Tree and shrub clearing and grubbing is a visual certainty. Early and thorough communication about the clearing is necessary. An opportunity exists to inform the public about replanting the area with native plants and to educate the public about better drainage systems, etc.
- **Traffic backups on freeway, ramps and arterials.** During the course of construction, the public will be delayed during closures. (weekend, night time or other times).



- **Negative public perception/stakeholder dissatisfaction.**
- **City of Bellevue, Kirkland, and Bothell Concerns.** The cities have a stake in maintaining emergency/hospital services.

## Communication strategies

**Consistent “Branding.”** The PI Team will maintain a consistent project name for all external communications (NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street to I-5 Widening and Express Toll Lanes Project or *Bellevue to Lynnwood Express Toll Lanes Project*).

**“No Surprises” Approach.** The project team will communicate early and often with the public and identified stakeholders about planned construction activities and forecasted impacts to traffic, as well as “coping” methods to keep the public moving during construction. The team will provide information about the need, the benefits and innovations of the project through key messages.

**Maximize media exposure.** One of the most cost-effective ways to inform the public is through social and traditional media. Project communications should maximize media relations, including use of media releases, media tours and other appropriate events. Media relations (social and traditional) will be managed by WSDOT with input from the contractor.

**Utilize electronic communication tools.** Post information on WSDOT websites, include major traffic impact information in I-405 List Serve, send emails about I-405 closures, use social media as appropriate.

**Maximize use of partner agency communication tools and reinforce partnerships.** WSDOT and city agencies within the project limits have numerous communication tools available for use to publicize the project (see Communication Tactics section). The contractor, WSDOT and the city are all working together for the success of the project and the public benefit, including joint participation on multiple task forces, including Community Involvement..

**Progress reporting.** Consider ways to showcase the percent complete or milestones as the project progresses, and graphical ways to show progress (bar charts for milestones, etc.)





## Target audiences

- General public
- Businesses along project limits
- Bellevue, Bothell, and Kirkland residents and businesses
- Neighborhoods surrounding the project.
- Media
- Bus riders and other HOV lane users
- Metro and Sound Transit agencies
- Freight companies
- Schools
- Emergency services
- Low-income, senior and minority populations that might be impacted by the project
- City of Bellevue, City of Kirkland, City of Bothell, other local governments as appropriate
- Bicyclists

## Communication tools (tactics)

Contractor to draft plans and/or information for:

- Construction kick-off open house
- Other open houses (one per year)
- Emergency Management Plan
- Project identification signage
- Newsletters
- Articles for business and other organizations' publications (Chambers, Bellevue Downtown Association, etc.)
- Speakers' bureau (at least 10 presentations/year, including summer "booth time.")
- Email alerts
- Media releases
- Construction notices/updates
- Project website updates
- Variable message signs
- Photos and video as requested



WSDOT to lead:

- Toll System Communications
- Groundbreaking and ribbon cutting events
- Advisory committee outreach
- Executive and steering committee coordination
- Agency briefings
- Construction hotline
- Citizen correspondence for I-405 corridor
- Communications for corridor-wide programs
- Traditional and social media
- Manage I-405 corridor website
- Contacting elected officials
- I-405 Attitude and Awareness surveys
- I-405 Corridor Program Communications Plan
- WSDOT hosted events, for example, groundbreaking events
- Highway Advisory Radio (HAR)

Other, TBD lead

- Project and issue fact sheets
- Collateral materials as needed
- Correspondence and e-mail

City Agency tools

- *It's Your City, Currently Kirkland, Bothell Bridge* newsletters
- Downtown Bellevue projects insert
- Neighborhood e-mail lists
- City and county Websites
- City Projects open houses
- Bellevue, Kirkland, Bothell TV
- City Council meetings
- Transportation Commission

Other organizations' tools to tap into as appropriate

- Neighborhood association meetings
- Bellevue Downtown Association e-mail and website
- Bellevue, Bothell, and Kirkland Chamber of Commerce
- Events sponsored by other organizations (Overlake Hospital, Group Health, BDA, etc.)



## Communication tactics checklist

For each construction activity that impacts traffic, at a minimum, the PI team will implement the tactics below. Additional communication tactics would be assigned depending on the magnitude of the traffic impacts and specific milestone.

<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Report to WSDOT and emergency services	One month ahead of construction activity	Contractor PI
Weekly report to WSDOT, City of Bellevue, Bothell and Kirkland	Weekly, submitted to WSDOT on Wednesday afternoons. WSDOT to distribute to media, city agencies, and emergency services by Thursday afternoon. Web updates are automatically produced when closures are approved.	Contractor PI
Notification of Commercial Vehicle Access and Restriction Information to Washington State Patrol, WSDOT's Northwest Region Communication Manager, WSDOT's Commercial Vehicle Office, Washington Trucking Association, King County/Metro, Community Transit and Sound Transit.	14 days before construction that affects commercial vehicle access	Contractor PI
Notify emergency services	As needed	Contractor PI
Notify WSDOT of impacts to ped/bike or disabled access	7 calendar days prior to event	Contractor PI
Notify WSDOT of construction that will impact events	14 calendar days prior to event	Contractor PI
Businesses and residents affected by utility shutoffs	48 hours ahead of utility shutoff	Construction Manager



## **Other requirements specific to the RFP:**

### **Meetings and weekly progress reports**

The Public Information Task Force will meet as required. The Design-Build Public Information Officer will provide weekly project updates with the upcoming week's closures, detours, etc. The PIO will also summarize public inquiries, complaints and comments and how Design-Build has responded to those comments.

### **Construction Schedule**

For each construction milestone, The Design-Builder will notify WSDOT one month prior to the scheduled activity. The Design-Builder will provide weekly updates to construction activities forecasted to impact traffic.

### **Crisis Communication Approach and Emergency Information Dissemination**

Please see the separate Crisis Management Plan for the PIO Contact List and details of the crisis communication approach.

Emergency services will be notified of planned activities, closures and detours at the same time WSDOT is notified (one month ahead, and weekly updates).

### **Maintenance of Traffic and Access**

At least one month before the beginning of major construction, or as appropriate for traffic shifts given construction stages, the Design-Builder will provide maintenance of traffic and access information for the entire Project to commuters, residents, and businesses within a minimum of four blocks on either side of the limits of construction. Notifications shall include:

- Purpose of the change
- Area affected and dates of impact
- Alternate routes and detours
- A contact for further information

### **Traffic Conditions**

The Design-Builder will inform WSDOT of any unusual traffic conditions (such as road obstructions, etc.) within 15 minutes of detection so this information can be forwarded to the Traffic Systems Management Center. (Construction Manager)



### **Commercial Vehicle Access and Restriction Information**

Fourteen (14) days prior to an activity that may restrict or impede the movement of commercial vehicles due to reduced lane widths, reduced height clearances or lower weight limits, The Design-Builder will notify the Washington State Patrol, WSDOT's Northwest Region Communication Manager, WSDOT's Commercial Vehicle Office, Washington Trucking Association, King County/Metro, Community Transit and Sound Transit with:

- Description of the event
- Start of the event
- End of the event

### **Emergency Vehicle Access**

The Design-Builder will provide information regarding access for emergency services to necessary parties by a schedule agreed upon by the Design-Builder and the emergency services providers.

### **Mobility and Access for Bicyclists, Pedestrians, People with Disabilities**

The Design-Builder shall clearly define and communicate to WSDOT accommodations for access by bicyclists, pedestrians and people with disabilities, including alternate routes and detours. Where impacts are significant for bicyclists, The Design-Builder will communicate with the Cascade Bicycle Club to inform this key constituent group of upcoming affects on bicycle access. As impacts are further identified, a communication strategy will be developed to address them.

### **Events**

The Design-Builder shall keep a list of public events (e.g. Seafair, arts and crafts festivals, Kirkland Unplugged) and will notify WSDOT of planned events that may be affected by construction fourteen (14) calendar days before the event takes place, and submit weekly updates to the special events listing.

### **Utility Shut-offs**

The Design-Builder will communicate with businesses or residents affected by utility shut-offs, contacting all affected businesses and residents 48 hours in advance of a utility shut-off, keeping a record of the notification. Notices will indicate the purpose and expected duration of the outage and provide contact information. The Design-Builder will provide copies of the notices to WSDOT.



The Design-Builder will notify the utility owner and local emergency services in the event of an emergency involving a utility shutoff.

### **Team members and affiliations**

Kim Henry, WSDOT  
Denise Cieri, WSDOT  
Wendy Taylor, HNTB/WSDOT  
Lisa Hodgson, WSDOT  
Matt DeGooyer, WSDOT  
Diana Giraldo, HNTB/WSDOT  
Steve Peer, PRR/WSDOT  
Amy Danberg, PRR/WSDOT  
Patty Michaud, WSDOT – Toll Division