

# SR-164 Corridor Study

## Corridor Working Group Partner Chartering Session

### Meeting Summary

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**Meeting date:** October 14, 2004

**Location:** Kent Centennial Center (400 West Gowe Street, Kent, WA 98032)

**Attendees:** *Partners in attendance:*

Dennis Dowdy, Laura Philpot, Rich Wagner – City of Auburn  
Steve Taylor, Woody Ward – Muckleshoot Tribe  
Les Johnson – City of Enumclaw  
Randy Brown – Federal Aviation Administration  
Ann Martin, Mark Melroy – King County  
Allison Dobbins – Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)  
Ron Paananen – Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Northwest Region  
Seth Stark – WSDOT, Urban Planning Office

*Partners not in attendance:*

None

*Others in attendance:*

Michael Cummings, Kamuron Gurol, Melissa Loomis, Don Sims, Renee Zimmerman – WSDOT  
Pamela Arora, Pat Gelb, Omar Merheb – Parsons Transportation Group  
Lynn Lefkoff, Kristine dos Remedios – EnviroIssues

**Welcome and Introductions**

Mike Cummings, WSDOT, welcomed the partners and thanked them for taking the time to attend the chartering session. Mike introduced Kamuron Gurol, the new WSDOT Corridor Planning Manager, who is overseeing the SR-164 Corridor Study and three other studies in the Puget Sound area for the Urban Planning Office. Mike also introduced Seth Stark, the SR-164 Corridor Study Project Manager. He will be the WSDOT point person for this project ([starks@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:starks@wsdot.wa.gov), 206-464-1288).

Attendees introduced themselves and shared the name of the organization or jurisdiction they were representing for the SR-164 Corridor Study effort.

**About the Study**

Seth Stark gave a brief background on the SR-164 Corridor Study effort, including information on the project's budget and schedule. In 2004, the legislature designated \$650,000 for the current SR-164 Phase II study. Phase I, which was completed in 2001, resulted in a list of 34 short-term safety improvement projects for the SR-164 corridor, some of which have already been implemented. The Phase II project has an 18-month schedule, but WSDOT and the consultant team intend to complete the SR-164 Route Development Plan in 12 months in order to be as efficient as possible with the available funds. The SR-164 and SR-169 corridor studies are being conducted concurrently, they have similar scopes, and the two corridors will be modeled together.

Seth explained that the SR-164 Corridor Study would result in the creation of a Route Development Plan (RDP). The RDP will include immediate term (6-18 month), short-term (6-10 year) and long-term (20-25 year) project lists to address safety and reliability

needs along SR-164. The immediate-term list will consist of projects that address immediate needs along the corridor together based on projects identified in the Phase I study, if deemed valid by the project partners through the Phase II study. The short-term and long-term lists of projects will be developed to address future needs along the corridor over the next 20-25 years. It is also important to WSDOT to address the goals outlined in the Tri-Party Agreement between WSDOT, Auburn and the Muckleshoot Tribe, including resolution of the Auburn bypass issue.

State legislators have requested that the immediate-term list be available before the new legislative session starts at the beginning of 2005. Ron Paananen, WSDOT, summarized the status of some SR-164 Improvement Strategies that were identified in the SR-164 Phase I Corridor Study.

Ideally, the recommendations from the study will be consensus-based, as projects identified through consensus are more likely to receive funding and be implemented. Likewise, the projects recommended by the partners should be "doable" (e.g., most likely safety-type improvements, non-controversial, confident cost estimates, identified funding, no environmental concerns, etc.). The initial strategy is to review and prioritize projects already identified by project partners and the Phase I study.

## **Project Charter**

Lynn Lefkoff, Envirolssues, reviewed the draft project charter with the partners to address any concerns with the language and to make sure all of the important content was included.

### ***Project Vision***

There were no questions or concerns about the project vision section of the draft charter.

### ***Project Goals***

The City of Auburn expressed a desire for language in the project goals about the SR-164/ SR 18 Auburn bypass to reflect that the corridor study would address congestion in the corridor within Auburn today. Given the current situation where a significant urban population has to rely on one sole access to and from SR 18, and that during times of heavy traffic congestion the entire corridor within the city is gridlocked, the study should review, validate, and address present concerns from the SR 18 interchange to the south city limits, especially for emergency service access. The study should also propose appropriate long-term options to include a by-pass for achieving reliability and access goals. There was further discussion about whether it is appropriate to assume a "By-Pass" as a viable long, medium or short-term option at the outset of the study.

WSDOT indicated that it is premature to predict whether a bypass falls under the immediate-, short-, or long-term category. Not identifying a specific a time frame will allow the group to focus on the congestion issues at the interchange of SR 164 and SR 18 and develop alternatives to address this issue. WSDOT also noted that the legislative directive for WSDOT is to perform a Corridor Study of the entire corridor, which includes issues related to an Auburn link road. Safety and congestion issues need to be examined for the corridor as a whole and the available resources for the study must be expended accordingly.

Partners agreed to move the mention of the bypass to the introductory paragraph of the project goals in order to de-link the bypass from a particular time frame but also to keep this issue on the table for discussion. It was then suggested that the bypass option be renamed a "potential link road," to make it clear the bypass will not only relieve congestion in Auburn, but also address the needs of those living on the nearby plateau

who currently have limited alternate routes in the corridor.. Partners agreed on the use of the term “potential link road” in place of “bypass.”

### ***Roles of Study Participants***

The difference between a partner and a stakeholder for the SR-164 Corridor Study was discussed. Partners agreed that it was their role to help identify stakeholders for WSDOT and the consultant team to ensure that all appropriate stakeholders are involved in the study process.

The definition in the charter of a project partner, in terms of who has ultimate decision authority for guiding the study within each jurisdiction, did not reflect the collaborative nature of the study. The partners agreed they should work collaboratively to create a comprehensive corridor vision. It was agreed that a sentence be added to the charter to express this. The new sentence should read, “Partners will have ultimate decision authority in implementing projects within each jurisdiction; however, partners will work collaboratively for corridor solutions.”

Partners also agreed that a stakeholder should be defined as a party who is affected by, not simply interested in, corridor study outcomes.

### ***Project Outcomes***

Partners agreed that stakeholders and the public are two separate groups and both should be called out in the project outcomes section of the charter to make this clear. A revision was made to the third bullet to reflect this and now reads “Stakeholders and the public are meaningfully involved in development of recommendations.”

### ***CWG Operating Guidelines***

Partners agreed that Corridor Working Group (CWG) meetings should be rotated among various locations along the corridor, in order to meet along the corridor but maintain a sense of neutrality for partner discussions. Partners were asked to volunteer meeting locations along the corridor for future CWG meetings.

The partners also agreed to actively participate in the study, maintain a focus on projects that benefit the entire corridor, share information openly and promptly, be patient when requesting information, and give each other adequate notice of arising issues.

### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

The partners had no additions to the WSDOT and consultant team responsibilities as described in the charter.

Partners asked that “promptly” be defined for partner comment and responses to project tasks. WSDOT and the partners agreed that the word “promptly” meant deadlines would be specified for all requests for information or comment on project materials. If partners are not able to meet the specified deadline, they need to let WSDOT know in advance. Otherwise, no response by a specified will deadline will be taken to mean the partner has no comments.

### ***Communication***

A project website will be maintained by WSDOT for the project. Everyone in the group committed to send relevant emails to all of the partners involved and to keep track of who contacts them about the project and what questions they ask.

The CWG, consisting of the partners at this meeting, will meet approximately six (6) times over the 12-month project schedule (but only when it is necessary). WSDOT agreed to provide an estimated schedule to serve as a guide for upcoming study meetings and events. At least one partner from each organization and jurisdiction will be present at these meetings and designated alternates are acceptable and encouraged if a regular partner cannot attend. Seth is the WSDOT contact for all CWG correspondence.

### ***Decision Making***

The partners discussed the respective timelines for agency/jurisdiction approvals for decisions throughout the course of the study. The City of Auburn has a two-week time frame, as they must consult their public works committee. The City of Enumclaw similarly has a two-week time frame to consult with their public works committee, depending on the extent of the decision and what is needed for approval. The Muckleshoot Tribe also estimated a two-week turnaround on decisions. For King County, short-term projects that are already included in existing policies can be handled by the study partners representing the County. For long-range projects, or if there are major departures from existing policies, County approval may take longer. WSDOT agreed to identify key policy issues as the study progresses.

The partners were encouraged to keep their own councils, executives, and electeds informed on a regular basis and WSDOT agreed to meet with each jurisdiction as well as provide briefing materials when necessary. As recommendations are developed, they can be discussed at meetings and acted upon at subsequent meetings, after the partners have a chance to brief their officials.

The definition of consensus was also discussed. There was concern over the language in the charter that said only partners with a direct stake in the outcome of a proposed action within each jurisdiction would be responsible for developing specific recommendations. Some partners felt that this excluded agencies or jurisdictions and could prevent them from providing input on project recommendations. Other partners were concerned that jurisdictions with management responsibility over these projects would be subject to the concurrence of a party without such responsibilities.

Partners agreed that the charter language would be changed to indicate that a jurisdiction with management responsibility on a recommendation would take a lead on that recommendation, but that does not foreclose discussion with other partners at the table on that recommendation, in order to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal. If a partner does not have a stake in the action but is dissenting, the dissent will be reflected in the recommendations.

The language was updated to read, "Equal participation will be a goal of the decision process. Those partners with a management responsibility for the outcome of a proposed action within each jurisdiction will take the lead on developing specific recommendations. Minority opinions will be reflected in the final report on recommendations."

### ***Conflict Resolution***

The partners suggested minor edits on this section but there were no questions or concerns about the content of the conflict resolution section of the draft charter.

### ***Authority***

The point of contact for each organization and jurisdiction was established as follows:

- Les Johnson, City of Enumclaw
- Steve Taylor, Muckleshoot Tribe

- Dennis Dowdy, City of Auburn
- Ann Martin, King County
- Allison Dobbins, Puget Sound Regional Council
- Seth Stark, WSDOT

Envirolssues staff agreed to make revisions to the charter and send out the final version to the partners via email. The partners agreed to sign the charter together at the first CWG meeting.

**Phase I Short Range Improvement Strategies**

Ron Paananen, WSDOT, reviewed the Short Range Improvement Strategies list that resulted from the SR-164 Phase I study. He indicated the projects that have been implemented, slated for construction, or have not been programmed for funding. Some of the projects from the Phase I list had been partially implemented; either because funding was only available for a portion of the project scope, or the actions taken adequately addressed the safety issue identified. WSDOT requested help from the partners in identifying the current status of some of the projects, as they may have been implemented by the lead jurisdictions since the completion of the Phase I study in 2001.

**Closing and Next Steps**

The next CWG meeting will likely be held the week of November 15<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting, the partners will sign the charter, a preliminary short-term project list will be compiled, and the initial screening of potential projects will be discussed.

**Action Items:**

- Partners are to send their project lists to Seth Stark at WSDOT ([starks@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:starks@wsdot.wa.gov) 206-464-1288) by October 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- WSDOT will revise the current Phase I project list, send the file out to the partners for comment, and compile a complete, updated short-term project list for the first CWG meeting in November.
- WSDOT will send out a phone log template to the partners.
- Envirolssues will revise the charter per the partner's comments, email the final version to the partners and bring a copy to the first CWG meeting for the partners to sign.
- Envirolssues will write a meeting summary for the Chartering Session and send it out to the partners.

**Upcoming Meetings**

- CWG Meeting: The week of November 15<sup>th</sup> – The date of the meeting has since been set for November 16<sup>th</sup> from 8:30am to 11:30am. The meeting will likely be held in Enumclaw

**Handouts**

- Chartering Session Agenda
- Study Area Map
- Draft SR-164 Charter
- SR-164 Study Schedule
- Route Development Process Flowchart
- SR-164 Issues Previously Identified by Partners
- WSDOT Kick-off Meeting Summaries
- Route Development Plan Checklist
- WSDOT Route Development Plan Website FAQ
- WSDOT Route Development Plans Purpose Statement
- SR-164 Partner Contact Information
- SR-164 Phase I Study Improvement Strategies List

