

SR 167 Corridor Plan

Technical Memorandum 1: Goals and Objectives



Washington State
Department of Transportation

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What are the goals of the SR 167 Corridor Plan?

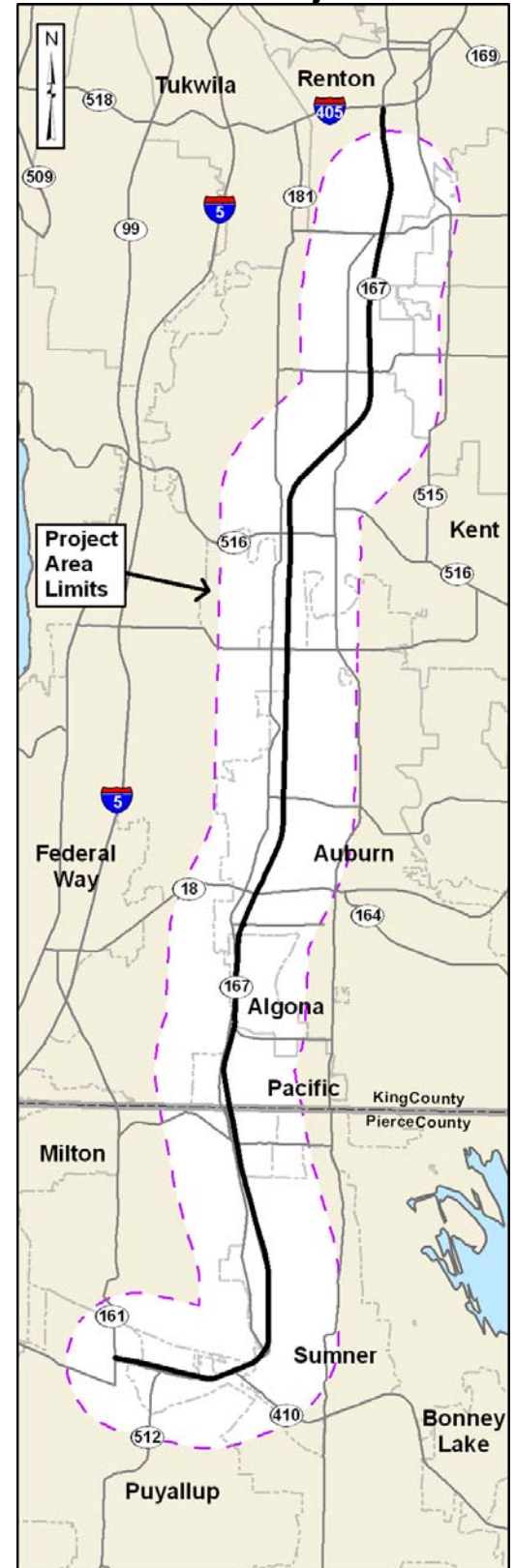
The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the cities and counties between Renton and Puyallup are developing strategies to ease traffic congestion along the State Route (SR) 167 corridor. They are developing the SR 167 Corridor Plan, which will identify a series of traffic improvement projects to increase safety and travel efficiency for all users of the highway.

A corridor plan is a study that identifies the existing and future transportation-related problems in an area, and proposes solutions to those problems. These proposed solutions are then analyzed to determine their potential effects on the highway and nearby communities.

The SR 167 Corridor Plan will identify a long-term vision for the corridor. It will also identify projects that can be completed in the short-term to improve the route's capacity and safety. The final projects selected for the corridor will:

- Provide an efficient set of transportation solutions within the SR 167 corridor;
- Make many communities within the corridor more livable;
- Maintain or improve air quality, protect and enhance fish-bearing streams, and continue to protect the integrity of the local natural environment;
- Contribute to a vigorous state and regional economy by satisfying existing and future travel needs; and
- Accommodate planned regional growth.

Exhibit 1-1
SR 167 Corridor Project Area



What is SR 167?

SR 167 is a state highway that extends from I-405 in Renton to I-5 in Tacoma. SR 167 is an access-controlled highway, like I-5 and I-405, where drivers must use on-ramps and off-ramps to merge onto the highway. SR 167 has two general purpose (GP) travel lanes in each direction where all vehicles are allowed to drive. An additional travel lane designated for high-occupancy vehicles (HOV) exists in both the northbound and southbound lanes from south of I-405 in Renton to Auburn.

The corridor plan will include 20 miles of the 26-mile SR 167. The corridor plan spans from I-405 in Renton to SR 161 in Puyallup and includes a 1-mile buffer on both sides of SR 167.

Why do we need a corridor plan for SR 167?

The SR 167 corridor is important to the region. It has emerged as a regional and interstate freight distribution corridor and it has a growing residential community thanks to affordable housing and rental costs. The highway has become very congested and leads to unpredictable commute times and accidents. The delays can also mean lost income for freight trucks stuck in traffic.

The SR 167 corridor is the primary freight and commodity distribution point for:

- The Port of Tacoma
- The Port of Seattle-Marine Port
- The Port of Seattle-SeaTac Airport

What are HOV lanes?

HOV lanes are restricted access lanes that require a minimum number of people per vehicle to use the travel lane, usually two or three people. HOV lanes reduce commute times for transit, carpools, and vanpools by maximizing the movement of people. Lanes for carpools, vanpools, and buses carry far more people than a general-purpose lane of traffic.

Fast Facts about Freight in the Green River Valley:

The Green River Valley has the West Coast's second largest concentration of truck distribution centers, according to the Daily Journal of Commerce.

Approximately one-third of the region's trucking and storage facilities are located along the corridor.

A Kent Chamber of Commerce study revealed that up to 92% of manufacturing goods and 62% of other industries located in the Valley use the SR 167 freeway to move their goods and commodities.

- Boeing Co.
- Green River Valley manufacturing and industrial centers

On a typical weekday, SR 167 carries more than 120,000 vehicles on the busiest sections of the highway (between SR 18 and I-405). This daily deluge of vehicles includes a high percentage of trucks. More than 12,000 trucks per day travel the corridor to and from warehousing distribution centers, as shown in Exhibit 1-2. The flow of trucks in the corridor reaches a peak around 10 am, when an average of 950 trucks drive the stretch of highway just south of 212th Street. During peak periods this volume of traffic overwhelms the system.

As a result, commuters and freight haulers face long traffic delays on weekdays. Congestion wastes time and makes freight deliveries and services unpredictable, adding costs and making the region less competitive in national and global markets. Freight movement relies on “just in time” delivery, which is a hard promise to keep while trucks are using such a congested corridor.

Furthermore, the communities that primarily use the corridor are expected to grow in coming years. This will only add to the crowding. The proposed SR 167 projects will improve the efficiency of the corridor, increase safety, and support the long-range vision for the region.

Exhibit 1-2

Growth of Traffic and the Freight Industry in the Green River Valley



Increasing Congestion



Warehouse / Trucking Growth

To date, what has been done to evaluate corridor problems?

In 2001, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) published *Destination 2030: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the Central Puget Sound Region*. This plan included recommendations for expanding HOV lanes and roadway improvements within the SR 167 corridor.

In 2003, the Puget Sound Regional Council, King County, and the cities of Auburn and Kent provided funding for the first phase of a SR 167 Valley Freeway analysis to identify a long-range investment strategy for the corridor. This study was called the *SR 167 Valley Freeway Corridor Analysis*, which focused primarily on SR 167 within King County from Renton to the King/Pierce County line.

This *SR 167 Valley Freeway Corridor Analysis* looked at possible transportation investments to make in the corridor. They agreed on a preliminary set of options to evaluate which will address SR 167 travel needs through the year 2030 and will help guide future federal, state and local transportation funding decisions.

What are the next steps?

The SR 167 Corridor Plan will pick up where the *SR 167 Valley Freeway Analysis* left off. The SR 167 Corridor Plan will analyze and evaluate a number of short-term improvement options as well as four long-term improvement options proposed in the *SR 167 Valley Freeway Analysis*. In addition, the SR 167 Corridor Plan will expand the study area south to SR 161 in Pierce County.

The short and long term options will be analyzed in a series of eight technical memorandums that will:

1. Identify goals and objectives
2. Identify improvement options screening criteria
3. Inventory existing conditions
4. Evaluate current travel conditions

What is the Puget Sound Regional Council?

The Puget Sound Regional Council is an association of cities, towns, counties, ports, and state agencies that serves as a forum for developing policies and making decisions about regional growth and transportation issues in the four-county central Puget Sound region.

5. Identify corridor improvement options
6. Evaluate future travel demands and traffic operation of improvement options
7. Evaluation and ranking of improvement options
8. Public involvement summary

The improvement options will be screened for environmental issues. All of the study information will then be evaluated during a three day workshop conducted by WSDOT to perform a Cost Estimate Validation Process (CEVP®). The conclusion of this effort will be summarized in a final project report ranking the priority of improvement options and their cost.

How does the SR 167 Corridor Plan fit in with other transportation projects in the area?

Two other major transportation projects are being developed simultaneously with the SR 167 Corridor Plan. They are the I-405 Corridor Program and the SR 167 Extension Project.

The I-405 project includes the construction of one additional southbound lane along SR 167 from I-405 to South 180th Street (43rd) in Kent. When further funding becomes available, an additional lane will be constructed on SR 167 northbound from 180th Street (43rd) to I-405.

The SR 167 Extension Project will provide a new 6-mile segment of freeway with two general purpose lanes and a future HOV lane in each direction from the Port of Tacoma to where the current SR 167 Valley Freeway ends at SR 161 in Puyallup. This extension will provide additional access for the Port of Tacoma and allow easier access for trucks to SR 167. The SR 167 Extension Project and other planned corridor improvements will encourage use of SR 167 as an alternative route to I-5.

What is the Cost Estimate Validation Process (CEVP)?

WSDOT has implemented a new process, CEVP, to better estimate the probable cost and schedule (as well as cash flow) of their planned mega-projects, including risk, opportunity, and other uncertainties. This process was designed to provide:

- More realistic projections of probably cost and schedule, including the effects of inflation.
 - Better decision-making and risk management for individual projects, and for the entire program of projects.
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Exhibit 8-1

I-405 to SR 167 HOV-to-HOV Direct Connection Ramp



Artists rendering of incremental improvements to the I-405/SR 167 Interchange as designed in the I-405 Master Plan.

The SR 167 Corridor Plan team coordinated with the I-405 project and the SR 167 Extension Project to assure regional continuity. These three major programs have in common a major short fall in funding available to implement the needed improvements.

The Regional Transportation Improvement District (RTID), a joint effort of King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties, is developing a list of needed improvements to the regions transportation system. The counties plan on submitting a funding proposal to the voters of the region that may provide an additional source of funds to assist in paying for the improvement needs.

What's the timeline for the corridor plan?

The SR 167 Corridor Plan will be issued in 2007 to allow WSDOT the opportunity to pursue additional funding for the identified unfunded needs from the legislature or the Regional Transportation Improvement District vote in November of 2007. WSDOT will then begin to plan for the various phases of work, including environmental reviews, permitting, design, construction and maintenance.

Exhibit 1-4**SR 167 Corridor Plan Milestones**

Milestone	Milestone Description	Completion Date
1	Develop possible transportation investment packages	Summer 2007
2	Analyze options	Fall 2006
3	Identify long-term plan	Summer 2007

What are the currently funded SR 167 corridor projects?

WSDOT completed the *SR 167 Valley Freeway Study* in 2004. This study identified future improvement needs for the corridor ranging between \$1.1 and \$1.4 billion. These needs have been used to seek funding for a series of improvements.

The 2003 Nickel Package and the 2005 Transportation Partnership Account provide over \$300 million for SR 167's Renton-to-Tacoma corridor. The investments will include extending HOV lanes, purchasing right-of-way for the new SR 167 Extension, and implementing the High Occupancy Tolling (HOT) Lanes demonstration project. Additionally, the 2003 Legislature passed the "Regionalism Bill" which allowed the creation of the Regional Transportation Investment District. The projects identified in the SR 167 Corridor Plan are likely components of a future RTID investment plan if approved by the voters.

There are several funded projects in the SR 167 corridor that are ongoing or were begun in 2006. The funded SR 167 corridor projects include:

- HOT Lanes Pilot Project:

Convert the existing HOV lanes to High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes as a pilot project on northbound and southbound HOV lanes between Renton and Auburn.

- SR 167 HOV Lanes 8th Street E. to 277th Street:

Extending southbound HOT lanes from 37th Street NW in Auburn towards SR 410 in Puyallup.