



# I-5 Transportation Alternatives and Operational Traffic Model Study



## Technical Review Committee Meeting #1 Summary April 22, 2009

### TRC Members

Jesse Hamashima	Pierce County PW
Martin Hoppe	City of Lacey
Larry Mickel	Ft. Lewis Public Works
Delphie Nielsen	Clover Park SD
Kelly Hayden	Pierce Transit
Tina Lee	Pierce Transit
Will Williams	McChord AFB
Gaylord Higa	McChord AFB
Ryan Dumm	Congressman Dicks' office
Dirk Brier	PSRC
Robin Mayhew	PSRC
John Donahue	WSDOT
Bob Jones	WSDOT
James Colyar	FHWA
Wendy McAbee	FHWA

### Project Team

Bruce Haldors	Transpo Group
Mike Swenson	Transpo Group
Jon Pascal	Transpo Group
Jilma Jimenez	Berger Abam
Shuming Yan	WSDOT
Richard Warren	WSDOT

### Project Sponsor

Dan Penrose	City of Lakewood
Mel Perrussel	City of Lakewood

### **Welcome and Introduction**

Dan Penrose, Project Manager, welcomed everyone and provided an overview of the Technical Review Committee's (TRC) role, the purpose and process of the meetings. He highlighted the importance for those on the TRC to be active, engaged participants. Introductions were made around the table.

### **Project Schedule and Study Process**

Mr. Penrose summarized the project background, noting that Lakewood agreed to assume the lead role for the region following a meeting with OEA, WSDOT, FHWA, Pierce County and military installation staff in summer 2008. An application for grant funding for this project was awarded in January 2009 to study the impacts of military installation growth on the Interstate 5 corridor between SR 512 and the Mounts Rd exit. This kickoff meeting is the first in a series of meetings designed to gather technical review from the primary affected stakeholders within the study area. Application materials (narrative and scope of work) were distributed to the TRC members.

The Project Team is composed of experts from Washington State Department of Transportation's Urban Planning Office and the Transpo Group. WSDOT has contributed \$50,000 in grant match funding to help complete the model.

It is well known that there are congestion and capacity issues on I-5. Recognizing this, WSDOT's Olympic Region analyzed this congestion in a study completed in 2005 which proposed some low \$ fixes, including ramp metering, variable message board, and other system changes.

WSDOT also realized that they didn't have data to show where the trips were coming from, whether the congestion was a result of military growth at Ft. Lewis or local and regional traffic growth. This project will create an I-5 model for the corridor using Pierce County and City of Lakewood traffic models that produce data that begins to fill this gap. The study itself won't fix the problem but will

help to identify the true impacts of consolidation and growth of the bases and will help determine bottlenecks and options that might lessen the chokepoints.

This is an 18 month technical study, which will produce a model and outputs that will be useful in future planning and design studies on I-5, including potential IJR's. Mr. Penrose asked the group to provide the technical knowledge of processes and approach to make sure the Project Team is anticipating the critical factors and existing needs of the stakeholders.

Bruce Haldors, Transpo Group, reviewed the project schedule and outlined the six meetings scheduled with the TRC. The Project Team will be using a website and other tools to facilitate feedback, with the goal of a flexible, open and transparent process. Most project updates will be through email, and draft documents will be reviewed by the TRC prior to posting on the web. He mentioned that Ft. Lewis data will be included where available and provided. There have been other studies done, and this project will build on that work.

Mr. Haldors mentioned the importance of getting a lot of input on screening objectives, asking what type of criteria the Project Team should look at. He requested that the TRC provide documents and studies that have been done on this corridor as part of the literature review phase.

### **Corridor Issues**

Mr. Haldors summarized the Project Teams approach, noting that WSDOT was doing the modeling work and leading the effort on I-5 itself and Transpo is leading the effort on the local roadway network.

TRC members commented that an IJR looks at a number of things and can't just address how expanding the freeway will make it easier to get somewhere. It was also mentioned that some modeling already assumes short term recommendations and a need for study of alternate routes, could be through base or east of base.

The Project Team responded that the study was catered to address the military's impact on I-5 in the study area and allows the region to apply for OEA planning grants in the future. If there is indeed a large impact from the growth of Ft. Lewis, it is reasonable to ask the federal government to provide some funding to mitigate those impacts.

TRC members asked that the study consider transit plans and the need for transit center near the main gate to transfer the 70% of military personnel that live off post onto bases. Discussion was had on how to move people from Thurston County to Ft. Lewis without creating a safety issue. The 2008 park and ride study was mentioned as a resource.

### **Screening Methodology / Evaluation Criteria**

Transpo says not intended to develop alternatives at this point. The goal is to review fatal flaws and engage the group in a weighted process. The Project Team will send out a summary before next meeting to determine criteria and how they will be weighted. The TRC discussed a number of interchanges with known problems, including Berkeley/Jackson and Clark/Barksdale Ave.

Ryan Dumm (Congressman Dick's Office) brought up some of the funding options through Department of Defense, and noted that joint basing helps to recognize the need for integrated planning. He said that our congressional delegation is well position to help on this issue.

Discussion ensued on the uniqueness of the military travel patterns and the fact that they correspond with the typical commuter peak hours. Most soldiers report for 6:30 AM Physical Training and are due at their work site by 9 AM. The PM release is at 4:30 for the majority of the base personnel. This is an Army-wide standard and part of the Army culture and traditions, and highly unlikely to change.

There are long-term plans to provide more shopping and eating options for soldiers on post, which might reduce overall traffic on I-5.

Transpo reported that they are making basic assumptions on modeling. The City of Lakewood's local roadway traffic model is nearing completion and will help with this study. We can make a variety of assumptions on military traffic behavior based on land use and known travel patterns, however deployments and other activities can change these patterns. The forecast year is approximately 2030, but could change to 2035 depending on feedback from agencies. Intersection operation issues may not be looked at in year one, but year two and three.

### **Next Steps / Questions**

It was agreed that the next meeting should be longer to facilitate discussion. Mornings seemed to work better for TRC members and email was the best way to communicate in the interim. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for two hours on June 25, 2009 here at Lakewood City Hall. Materials and documents for review will be sent prior to the meeting.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 PM.