Summary

Tier II Final EIS

SR 167

Puyallup to SR 509


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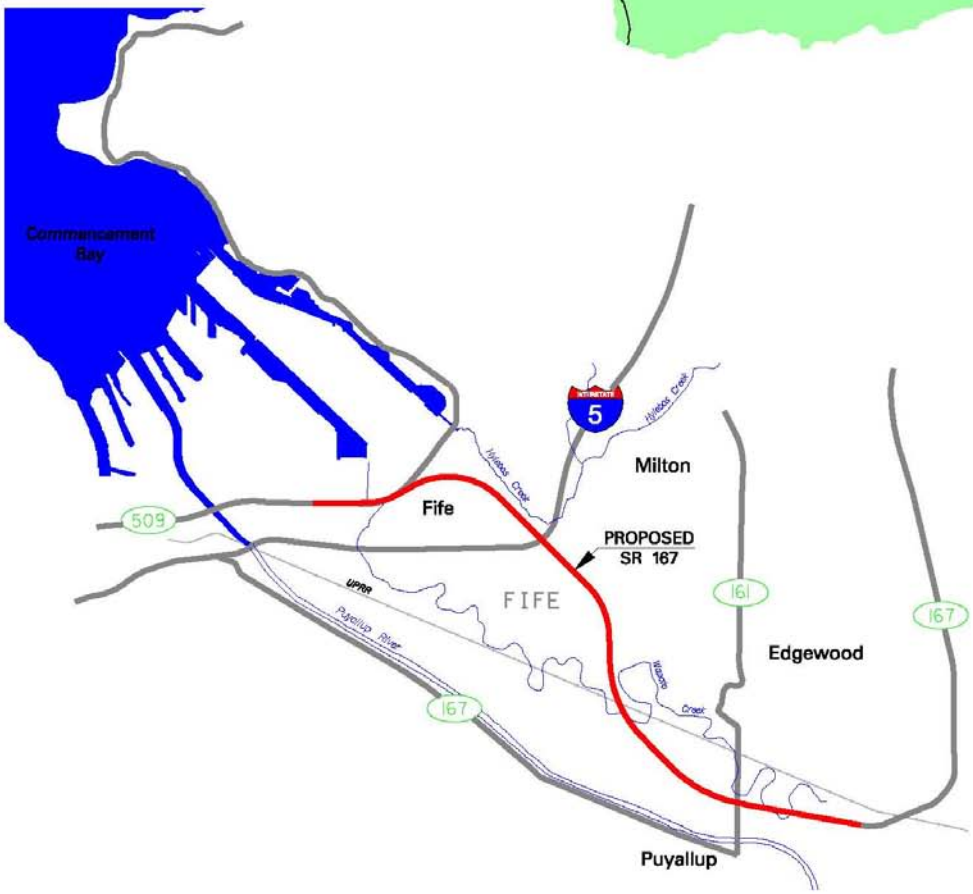
SR 167 Puyallup to SR 509
Seattle
Tacoma
Olympia
Proposed SR 167
Pierce County


Commencement Bay
Hylebos Creek
Milton
Fife
509
PROPOSED SR 167
FIFE
Puyallup River
Wapato Creek
Edgewood
Puyallup

Summary

Background

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are proposing the SR 167 Extension Project. They are the lead agencies for compliance with NEPA and SEPA. The SR 167 Extension Project is in Pierce County, Washington, within the cities of Fife, Puyallup, Edgewood, Milton, and Tacoma. It is also within the external boundary of the Puyallup Tribal Reservation.

The planning and environmental analysis for the SR 167 Extension is being conducted in two stages or tiers. This tiered approach is part of an agreement among agencies with key roles in environmental review and approval of major transportation projects like this one.

The Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) analyzed the location and environmental aspects of different corridor options. It also considered ways other than building a new freeway to address the purpose and need for transportation improvements in the project area. The Tier I EIS evaluated in detail three new corridors and a no build alternative. In June 1999, the Tier I Final EIS concluded that the Alternative 2 corridor and interchange locations were environmentally preferred.

The Tier II Draft EIS, distributed in February 2003, provided details on optional configurations of the interchanges. Tier II uses many design and environmental criteria to develop a reasonable range of interchange options for environmental

NEPA, SEPA, and EIS

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that environmental impacts be considered in federal decisions, including the use of federal funds.

NEPA requires an EIS be prepared for major projects that have the potential for adverse impacts.

A NEPA EIS also provides the documentation required by the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

Key Project Terms

Corridor is a strip of land between two endpoints within which a roadway is placed and conditions are evaluated.

Roadway is the portion of a highway including shoulders, for vehicle use.

Footprint is the outline of the physical limits of the area impacted by construction of the roadway and related facilities.

analysis. These details are important for better defining environmental effects and for discussing measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate these effects with stakeholders. This Tier II Final EIS responds to public comments on the Draft EIS and provides supplemental information.

What Is the SR 167 Extension Project?

The proposed project completes the State Route (SR) 167 freeway by building four miles of new six-lane divided facility from its current terminus in Puyallup at SR 161 through the Puyallup River valley connecting to Interstate 5 near the 70th Avenue undercrossing. The project will also include a two-mile four-lane divided highway section from SR 509 near the Port of Tacoma to I-5 and SR 167 at the interchange near 70th Avenue.

Current traffic congestion on 54th Avenue East

The roadway runs east and northeast from Port of Tacoma Road to 54th Avenue East. It then proceeds southeast over SR 99 and I-5 before turning south and crossing Valley Avenue just west of Freeman Road. The rest of the roadway runs mostly southeast before connecting with the existing SR 167 freeway near North Meridian in Puyallup.

Who Is Leading the Project?

The Washington State Division of FHWA is the lead federal agency for the project, and they provide guidance and oversight to WSDOT. The Olympic Region of WSDOT continues to lead this planning and environmental analysis phase, as they have since Tier I began.

Why Is the Project Needed?

The existing non-freeway segment of SR 167 has high levels of congestion at surface street intersections and includes many connecting driveways. Trucks transporting freight from the Port of Tacoma add to the congestion. These conditions contribute to relatively high accident rates, and increased air pollution because stop-and-go traffic uses more fuel than freeway traffic.

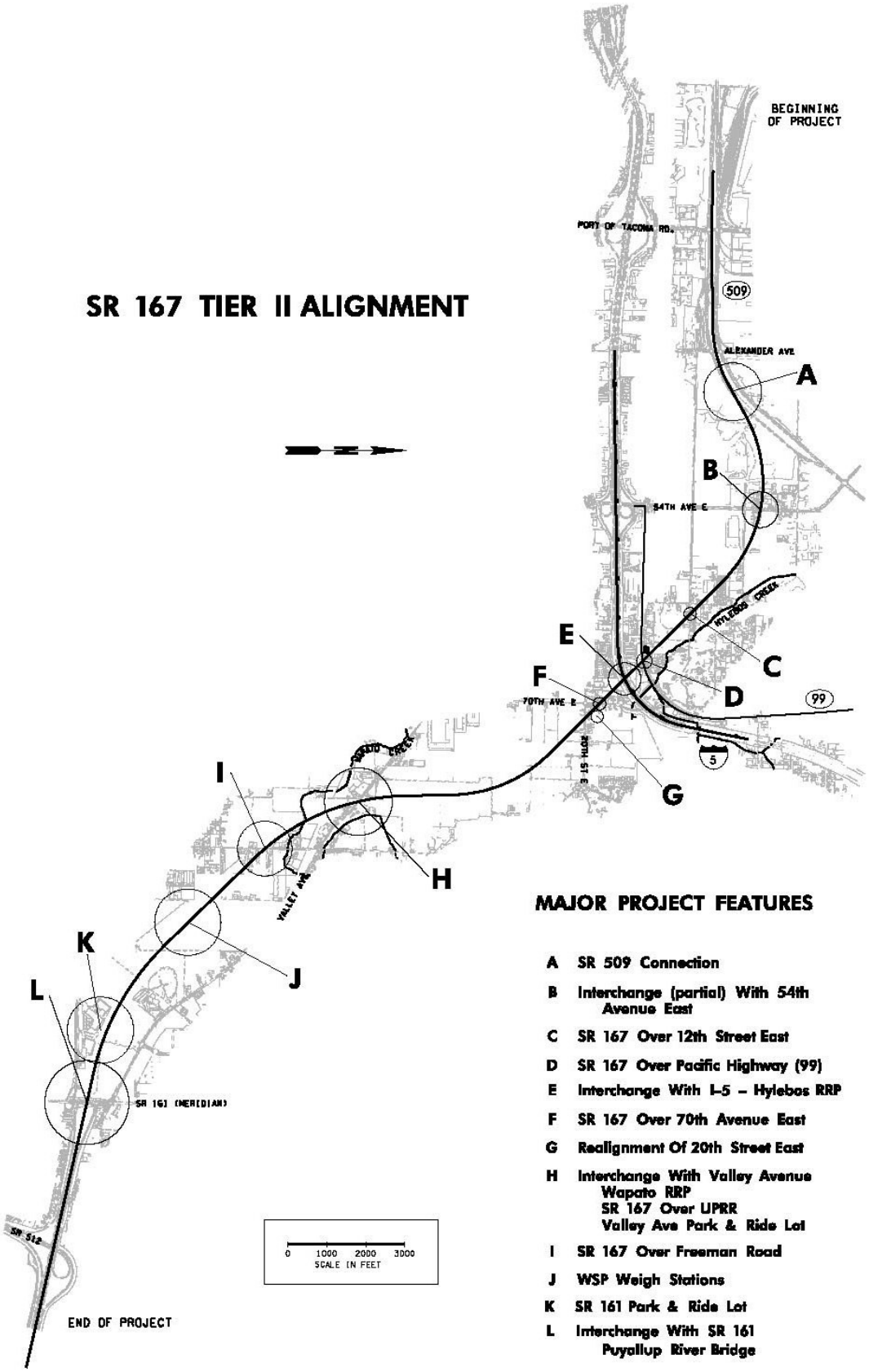
In 1999 the Port of Tacoma projected that truck traffic will double to 600,000 trucks annually by the year 2014. Traffic projections for the year 2030 also indicate problems will continue to worsen.

Some of the benefits identified for the proposed project are that it:

- Increases mobility and accessibility;
- Improves safety for traffic, pedestrians, and bicyclists;
- Improves regional mobility of the transportation system;
- Serves multi-modal freight and passenger movement;
- Improves continuity between SR 167 and I-5;
- Reduces flooded area along local creeks;
- Maintains or improves air quality in the corridor;
- Improves fish habitat in nearby streams.

Stop-and-go traffic emits more air pollution than highway traffic

Flooding in February 1996 at Hylebos Creek and I-5


SR 167 TIER II ALIGNMENT
BEGINNING OF PROJECT
PORT OF TACOMA RD.
509
ALEXANDER AVE
A
B
54TH AVE E
HYLEBOS CREEK
C
D
99
E
F
70TH AVE E
5
20TH ST E
G
WAPATO CREEK
I
H
VALLEY AVE
K
J
L
SR 161 (MERIDIAN)
SR 512
0 1000 2000 3000
SCALE IN FEET
END OF PROJECT
MAJOR PROJECT FEATURES
A SR 509 Connection
B Interchange (partial) With 54th Avenue East
C SR 167 Over 12th Street East
D SR 167 Over Pacific Highway (99)
E Interchange With I-5 – Hylebos RRP
F SR 167 Over 70th Avenue East
G Realignment Of 20th Street East
H Interchange With Valley Avenue
Wapato RRP
SR 167 Over UPRR
Valley Ave Park & Ride Lot
I SR 167 Over Freeman Road
J WSP Weigh Stations
K SR 161 Park & Ride Lot
L Interchange With SR 161
Puyallup River Bridge

What Are the Major Features of the SR 167 Project?

The new freeway section will be approximately six miles long. It has one direct highway connection, four interchanges, two weigh stations, and two park and ride lots. The project also includes an innovative stormwater management approach known as the Riparian Restoration Proposal (RRP) that reduces potential flooded areas while improving local streams. In addition to important traffic benefits like increased mobility, improved safety, and accessibility, the SR 167 Extension Project will include mitigation measures that avoid and minimize impacts, enhance wetlands, improve floodplain values, and has other measures to protect the environment.

Limited Access Divided Highway

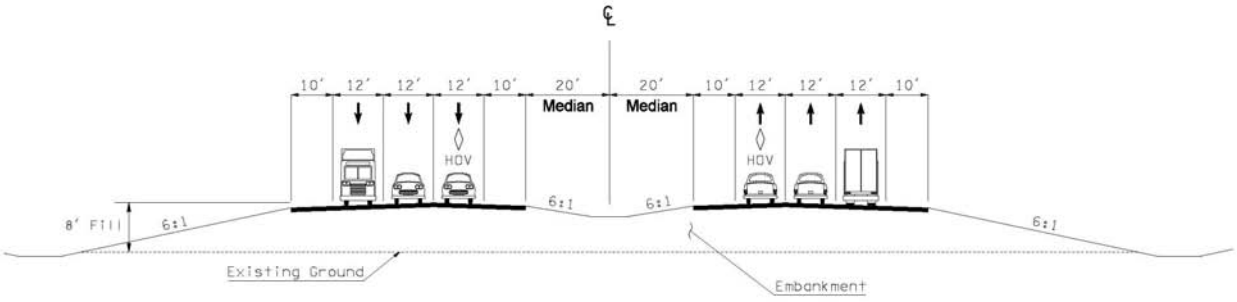
The SR 167 Extension begins as a four-lane limited access highway where it connects to SR 509. The four-lane freeway continues easterly on embankment until 12th Street. The mainline is elevated on structures over 12th Street, SR 99, I-5, 20th Street, and 70th Avenue. Between 70th Avenue and Valley Avenue, the freeway consists of three general purpose lanes and one future HOV lane in each direction. South of Valley Avenue, the freeway includes two general purpose lanes and one HOV lane in each direction (six total) to the SR 161 Interchange.

Key Project Terms

Limited access highways restrict the locations where traffic may enter the roadway. Driveways and sidestreets do not connect directly to the highway.

Divided highways separate traffic traveling in different directions with medians, physical barriers, or differing elevations.

Embankment is a structure of earth or gravel that is raised to form the foundation for a road.

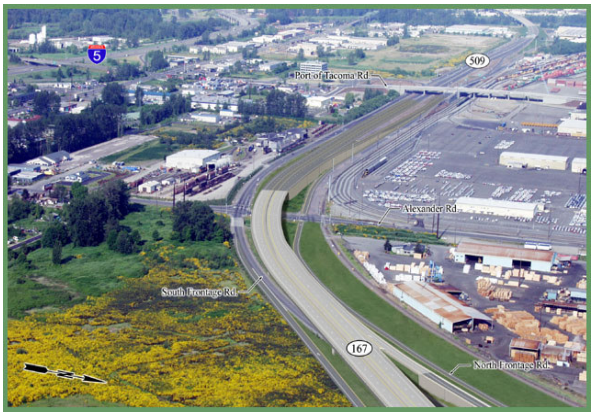


Typical Cross Section
SR 167 Valley Avenue Interchange to SR 161 Interchange

Freeway-to-Freeway Connections

The SR 167 Extension connects with the SR 509 freeway in Tacoma. A new interchange in Fife connects I-5 and the new SR 167 freeway. In Puyallup the SR 167 Extension connects to the existing SR 167 freeway that proceeds east and north to I-405 in Renton.

Current view along SR 509



Visualization of the new SR 509 and SR 167 connection

The new I-5 interchange is very complex with limited solutions for connecting the freeways. The I-5 interchange design in the Final EIS incorporates six recommendations of a special value engineering study that examined 67 optional ramp connections and alignments. After thorough analysis of all the options, it was determined that only one design option is reasonable, with the least adverse environmental impacts, to meet the needs at this location.

Current view of I-5 at the Fife Curve

Visualization of the interchange connecting SR 167 and I-5 at Fife Curve

Local Access Interchanges

A new interchange provides local access at 54th Avenue East. The Loop Option is the environmentally preferred design because it has the least effects on wetlands and their buffers, floodplains, and wildlife habitat. The City of Fife, Port of Tacoma, FHWA, and WSDOT also prefer this interchange option because truck traffic leaving the Port can access northbound SR 167 with a right turn from 54th Avenue East.

Current view of 54th Avenue East

Visualization of the preferred Loop Ramp interchange option at 54th Avenue East

The Valley Avenue Option is the preferred interchange design for local access at Valley Avenue. This option has least effects on wetland buffers, fewest residential and business displacements, least new impervious area, and most opportunity for connecting wildlife habitats.

Current view of Valley Avenue East

Visualization of the preferred Valley Avenue interchange at Valley Avenue East