

SR 162 Sumner to Orting Corridor Study

Stakeholder Committee Meeting #2

Wednesday, July 27, 2016

9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

Sumner City Hall, 1104 Maple Street, Sumner

Attendees Signed In

Jason Sullivan, City of Bonney Lake

Mark Bethune, City of Orting

Eric Mendenhall, City of Sumner

Rory Grindley, Pierce County

Jesse Hamashima, Pierce County

Sean Ardussi, Puget Sound Regional Council

Jason Kennedy, Pierce Transit

Eric Chipps, Sound Transit

Tom Uren, Tehaleh/Newland Communities

WSDOT

Dennis Engel, Olympic Region Planning

Nazmul Alam, Olympic Region Planning

T.J. Nedrow, Olympic Region Planning

Yvette Liufau, Olympic Region Planning

Joseph Perez, Olympic Region Traffic

Janarthanan, Natarajan, Headquarters TDGO

Ming-Bang Shyu, Headquarters TDGO

Rachael Katz, Headquarters Multimodal Planning

Welcome/Introductions

Eric Mendenhall with the City of Sumner welcomed everyone. WSDOT Olympic Region's Planning Manager, Dennis Engel led the introductions around the table and pointed out the main purpose of the meeting today is to gather brainstormed ideas for improving SR 162. Dennis mentioned the study survey is now online and the survey postcards have been mailed out. WSDOT's Study Lead T.J. Nedrow reviewed the meeting agenda with the group.

Study Progress Update

Referring to the meeting summary sent out by email on the 25th T.J. Nedrow provided a recap of the previous stakeholder committee meeting in June. As a reminder, the Study Management Plan will be used throughout the study and spells out the procedures and responsibilities of the stakeholder members. He briefly summarized the study corridor and expected outcome by describing SR 162 as an important north-south link for the Orting and Sumner communities as well as the surrounding areas of southeast Pierce County. The challenge of the study will be to recommend suitable strategies along the 8.11 mile segment of SR 162 that will meet current and future travel needs. The end result will be a study report identifying a ranked list of strategies for a 20-year vision.

T.J. reviewed with the committee members the Study Goals, the Corridor Vision, Study Objectives, the Purpose and Need Statement and the Study Assumptions which were discussed and agreed upon at the previous June 30th stakeholder committee meeting. The committee reviewed the information and had no further comments.

T.J. reviewed the Study Assumptions information with the group. A suggestion was made to add the year 2015 to the bullet stating “Pierce County Model will be used for modeling effort” to further clarify the model being used in the data analysis. Ming-Bang Shyu of WSDOT’s Transportation Data & GIS Office explained the 2015 and 2030 Pierce County model is being used. After a brief discussion no changes were approved.

The Community Engagement portion of the SR 162 Corridor Study effort, as T.J. explained, is well underway. Briefings to provide elected officials with information about the study have been conducted and additional briefings to update officials on the study’s progress will be scheduled around September 2016. The online survey to collect public input and comments about SR 162 was made available on July 25th and 150 responses have already been received. The WSDOT Olympic Region Communications Office has and will announce the survey through social media feeds and sent out information to media outlets, and local homeowner associations and veterans groups. T.J. explained to the committee that the next phased notification effort about the survey will be through Facebook and Twitter. He also encouraged the stakeholder committee to add the link to the survey onto their blogs and/or websites and to forward the survey information to others who are interested in the study. The online survey will close on August 19th, and a summary of the responses will be provided to the stakeholder committee. Jesse Hamashima of Pierce County asked if the survey response information would include where respondents live. T.J. explained the survey allows respondents to choose the zip code they live in.

Traffic Conditions – Existing & Future

Ming-Bang Shyu, WSDOT Transportation Data, GIS & Modeling Office provided a recap of information about the study’s Travel Demand Model. The study years used in the analysis are 2015, 2020, 2025 and 2035, and the study periods for travel demand modeling are 6:00 to 9:00 in the AM peak period and 3:00 to 6:00 in the PM peak period. The 2015 model validation results show they meet the criteria and measures in 85% to 87% of the cases for both AM and PM peak periods.

Ming explained the land use data that’s being used in the model was interpolated based on Pierce County’s 2015 and 2030 land use data. The anticipated development of the Tehaleh community (specifically the Alternative 3 version) was assumed to be an additional 9,800 households and 10,300 jobs in Year 2035. The question was asked about whether additional new developments such as the Plateau 465 community have been included in the data. Ming mentioned other new developments that were included in the County’s recently updated comprehensive plan have been included in the modal analysis. Additional questions were asked about the employment growth assumptions and whether the growth numbers being used is the highest growth scenario. Ming explained the growth numbers being used were the result of discussions between WSDOT and Pierce County staff. He will check the model to verify the land use data includes new developments as part of the growth rate and send out an email to inform the group.

After the meeting, Ming confirmed with the County that their model has assumed 500 housing units and zero employment for the Plateau 465 community for the Year 2030 based on the direction from the County Planning and Land Service Division. The 500 housing units were carried over and extrapolated with the estimated growth rates to Year 2035 model.

The base year travel time model during both the AM and PM peak periods meets the targets, however the data shows significant growth between the years 2025 and 2035. A suggestion from the committee was made that future maps include landmarks to make it easier for members to orient themselves with

locations of concern. The AM peak period demand to capacity ratio showed that by 2035 in the northbound direction between 128th Street and the SR 410 interchange, the V/C (volume to capacity) ratio is greater than 0.8 and 1.0. In the PM peak period, the V/C ratio showed that between 2025 and 2035 in the southbound direction is greater than 0.8 and 1.0 mostly from 128th Street north to the SR 410 interchange. The question was raised whether an LOS D threshold should be used as the baseline. Ming mentioned LOS D was based on the maximum service volume for two-lane undivided signalized arterial. Ming explained the average of 10 runs from SimTraffic simulation were used to compare against the observed travel time. The validation results showed the difference between the two is within the 15% criteria and the model is validated. Ming presented the intersection LOS results. There were 11 intersections, mostly signalized, that were analyzed. In the current year of the AM peak hour, there doesn't seem to be much congestion, except at SR 162 and SR 410 eastbound ramp which shows LOS F. In the year 2025 there are four intersections showing LOS F and in 2035 the majority of intersections are at LOS F. In the PM peak hour the current year shows four intersections with LOS F and in 2020, 2025 and 2035 the majority of the 11 intersections are at LOS F. In the PM peak hour the intersections of Rivergrove Drive, Pioneer Way, Military Road, and 128th Street are showing LOS F during all four years.

Travel time was measured between Meade McCumber Road and Lane Boulevard using SimTraffic software. The results showed that the southbound traffic in the AM and PM periods are congested in Year 2035 and mostly due to the volume of traffic making left turns at 128th Street. Further analysis of arterial travel time reliability showed both northbound and southbound directions the travel time index, which is the ratio of peak hour travel time to free flow travel time, would be higher than the reliability threshold 1.5. The key findings are the critical locations to focus on are 128th Street and Military Road. In concluding, Ming mentioned the possibility of making adjustments to the signal timing as needed in the analysis of future scenarios. Adjusting (or optimizing) signal timing including timing splits and cycles (with the same hardware) to better serve the future demand will be applied along with the proposed strategies for all other future scenario runs.

Considerations, Challenges and Opportunities

T.J. Nedrow presented a summary of elements that comprise the considerations, challenges and opportunities that are presented in this study. The Legislature has outlined the geographical limits of the study. He explained that the guiding documents which will drive the agreed upon strategies for the study are the goals, corridor vision, the study objectives, purpose and need and the assumptions. The study will take into consideration the expectations of the community as well as the greater Pierce County region when considering the screening criteria.

WSDOT, T.J. mentioned, will follow the practical solutions approach to recommending strategies that provide the greater value and opportunity for corridor improvement. The safety of the traveler is important and Target Zero strategies will be taken into consideration. The study will incorporate elements that promote and improve mobility, economic vitality, current technologies, events and environmental resources. T.J. noted the challenges facing the study as being funding constraints, future growth forecasting, access management, topography, environmental concerns, maintaining the local area vision and time constraints. He mentioned the study is an opportunity to engage the community in identifying meaningful strategies to carry forward, address local and regional needs, encourage practical solution approaches, partner onto other improvement opportunities, encourage other funding sources and involve other resource agencies.

Screening Criteria & Ranking Methodologies

WSDOT Olympic Region's Nazmul Alam gave an overview of the process of compiling a list of ideas, developing the screening criteria and ranking methodologies. Ideas and improvement strategies are compiled from brainstorming sessions, public input, plans, studies and other sources. The study team typically will perform a screening analysis of the ideas to identify strategies that can be further evaluated and screened. Nazmul mentioned sometimes the screening can be as simple as determining if the idea is reasonable or if it meets the study purpose and need, vision and goals.

After the initial screening, the study team will conduct further evaluation to be used in a more detailed screening process. Nazmul presented to the group the screening process that will be used in the study. The study team will conduct an initial screening of the brainstormed ideas generated during the meeting, public input through online survey, and from other sources, and present the results at the next stakeholder committee meeting in August. During the August meeting the team will conduct a detailed screening with the committee. Some of the detailed screening will include discussions about mobility, safety and feasibility.

Following the third stakeholder committee meeting, the study team will conduct further analysis of the remaining strategies and generate information that will be used in the scoring/ranking process. At meeting #4, the screening results will be presented as an unranked list of strategies. The study team will lead the stakeholder committee in an exercise to create a ranked list of strategies.

A fifth and final stakeholder committee meeting will be held to discuss the recommended ranked strategies. A question was asked whether the next stakeholder meeting will include information about the results of the online survey. T.J. Nedrow responded that the study team will to the extent feasible share the survey results with the committee.

Brainstorming Exercise

T.J. Nedrow presented the list of what was not working well on SR 162 that was created during the June 30th stakeholder committee meeting. The group took the opportunity to review and clarify the bulleted list. The result of the committee's discussion is the following revised list:

- (Many Signalized Intersection) Turn lanes are missing left turn lanes with enough storage length to accommodate traffic volume.
- (Deficient Shoulder widths in portions of the corridor) Nonexistent shoulders in some areas
- (Significant PM queues) at the intersection at 128th St E
- SR 410/SR 162 Interchange (Ramps are not operating well during AM & PM peak periods)
- SR 167 (NB) HOV doesn't extend south enough and affects SR 162 (westbound AM travel)
- SR 167 (NB AM) backups are backing up onto SR 162. Traffic diverts off SR 167 and onto SR 162 in Sumner vicinity.
- Too many single occupant drivers travelling from Orting to the Sumner train station use SR 162. Prefer to see more transit available.
- Travelers experience congestion resulting from (agricultural event) parking on highway shoulders (need park and ride facilities)
- Signal (coordination) timing of the 3 signals on SR 162 from Pioneer to SR 410 (Pioneer, River Grove and SR 410)
- Crashes shut down the highway. Need for better coordination.
- Significant intersection related crashes occurred at Pioneer Way intersection (Northbound)

T.J. led the committee through a brainstorming exercise listing the following ideas of what could be done to improve the SR 162 corridor:

- Improving Riverside Road and McCutcheon Road to use as an alternate route to SR 162
- Left turn channelization at SR 162
- Consider roundabouts at key locations
- Restricting left turns at unsignalized intersections to right in/right out
- Linking the Foothills Trail to the Sumner train station
- Add a park and ride lot at 128th and SR 162
- Add park and pool lots
- Opportunities to utilize park and ride lots for event parking
- Look at existing TDM along the SR 162 corridor
- HOV lanes are needed on SR 162 during peak periods
- Bus rapid transit service is needed between Orting and Sumner
- Public transit service needed on SR 162
- 3 lane configuration on SR 162
- Increase incident response along the SR 162 corridor
- ITS devices needed along the SR 162 corridor
- Train or commuter rail service needed and to include a stop at 128th/SR 162
- Intersection transit queue jumps along SR 162
- Expand existing vanpool availability
- Put tolls on SR 162
- Add reversible 3rd lane in key locations or throughout the SR 162 corridor
- Use historic bridge as a 3rd lane at river crossing
- Separated bus way
- Dedicated incident turnout areas along the SR 162 corridor
- Increase law enforcement presence along the SR 162 corridor
- SR 162/SR 410 interchange overpass to increase capacity
- Adequate shoulders for bicyclists, vehicle breakdowns and transit
- 3 lanes with transit in middle lane
- Reduce Tehaleh growth based on employment growth
- Constrain development
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle access into Sumner
- Increase bicycle storage at Sumner train station
- Implementing 1997 Route Development Plan improvements
- Assure that roadway facilities are provided along with development proposals
- Potential state policy changes to make it easier for cities to join back into Pierce Transit's benefit area
- Consider formation of transportation benefit or transit district

In consideration of the brainstorming improvements T.J. presented to the committee some of the major recommendations from WSDOT's 1997 SR 162/SR 410 to Junction SR 162 Route Development Plan (RDP). Those recommendations included

- Widen SR 162 from SR 410 to Pioneer Way near South Sumner as a five lane roadway
- From Pioneer to 144th near Orting, This section should be widened to a four lane highway with median barrier used to separate opposing direction of travel. Selected intersections in this segment would remain accessible to left turns and possible U-turns.
- Highway access management (befitting the corridor operation should be considered)
- Between 144th (MP 7.17) and Whitesell Street (MP 9.34) in Orting, the RDP recommends widening SR 162 similar to the five lane roadway SR 410 to 114th. Either a center two-way left-turn (if warranted) or raised islands should be used as a median treatment in this section of SR 162.
- Park & Ride lots; the route would benefit from such facilities.
- The Route Development Plan also called for increased emphasis and infrastructure improvement in the area of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) i.e. carpool/vanpools, walking and bicycling, and public transportation (Express Bus)

He also emphasized other areas that WSDOT plans to focus on; Demand Management strategies such as real time notifications to inform travelers of road and travel conditions, modal improvements and park and ride facilities will be reviewed and analyzed. The committee was reminded that the study team will also consider transit and rail improvement opportunities, highway safety improvements, and mobility opportunities in the strategy building process.

Schedule Review and Next Steps

T.J. reviewed with the committee the study schedule and outlined the next steps will be to provide the results of the online survey, present the initial screening results and discuss the strategies that will be further analyzed. Dennis Engel, WSDOT's Planning Manager mentioned the study team will determine the possibility of having two public information sharing meetings instead of one and let the committee know. The next Stakeholder Committee meeting was scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on August 25th at the City Hall in Sumner.

Recap / Actions

The committee was thanked for their efforts and participation today. The study team will be creating an initial screening of the items raised in the brainstorming exercise, and captured in the online survey effort. T.J. reminded the stakeholder committee that the brainstormed list of ideas that was developed will be sent out by email to the committee. Any comments, revisions or additional ideas should be emailed to T.J. by August 2.