



## **SR 167 Master Plan Policy Advisory Committee Meeting #5**

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Zoom

### **Policy Advisory Committee members in attendance:**

- Mayor Nancy Backus, City of Auburn
- Rep. Jake Fey, Washington State House of Representatives
- Senator Phil Fortunato, 31st District
- Caylin Jensen, LA for Senator Gildon
- Councilmember Pat Hulcey, City of Fife
- Michael Kosa, City of Sumner, Alternate
- Commissioner Dick Marzano, Port of Tacoma
- Councilmember Valerie O'Halloran, City of Renton
- Riley Patterson, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- Mayor Dana Ralph, City of Kent
- Darin Stavish, Pierce Transit, Alternate
- Carl See, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Jen Tetatzin, Pierce County

### **Technical Advisory Committee members/staff in attendance:**

- Kim Becklund, King County Metro
- Rob Brown, City of Kent
- Steve Friddle, City of Fife
- Ingrid Gaub, City of Auburn
- Aaron Halbert, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Shivani Lal, City of Renton
- Cecile Malik, City of Auburn
- Daniel Masterson, Senate Transportation Committee
- Austin Neilson, Sound Transit Government & Community Relations-South Corridor
- Ralph Rizzo, Federal Highway Administration Washington Division, Olympia
- Lindsey Sehmel, Pierce Transit
- Jim Seitz, City of Renton
- Ellen Talbo, City of Renton
- Ryan Windish, City of Sumner
- Ken Cook



**Presenters and project team members in attendance:**

- Amy Danberg, SR 167 Master Plan
- April Delchamps, WSDOT
- Daniel Dye, SR 167 Master Plan
- Zachary Howard, WSDOT
- Laurence Idos, SR 167 Master Plan
- Laura Lloyd, SR 167 Master Plan
- Loreana Marciante, SR 167 Master Plan
- George Mazur, WSDOT
- Roger Millar, WSDOT
- Thomas Noyes, WSDOT
- Kristin Sandstrom, WSDOT
- Gaius Sanoy, WSDOT
- Sarah Shannon, WSDOT
- Jeff Storrar, WSDOT
- Christina Strand, WSDOT
- Wendy Taylor, SR 167 Master Plan
- Karl Westby, SR 167 Master Plan
- Henry Yates, SR 167 Master Plan
- Steve Breaux, WSDOT



## **Meeting objectives:**

- Provide an update on community engagement outcomes
- Provide an overview of baseline and three refined scenarios
- Present and discuss the baseline and the three refined scenario analysis
- Review next steps

## **Introduction**

April Delchamps, Planning Manager, provided the official welcome and reviewed the objectives and agenda of the meeting.

## **Planning steps and partner meeting schedule**

April Delchamps, Planning Manager, reviewed the project timeline and partner meeting schedule. She pointed out that the project is currently in Phase 4, where the team is incorporating feedback from community members and partners. She noted that the project team is also looking into the future to determine how implementation will be based on the final recommendation.

## **Updates from sandbox**

April Delchamps, Planning Manager, provided additional project updates within the SR 167 study area. She highlighted South Pierce County Multimodal Connectivity study's second Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting and Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, SR 512 first Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), The SR 167 Completion project, and Tacoma to Puyallup Trail project. She shared that the SR 167 Master Plan team is coordinating closely with all the projects mentioned.

## **Community Engagement Update**

Amy Danberg, SR 167 Master Plan Partner & Community Engagement, gave a summary of the different community engagement events that happened in summer. She shared that the team is almost complete with community engagement, with another online open house coming up next Spring. Amy highlighted that the project team reached over 1,000 people in person between all summer events. Common themes the project team heard includes capacity expansion, improved connectivity, and planning for the future.

### *Fairs and Festivals*

Amy shared that the SR 167 Master Plan project team partnered with Gateway and 405 which helped draw people in and get them talking about the future of the SR 167 corridor.

### *Online Open House*

Amy shared that the project team conducted an online open house with a survey attached. The objective was to introduce the study at a high level and gather input from the community. The online open house was in 7 languages and included a phone in option to reduce the barrier for those people without internet access. The team also expanded the postcard mailer to include equity priority areas and diversified online and print advertising to target low-income and people who are Black, and people of color.

### *Key Feedbacks*

Amy shared that the key feedback the team heard from this work includes capacity expansion for SR 167, improved connectivity to I-5, I-405, SR 18, including other interchanges, expanded Sounder services, and comments on planning for the future.



### *Desired outcomes and demographic*

Amy noted that although the feedback received came from a diverse representative, the survey attached was skewed demographically. More people who identify as white and male took the survey, and majority of people who took the survey were from Puyallup, Bonney Lake, and Sumner.

### *Co-creation workshops*

Amy shared about a new approach to engage the community members along the corridor. She highlighted that the five equity focused co-creation workshops utilized partnership with community-based organizations and recruited community members through them to attend the workshops. She mentioned that nearly 70 community members attended both online and in-person workshops.

### *Key challenges and solutions*

Amy shared key challenges that community members mentioned include difficulty understanding toll lanes and prices should consider people with low-income, heavy traffic in the morning and afternoon, lack of connections to local neighborhoods and streets, limited public transportation options, long walking distance to transit, lack of bike infrastructure, and transit options not providing enough benefit to choose over driving.

Amy shared the solutions the community members came up with include capacity expansion to accommodate more traffic, expansion of Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) to accommodate shift workers, more HOV lanes, and more education on toll lanes.

## **Baseline and Three Refined Scenarios**

April Delchamps, Planning Manager, reiterated the vision and goals for the SR 167 Master Plan. She explained that by using the data and feedback gathered from partners and community members, the team went from a baseline with four themed scenarios to three refined scenarios, and ultimately, to a final recommendation.

April reviewed the baseline scenario and a summary of the three scenarios. She mentioned that the baseline scenario includes funded projects and highlighted the projects around and within the SR 167 study area that are fundamental to all the scenarios.

## **Incorporating Key Feedbacks**

Henry Yates, Facilitator, explained that the projects that were included were based off community members and EAC feedback. The feedback on transit, sidewalks, safety, traffic congestion, and tolling were taken into consideration as the team identify the recommended projects in the scenarios.

## **Three Scenarios**

### *Scenario A*

April shared that Scenario A focuses on extensive transit investments by leveraging on transit agency partners and their plans. She shared that it would include additional routes in all directions (north, east, south, west) of the study area. Other projects and strategies will include continuous dual express toll lane between I-405 and SR 410, direct access ramps to Sumner, Kent, and Auburn, rebuilding interchanges to reduce weaving in traffic, arterial improvements to improve access to manufacturing industrial centers, and a bus rapid transit between Puyallup and Renton.

### *Scenario B*



April shared that the focus of Scenario B is mainly on the SR 167 corridor facility. Projects and strategies include interchange improvements to address bottlenecks and freight access, better access to regional centers and manufacturing industrial centers, and more frequent bus routes along SR 167.

#### *Scenario C*

April highlighted the difference in Scenario C is a truck-only lane on SR 167 from SR 18 to SR 167 extension. She mentioned that it includes a truck corridor from Port of Tacoma up to highway 18. He shared that this location was chosen due to fast growth in truck trips within the study area and growth in manufacturing industrial land use between Fife, Sumner, and Auburn.

### **Equity Advisory Committee Feedback**

Henry Yates, Equity Advisory Committee Facilitator, reminded the PAC who is invited and attended EAC meetings. He shared that the key feedbacks from the EAC are broken into three categories—Transit, Bicycle and Pedestrian, and Cars and Trucks. He shared that for transit, the team will be recommending extended bus service and additional safe parking for public transits. Henry shared that in terms of Bicycle and Pedestrian feedback, there are language barriers that needs to be addressed when considering signage and other communication. And finally, Henry shared that congestion is a major issue for cars and trucks. He also shared that language barrier is an issue when understanding tolling policies along the corridor.

### **Analysis of the Scenarios**

April Delchamps, Planning Manager, introduced the next part of the presentation, and explained how the team will be presenting the analysis results. She explained that team will be sharing the results related to each of the goals, and across each of the scenarios to summarize what is common in all scenarios and highlight the differences. She noted that the analysis being shared today is a summary of the information presented at the Technical Advisory Committee meeting 3 weeks ago.

#### *Equity Analysis*

April shared that all scenarios would have improved bicycle system and growth in access to jobs via transit, especially in equity priority areas. She also shared that a low-income toll program will be recommended, although the decision to implement will be carried out by Washington Transportation Commission.

She shared that the notable difference between the scenarios all stem from the greater level of investment in transit and active modes for Scenario A. This will result in more job accessibility during off-peak hours and greater level of sidewalk system in equity priority areas.

#### *Environmental Analysis*

April shared that overall, environmental impacts are similar throughout the corridor. All scenarios would have lower VMT per capita and would address existing environmental conditions along SR 167.

She shared that the key differences include Scenario A having more local roadway projects with potential environmental impact compared to Scenario B and C. And Scenario B and C would have more environmental impact on along SR 167 due to interchange and direct access projects compared to Scenario A.

#### *Safety Analysis*

April shared that all scenarios have substantial investments in locations with high crash history in SR 167, including dual ETLs, auxiliary lanes near SR 18, and improvements near SR 410 and SR 512 interchange.



The key differences include Scenario B having higher investments in high-speed area, while Scenario A has more investment in active mode transportation infrastructure and focuses on areas with more serious pedestrians and bicycle crashes.

#### *Multimodal- Active Modes*

April shared that in all scenarios, there is an equal investment in bike infrastructure. She also noted that near regional growth centers, there are investments close the remaining gaps for the sidewalk system.

The main difference is the level of system completeness or how much of the system is built out within a mile of SR 167. Scenario A will have a higher level of completeness compared to Scenario B and C.

#### *Multimodal- Transit*

April shared that across all the scenarios, there is a significant increase in frequency and span of service to the major origins and destinations that tend to generate the greatest concentrations of transit trips and overlap with equity priority areas and community-identified destinations.

She noted that daily bus boardings on SR 167 are slightly higher for Scenario B compared to Scenarios A or C, because there is more frequent service between some transit hubs, notably Kent, Auburn and Renton, under Scenario B.

#### *Mobility & Economic Vitality- Traffic Congestion*

Karl Westby, Traffic Lead, shared that in general, across all scenarios, there is improvement on travel times and speed. He added that Expressed Toll Lanes (ETLs) will potentially reduce congestion and will remain reliable on trip times. He shared that the team has identified complementary projects to manage shifts in travel demand on I-405 and SR 512. He noted that the analysis assumed that HOV3+ and managed toll lanes are part of the ETL concepts.

He mentioned that there is a difference in performance metrics when comparing Scenario C to A and B, which shows slightly lower performance in person throughput and reliable travel times on ETLs.

#### *Mobility & Economic Vitality- Freight Reliability*

Karly Westby shared that freight throughput input is comparable between all scenarios. He noted that travel time reliability is similar in all scenarios due to friction in the truck lane. He shared that the difference is seen in Scenario B and C where they reflect more investment in interchanges.

#### *Practical Solutions and State of Good Repair*

Karl shared that all scenarios are feasible to implement and maintain. He added that it also increases the resiliency of the multimodal and multi-agency transportation system. He shared that the project cost is all within range of each and up to \$1 billion in difference.

#### *Key Summary Findings*

Karl summarized the findings and shared that costs are very similar, but each scenarios offer a unique benefit. He noted that only a few projects drive the difference in cost and results, therefore, there is an opportunity to mix and match projects/strategies for the final recommendation.

## **What we understand**

April summarized what the team understands based on all the analysis and scenarios. She shared the following:

- **Expanded transit access** is key to serving vulnerable and overburdened communities.

- **Transit ridership grows strongly** with increased service levels, frequency, span of service and routes.
- **More capacity on SR 167 reduces delay** on arterials within study area and **improves reliability/resiliency** for freight and regional trips.
- **Express toll lanes** benefit all modes.
- **Interchange improvements** benefit freight and multimodal access to community-identified destinations.
- **Filling gaps in the active mode** network are aligned with feedback from vulnerable and overburdened communities.
- **General purpose** capacity increases per-capita VMT and could shift bottlenecks to other adjacent facilities.

## Discussion

- Mayor Dana Ralph, City of Kent, asked where funding is coming from for all the local projects and asked about SR 167 capacity improvements.
  - Karl Westby reiterated that all scenarios would include additional lanes in each direction that will shift local traffic to SR 167. He added that the scenarios will increase capacity in the corridor and will move 30-40% more vehicles and people.
- Mayor Dana Ralph shared a concern regarding toll lanes as a more expensive alternative is not helpful for low-income communities.
  - Karl noted some observations and shared that a two-lane system not only allows more opportunity for better trips, and helps the general-purpose lanes, it also results in significantly lower tolls.
  - Secretary Millar added that the goal of the project is to improve the ability to move people, trucks, and goods along the corridor. He noted that the team is constrained by state law that directs the team what to reduce VMT per capita across the system. He added that funding will come from local and state funding, and in some cases transit agency funding.
- Mayor Dana Ralph shared that they are very supportive of improving transit in the south. She noted that that even though SR 167 and 405 has similarities, they are also very different in terms of commuter traffic being prevalent in SR 167. She appreciated the inclusion of shift workers when gathering feedback from the community.
- Councilmember Valerie O'Halloran, City of Renton, thanked the team for the presentation. She added that she's very pleased to see the Grady Way/ Rainier Ave grade separation concept. She noted that she wants to see a clear connection between I-405 Master Plan and SR 167 Master Plan pertaining to the intersection because it is a highly congested area. She asked a clarifying question if the connection to Valley Medical Center on 43rd interchange is being improved.
  - Karl Westby answered that improvements would address the issue for nonmotorized travelers in that area and identifying a rebuild of the interchange for a permanent solution.
- Councilmember Valerie O'Halloran shared a follow up comment if there are conversations around improvements where I-405 and SR 167 come together in the north.
  - Secretary Millar shared Renton to Bellevue is under construction and there will be significant increase in capacity, particularly in express toll lanes, from SR 167 to 405.

Secretary Millar reminded the committee members that they are not picking a scenario. He added that the members can identify what they like in each scenario that the team can use to move forward with a final recommendation.

- Mayor Nancy Backus, City of Auburn, supported the improvements to state the interchange of 18 and 167 as well as the auxiliary lanes. She shared a concern on the additional toll lanes if they are 3+ toll lanes.
  - Secretary Millar noted that the 3+ is an assumption, and the team will need to look into more studies if it will work with 2+ as well.
- Senator Phil Fortunato opposed any adjustment to tolls based on income. He added that there could be other things to help low-income people and reduce cost. He shared a concern around on route 18 to Auburn, and the congestion around Muckleshoot Casino.
  - Karl Westby noted that common to several scenarios, there's an improvement from SR 167 to SR 18 east bound, that would add an auxiliary lane. He shared that the team is also looking at west bound SR onto south bound SR 167 for a short auxiliary lane to improve traffic flow.
- Senator Fortunato recommended if the merge lane on SR 167 is extended to the off ramp to 15th, would relieve traffic.
  - Karl shared that it has been identified and included in the scenarios.
- Senator Fortunato asked the team if they have any information on the proposed off ramp to Muckleshoot.
  - Karl shared that it is an action item that the team can follow up with.
  - Riley Patterson, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, shared that he will update team and will share any updates he hears.
- Councilmember Valerie O'Halloran, City of Renton, asked about moving trucks on toll lanes and asked to hear more about it.
  - Karl Westby clarified that the recommendation to increase the limit, from 10,000 pounds, will allow delivery trucks such as UPS to utilize the lane. Secretary Millar added that the intent is no to allow the trucks for free, but it will allow them to have a Good to Go pass and participate in the program.
- Mayor Dana Ralph, City of Kent, showed support towards addition of second express toll lane, and low-income tolling program, SR 167 and central interchange for freight mobility, SR 167 north bound auxiliary lane from 277 St to Willis, and building the missing off ramps on SR 18 and SR 167.
- Ingrid Gaub, City of Auburn, asked in the chat what the max weight is for the medium duty freight to use the ETL.
  - Carl See, Washington State Transportation Commission, answered that 10,000 pounds is current limit. He added that the exact weight increase is still yet to be determined.
- Jim Seitz, City of Renton, shared his concern with interchange in I-405 in Renton since the traffic modeling will bring more congestion across all three scenarios.
  - Karl confirmed that construction under work for the Renton to Bellevue improvements. He added that there are components in both I-405 and SR 167 Master Plan that will be evaluated and ensure that the solutions will sync up.





- Carl See, Washington State Transportation Commission, clarified that the commission is not currently undertaking an assessment for a low-income tolling program. He noted that they are waiting for further directions and potential funding from the legislature.

### **Next steps**

April Delchamps, Planning Manager, shared the next PAC meeting will happen in March 8, and will send a calendar hold soon. She highlighted that the next community engagement will be an online open house in mid-March. She invited the PAC members to reach out and set up a meeting to address questions or concerns.