SR 167 Master Plan Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #5

Wednesday, November 9, 2022
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Zoom

Technical Advisory Group members in attendance:

- ☑ Jennifer Barnes, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
- ☑ Chad Bieren, City of Kent
- ☑ Kacie Bray, Auburn Area Chamber of Commerce
- ☑ Rob Brown, City of Kent
- ☑ Florendo Cabudol, City of SeaTac
- ☑ Eric Chipps, Sound Transit
- ☑ Ken Cook, City of Puyallup
- ☑ Ken Davies, City of Puyallup
- ☑ Diane Dobson, Renton Chamber of Commerce
- ☑ Ingrid Gaub, City of Auburn
- ☑ Aaron Halbert, Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC)
- ☑ Ryan Johnstone, City of Bonney Lake
- ☑ Michael Kosa, City of Sumner
- ☑ Owen Kehoe, King County Metro
- ☑ Shivani Lal, City of Renton
- ☑ Sharon Love, Federal Highway Administration
- ☑ Cecile Malik, City of Auburn
- ☑ Riley Patterson, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- ☑ Carl See, Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC)
- ☑ Jim Seitz, City of Renton
- ☑ Darin Stavish, Pierce Transit
- ☑ Jacob Sweeting, City of Auburn
- ☑ Ellen Talbo, City of Renton
- ☑ Jen Tetatzin, Pierce County
- ☑ Ryan Windish, City of Sumner
- ☑ Christine Wolf, Northwest Seaport Alliance and Port of Tacoma

Presenters and project team members in attendance:

- ☑ Chris Breiland, SR 167 Master Plan
- ☑ Dylan Counts, WSDOT
- ☑ Amy Danberg, SR 167 Master Plan
- ☑ April Delchamps, SR 167 Master Plan
- ☑ Daniel Dye, SR 167 Master Plan
- ☑ Zachary Howard, WSDOT
- ☑ Laurence Idos, SR 167 Master Plan
- ☑ Laura Lloyd, SR 167 Master Plan
- ☑ Julie Meredith, WSDOT
- ☑ Loreana Marciante, SR 167 Master Plan
- ☑ George Mazur, WSDOT
- ☑ Gaius Sanoy, WSDOT
- ☑ Jeff Storrar, SR 167 Master Plan
- ☑ Christina Strand, WSDOT
- ☑ Wendy Taylor, SR 167 Master Plan
- ☑ Karl Westby, SR 167 Master Plan
- ☑ Henry Yates, SR 167 Master Plan

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 reiterated that this Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting is the fifth of the seven meetings scheduled. April pointed out that the project is currently in Phase 4, where the team is focused on developing and evaluating multimodal, multi-agency scenarios. Phase 5 shifted for a few months for the report to be delivered, but still on schedule. The project team is also looking into the future to determine how implementation will 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 just had their second Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, followed by a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, and an online open house. The SR 167 Master Plan project team meets monthly with the two study teams to coordinate planning efforts.

April also provided updates on Gateway SR 167 Completion Project, Tacoma to Puyallup Trail, SR 167 facilities.

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. A detailed summary for tabling at fairs and festivals, the first online open house, and co-creation workshops were sent to the committee members prior to the meeting. 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

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

The project team also 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 hosted in seven 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 we 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 demographics

Amy noted that although the engagement in the online open house came from a representative sample of the community, the survey attached was skewed demographically. More people who are white and male took the survey, and majority of people were from Puyallup, Bonney Lake, and Sumner. The comments did come from a diverse age range.

Co-creation workshops

Amy also shared that the project team conducted five equity focused co-creation workshops along the corridor. The project team utilized partnership with community-based organizations and recruited community members through them to attend the workshops. There were a lot of lessons learned from using this approach as well as feedback from the community. Nearly 70 community members attended both online and in-person workshops.

Key challenges and solutions from the workshops

Some key challenges that community members mentioned includes 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.

Some solution community members shared includes 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.

Baseline Scenario & Fundamental Projects

Chris Breiland, Project Manager, reviewed the baseline scenario and a summary of the three scenarios. He 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.

Scenario A

Chris shared that Scenario A focuses on extensive transit investments by leveraging on transit agency partners and their plans. This will include additional routes in al 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.

- Darin Stavish, Pierce Transit, asked if SR 167 BRT is with King County Metro.
    - Chris responded that the SR 167 BRT is not on any transit agency's current plans. Conversations with transit agency partners are ongoing to see if this aligns with their goals. April added that at this moment, no transit agencies have been identified.

Scenario B

Chris 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

Chris highlighted that what's different in Scenario C is a truck-only lane on SR 167 from SR 18 to SR 167 extension. It creates 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.

Incorporating Key Feedback

Henry Yates, Equity Advisory Committee Facilitator, introduced how feedback received from the committee, and people that live along the corridor were incorporated into the scenarios. He shared the key feedback the team heard on transit, bicycle and pedestrian, and cars and trucks in the corridor. Henry mentioned that the feedback from each category were connected to projects in each scenario. For example, to address the challenge of transit not being reliable or accessible, the projects included in the scenarios include new east-west transit routes, new on-demand transit services, and connections to regional destinations along the corridor.

Analysis of the Scenarios

Chris Breiland, Project Manager, explained that the team will first share the results related to each goal, across each scenario. Then, the team will summarize what is common across all scenarios and highlight the differences.

Equity Analysis

Laura Lloyd, Equity and Environmental Lead, shared that all scenarios will have improved bicycle system and grown 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

Laura Lloyd, Equity and Environmental Lead, 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

Chris Breiland, Project Manager, 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.

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

Chris Breiland, Project Manager, shared that in all scenarios, there is an equal investment in bike infrastructure. Near regional growth centers, there are investments close the remaining gaps for the sidewalk system. For the Interurban Trail, safety improvements will include lighting, security, and improved access/crossing.

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.

- Jen Tetatzin, Pierce County, asked in the chat if there is a good reference that defines WSDOT's "level of completeness" standard.
    - Chris responded that the level of system of completeness is not a WSDOT standard or term and was identified for this study. System completeness is defined as having a sidewalk on at least one side of an arterial with the study area or one mile of SR 167.

Multimodal- Transit

Chris Breiland, Project Manager, shared that across all scenarios, transit travel times between transit hubs, expanded service hours, direct access ramps to Kent and Auburn and on demand transit services in Equity Priority areas.

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. And 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.

Karl showed a series of graphics that illustrated congestion levels in year 2030 on general purpose lanes and express toll lanes during morning and afternoon peak hours, traveling northbound and southbound:

- *Northbound Travel GP Lane- AM Peak Period*: with No Build (Base) condition, there is heavy congestion in middle and south of corridor. Scenarios A, B, and C shows improvements in traffic, however it pushes traffic up north to Renton area. He also noted in Scenario C, there is some congestion south of SR 18 due to lack of ETLs.
- *Northbound Travel ETL- AM Peak Period:* with No-Build (Base) condition, there is heavy traffic throughout the corridor. Scenarios A and B alleviates the congestion across the corridor with exception of moderate congestion as it approaches I-405. Scenario C, with a single ETL south of SR 18, there are still moderate congestions.
- *Southbound Travel GP- PM Peak Period*: No-Build (Base) will have heavy traffic across the corridor. Scenario A and B shows major improvements due to added ETL capacity and auxiliary lanes, but still has congestion south of SR 18. Scenario C shows heavy congestion approaching south SR 516 and SR 18 due to auxiliary lanes ending and ETLs going from two lanes to one, causes traffic to weave and causes backups.
- *Southbound Travel ETL- PM Peak Period:* No-Build (Base) shows moderate to heavy congestion. With Scenario A and B, congestion is cleared up. The single lane in south of SR 18 causes moderate congestion.

Karl also shared another set of data that showed person throughput at key locations. All three scenarios showed an increase between 23%-56%. Data on vehicle delay was also shown and he shared that AM delay reductions are from 80% to 87% reduction in peak period delay, while PM peak is reduced from 70% to 80%.

- Christine Wolf, Northwest Seaport Alliance and Port of Tacoma, asked in the chat if major arterials were accounted in the data.
    - Karl responded that this primarily focused on SR 167 corridor and major connecting highways. Chris Breiland also added in the chat that there is a separate set of metrics for delay on the local street system, but they are not based on the VISSIM model that Karl is speaking to. However, the patterns are very similar on arterials.
- Christine Wolf followed up with a question in the chat and asked what the SR 18 interchange improvements would do to the corridor, eastbound, since it is causing congestion in all scenarios.
    - Chris responded by sharing that building an auxiliary lane from eastbound SR 18 to eastbound 164 could potentially alleviate the congestion.

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. The difference is also seen in Scenario B and C where they reflect more investment in interchanges.

Practical Solutions and State of Good Repair

Chris Breiland, Project Manager, 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. The project cost is all within range of each and up to $1 billion in difference.

Key Summary Findings

Chris Breiland 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.

Discussion

Amy Danberg opened the space for discussion and asked the TAC members if they have any clarifying questions or initial reactions.

- Jim Seitz, City of Renton, thanked the team for a thorough presentation. He shared a concerned about the heavy traffic congestion approaching I-405 in all scenarios and recommended that the team to look at the I-405 Program and if there are planned projects that could be noted in the plan. He added that maybe more analysis or study needs to be done to address the issue.
    - Karl responded and shared that there is a 405 Master Plan with improvements around Tukwila. He also noted that a lot of the traffic congestion is northbound, going west to Tukwila.

- Michael Kosa, City of Sumner, thanked the team for all the work and through presentation. He asked about funding for the scenarios, specifically in Scenario A. He also shared a concern that only on-network improvements will be constructed and asked if off-network improvements are picked up by WSDOT. What would implementation look like?
    - April Delchamps, Planning Manager, responded by sharing that since this is a multi-agency plan, the team leans on partner agencies to get implementation done. She noted that at this point, the team has not identified the funding piece and it would be the next step in the plan. The rest of the team added that the next steps would be creating a funding and phasing plan similar to the approach done with the I-405 Master Plan.

- Michael Kosa followed up with what that the funding look like on a local level.
    - The team responded by sharing the funding and phasing plan didn't assume the partners fully take on funding projects and strategies.

- Ryan Windish, City of Sumner, asked in the chat what direct access ramps are.
    - Chris Breiland responded that for this project, direct access ramps refer to on- and off-ramps directly from the Express Toll Lanes to a local street or another highway.

- Eric Chipps, Sound Transit, asked a follow up question and asked if the direct access ramps are being utilized in the modeling.
    - Chris Breiland answered yes, including buses that carries about 30-45 passengers based on the model.

- Eric Chipps clarified an assumption in the modeling if scenarios had new routes from an unidentified agency traversing the entire corridor. He commented that this is adding a lot of trips in the corridor and noted that Sounder is the best option for transit along SR 167 right now since it is reliable and covers the entire corridor as well.
    - Chris Breiland answered that on Scenario A & C there are new routes that traverses the entire corridor and utilizes the direct access ramps. Amy included that the team also

heard feedback from the community about the Sounder about having expanded hours outside of usual commute time frame.

- Jim Seitz, City of Renton, asked if all scenarios have all HOT/HOV lanes? He shared a concern on how residents and transits, especially in Renton, can access those facilities directly.
    - Chris Breiland answered that between I-405 and SR 18, there are HOT/HOV lanes. However, south of SR 18, Scenario A and B will have the dual express toll lane while Scenario C will have a single express lane and a truck-only lane. Chris also addressed that in the modeling work, there are areas of entry to access the express toll lanes, but it may not be a direct access point.

- Ingrid Gaub, City of Auburn, shared that Auburn is happy the completion of the SR 18 interchange in all scenarios. She also asked what the impact to the local streets is so they can evaluate the projects. How much lift is on the local agencies versus state and federal agencies in all scenarios?
    - Chris Breiland responded and said that are maps of local streets that shows vehicle hours of delay. The team will share those maps to the members.
- Ingrid followed up with another question and asked what are the direct access ramps are connecting to and what are the benefits? She is unsure if buses will be able to maneuver on Main Street due to limited turn movement capabilities and narrow streets.
    - Chris responded that all direct access ramps are centered around transit centers and growth centers. In Auburn, it will provide connection to downtown and transit stations. The team will follow up with more details and more planning and alternatives analysis would need to be completed.

- Michael Kosa, City of Sumner, asked if there is a project list for each scenario that the cities can have after the meeting?
    - April Delchamps, Planning Manager, shared the team has a preliminary list so far of projects that can be shared.

- Jim Seitz, City of Renton, asked for more information on a few cross sections of the mainline facility and major overpasses to give people a sense of total number of lanes
    - Chris Breiland, Project Manager, is working on it and will share it very soon.

- Christine Wolf, Northwest Seaport Alliance and Port of Tacoma, thanked the team for a job well done in presenting the information that is currently available.
    - Eric Chipps echoed the comment.

- Ryan Windish, City of Sumner, asked if any of the transit partners are currently working on any on-demand transit services especially in Equity Priority Areas.
    - Eric Chipps, Sound Transit, responded no, they are currently not in that business, but willing to help with promotion of services.
    - Owen Kehoe, King County Metro, shared that Ride Pingo service is in Kent, however, there is no funding to expand it.
    - Darin Stavish, Pierce Transit, answered that they have runner service, however, there is no funding to expand it.

- Jim Seitz, City of Renton, asked if there is a slide on equity versus congestion. Is there a relationship between the impact of each scenario and where the congestion will happen? He shared a concern that it's important to lower the impact of congestion in equity priority areas as planning continues.
    - Chris Breiland, Project Manager, that the team has the data to evaluate it.

Next steps

- April Delchamps, Planning Manager, shared that int the next meeting, the team will provide the recommendation and additional community engagement updates over the next months. She invited the TAC members to reach out and set up a meeting to address questions or concerns.