

WSDOT's Corridor Sketch Initiative is a collaborative planning process with agency partners to identify performance gaps and select high-level strategies to address them on the 304 corridors statewide. This Corridor Sketch Summary acts as an executive summary for one corridor. Please review the User Guide for Corridor Sketch Summaries prior to using information on this corridor:

SR 163: SR 16 Jct to Point Defiance (Vashon Ferry Terminal)

This three-mile north-south corridor, also known as N Pearl Street, runs between the State Route 16 junction and Washington State Ferry's Point Defiance-Tahlequah Landing in the city of Tacoma. The route passes through Tacoma and the northwest tip of the city of Ruston. The corridor is predominantly urban in character with land uses primarily consisting of single- and multi- family residences and commercial retailers scattered throughout. As the corridor nears Point Defiance, density decreases and recreation becomes the main land use. Multiple recreation sites are at the north end of the corridor, including Commencement Bay, Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, Five Mile Drive, Ruston Way, and Point Defiance Park. The heavily forested Point Defiance Park includes Fort Nisqually Living History Museum, Science and Math Institute, and Owen Beach. A BNSF Railway runs through a tunnel perpendicularly under the corridor at the north end.



Current Function

SR 163 serves the city of Tacoma and the community of Ruston in Pierce County continuing via a ferry route to Tahlequah on Vashon Island in King County. The corridor encompasses all of SR 163 and provides connections to the nearby Point Defiance Park, Tacoma Community College, and the Point Defiance-Tahlequah Landing, major trip attractors on this route. It also serves as the primary access to commercial retail stores and restaurants. Along with providing access to SR 16, the corridor also provides access to Ruston Way, a popular waterfront destination. The corridor also serves as a recreational route and for users attending various annual events, such as the Taste of Tacoma, Freedom Festival, Sound to Narrows Running Event, and Zoo Lights. Pierce Transit and Paratransit both provide service along the corridor. Sidewalks are located on the corridor and pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations are provided in the vicinity of Point Defiance Park, including Five Mile Drive.

Future Function

Based on the projected population, land use, and economic trends, the future function of this corridor is expected to remain the same.

Highlights and Performance

SR 163 is a four-lane highway that transitions between divided and undivided throughout its length. There are several designated left and right turn lanes at the intersections. A center turn lane is present intermittently along the corridor. The annual average daily traffic on this corridor is highest near the SR 16 interchange and lowest at the ferry terminal.

What's working well?

- The corridor provides access or connection to multiple multimodal options such as walking, bicycling, ferries, and transit centers.
- The parking and pedestrian facilities that have been installed are working well.
- The corridor provides vehicles with easy access through Ruston.

What needs to change?

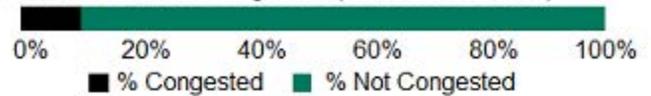
- Over 10% of the corridor experiences congestion on a regular basis.
- Roughly 18% of pavements surveyed are in poor to very poor condition.

WSDOT monitors the state system in ongoing efforts to track asset performance. For this corridor, WSDOT finds:

High	Low	
25,718	1,230	Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
8.7%	3.0%	Bus/Truck Percent
11.82		Number of Lane Miles
9		# of Signalized/Stop Controlled Intersections
\$0		Corridor Investments (2005-2016)

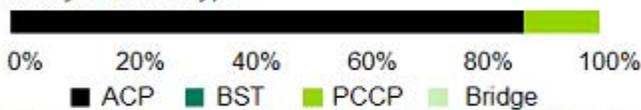
Mobility

Percent of Corridor Congested (Statewide Screen)

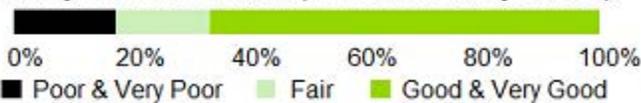


Preservation

Roadway Surface Type



Roadway Surface Condition (Percent of Surveyed Area)



Corridor Bridge Preservation Needs



Environment

	Protect	Restore/ Enhance/ Assess
Fish Barriers	None	0% to Do
Noise Walls	0% Built	0% Proposed
Chronic Environmental Deficiencies	0% Resolved	0% Unresolved
Wildlife Connectivity	0 Structures in Place	0 High Priority Miles
Stormwater Treatment	1 BMPs	Retrofit Prioritization in progress
Zero % of Corridor with high potential for increased Climate Impacts		
None Wetland Mitigation Locations		
None Historical Bridges		

1) 2015 data unless otherwise noted. 2) For more information see the User Guide for Corridor Sketch Summaries at <http://bit.ly/WSDOTcorridorsketch>

What we heard from our partners

WSDOT collected feedback from agency partners. Key themes included:

- Desire for better communication with WSDOT Local Programs regarding "Main Street" or "Parkway" designs from the Town of Ruston Comprehensive Plan.
- A strong desire for design speed to align with posted speed and speed reduction from 30 mph to 25 mph from N 46th St Vicinity to N Park Ave in Ruston.
- Concerns over events at Point Defiance Park impacting SR 163 in Ruston.
- Interest expressed in wider sidewalks (with curb bulb outs, on-street parking, wide fog line paint stripe) and other improvements.

Strategies

WSDOT identified the following strategies and associated actions to keep the corridor working well and address performance gaps. Regional partners collaborated on high-level mobility strategies. The identified strategies are not meant to be all-inclusive, nor an established list of priorities. Further evaluation is needed before any strategy can be recommended as a solution to address performance. Project funding decisions will take place at the programming phase, and are subject to statewide prioritization. For more strategy information, visit the Corridor Sketch Summary User Guide.

Policy Goals / Strategies Description and Near-Term Actions

Economic Vitality

Under Development	<i>WSDOT will continue to work with partners in developing strategies to address economic vitality.</i>
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Environment

Protect and Maintain	<i>Protect and maintain existing assets that provide environmental function (these include WSDOT's mitigation sites, storm water systems, fish passable culverts).</i>
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Enhance or Restore	<i>Enhance or restore natural areas and environmental functions associated with the multimodal transportation system.</i>
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Fish Barrier Retrofit	<i>WSDOT has prioritized the removal of state-owned culverts that block habitat for salmon and steelhead. See interactive map of uncorrected fish barriers at http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/FishPassage/default.htm.</i>
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Mobility

Assessment	<i>A mobility performance strategy has not been identified by WSDOT.</i>
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Preservation

Maintenance	<i>Based on expenditure history, it is expected that the top three activities will continue to be maintenance on snow and ice control, pavement repair, and rest areas.</i>
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Pavement	<i>WSDOT has identified three Pavement actions in the next six years encompassing 100% of the corridor.</i>
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Safety

Investment	<i>WSDOT has identified two Safety Investment actions in the next six years encompassing 91% of the corridor.</i>
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Stewardship

Planning	<i>Under Practical Solutions, the Corridor Sketch Initiative identifies corridor performance, and assesses alternative strategies to improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.</i>
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This segment is an urban freight, recreational, and tourism corridor. It is a north-south commuter route for Vashon Island and the city of Tacoma.

This corridor segment experienced two hours of daily congestion near SR 16 and 15 hours in the northbound direction between Highlands Parkway and N 26th St Vicinity.

Corridor Segment Characteristics

- This segment of SR 163 an urban four-lane facility, with alternating left turn lanes and planted medians. Posted speed is 35 mph in level terrain.
- The Freight and Goods Transportation designation was T-3 with annual tonnage ranging from 1,270,000 to 1,780,000 and daily trucks from 500 to 770 (3.2% to 3.0%) in 2017.
- The annual average daily traffic ranged from a low of 21,000 to a high of 29,000 in 2016.

Contributing Factors

- High traffic volumes and traffic signals reduce capacity.
- Traffic generators in the vicinity of the corridor include Tacoma Community College (TCC), Wilson High School, Westgate North Shopping Center, various parks including Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, Breakwater Marina, and WSDOT's Point Defiance-Tahlequah Ferry.

Mobility Strategies:

Local Network Improvements

- Work with City of Tacoma to improve signal timing operations to enhance traffic flow.
- Work with City of Tacoma to evaluate pedestrian signal timing at N 9th St and 6th Ave to lengthen or shorten walk times south of the SR 16/SR 163 interchange to improve mode shift.

Further Study

- Study options to improve traffic flow through the segment and at SR 16 interchange.



For more information

To find out more information about this corridor or how to get involved, please contact:

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Washington State Department of Transportation's Corridor Sketch Initiative is a set of planning activities that engage our partners to define the context and performance information for all of the state's 304 highway corridors. The Corridor Sketch complements and supports regional planning processes in Washington. It is not intended to duplicate, substitute or compete with other planning efforts; nor is it intended to generate lists of projects.

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