

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 7: US 12 Jct (Morton) to SR 706 Jct (Elbe)

This 17-mile long north-south corridor is located in Lewis County, just southwest of Mt Rainier National Park. The corridor runs between the US Route 12 junction in Morton and the State Route 706 junction in Elbe. The corridor is predominately rural in character as it winds through semi-mountainous terrain, cutting through a portion of the Cascade Mountains. Land use along the route is heavily forested and undeveloped. Within Morton, the corridor's density increases and land use is residential with a concentration of commercial and industrial businesses off the corridor. Within Elbe, the corridor is rural in character with residential and commercial land uses. In addition to crossing over multiple creeks, the corridor crosses over the Nisqually River at the north end. The entire corridor runs parallel to the Tacoma Rail Mountain Division rail line and intersects the rail line at Elbe and at the north side of Morton. Strom Air Field is located near the corridor at the southern end.



Current Function

SR 7 is a state highway that runs through Lewis and Pierce counties, intersecting several other state highways along its course from Morton to Tacoma. This corridor provides access to Mt Rainier, the community of Mineral, Mineral Lake, Alder Lake, and other recreation and tourist destinations. This is the only route that provides access to Mineral. This route may be used as a detour for trucks with emergency supplies and perishable loads during a closure of Interstate 5 and as such, it is listed as a route in the Mt. Rainier Hazards Response Plan. The corridor serves as a route for log trucks traveling to sawmills in Morton and other locations. Through Morton, the corridor serves as a “main street”. The Tacoma Rail runs between Elbe and the Alta Wood Products Lumber Mill in Morton, which leases the rail line to Mt Rainier Scenic Railroad for tourist excursions. In addition to intersecting with US 12, this route also connects with SR 508 in Morton and SR 706 in Elbe. There are sidewalks present along the corridor in Morton and shoulder use is permitted for bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the route.

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

This section of SR 7 is a two-lane, undivided, unsignalized highway with occasional turn lanes throughout. The annual average daily traffic on this corridor is highest at its junction with US 12 and lowest near its junction with SR 508.

What's working well?

- The entire corridor performs above WSDOT's congestion threshold.
- All of the surveyed pavements on this corridor are in fair or better condition.

What needs to change?

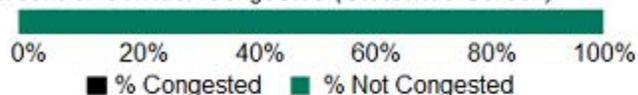
- Three bridge preservation needs have been identified on the corridor, two of which are for seismic retrofits.
- The corridor is rated high for climate vulnerability impacts due to occasional slides and snow.
- Fish passage barriers are present on the corridor.
- Beaver dams cause water backups which in turn threaten the roadway.

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

High	Low	
11,749	3,329	Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
10.1%	2.9%	Bus/Truck Percent
12.7		Number of Lane Miles
15		# of Signalized/Stop Controlled Intersections
\$1,437,000		Corridor Investments (2005-2016)

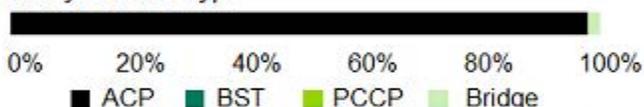
Mobility

Percent of Corridor Congested (Statewide Screen)

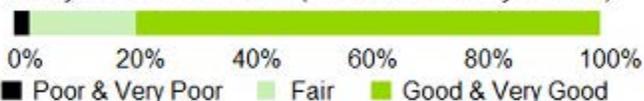


Preservation

Roadway Surface Type



Roadway Surface Condition (Percent of Surveyed Area)



Corridor Bridge Preservation Needs



Environment

	Protect	Restore/ Enhance/ Assess
Fish Barriers	100% Passable	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	0 BMPs	Retrofit Prioritization in progress
99.3	% of Corridor with high potential for increased Climate Impacts	
1	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:

- Interest expressed for the corridor having a more unified design connecting it with both Mt Rainier and the White Pass Scenic Byway. There is a desire for more viewpoints, trailheads, bike lanes, and passing and turn lanes.
- Desire for improvements to shoulders, inslopes, guardrail, flexible guideposts, and reflective pavement markings to be explored.
- Interest in bike lanes and alternate routes being identified as this could be a very popular bike route.

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, rest areas, and pavement repair.</i>
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Pavement	<i>WSDOT has identified one Pavement action in the next six years encompassing 92% of the corridor.</i>
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Structures	<i>WSDOT has identified one Structures action in the next six years at a single location on this corridor.</i>
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Other Facilities	<i>WSDOT has identified three Other Facilities actions in the next six years encompassing 4% 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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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.

Under 23 U.S. Code § 148 and 23 U.S. Code § 409, safety data, reports, surveys, schedules, lists compiled or collected for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, or planning the safety enhancement of potential crash sites, hazardous roadway conditions, or railway-highway crossings are not subject to discovery or admitted into evidence in a Federal or State court proceeding or considered for other purposes in any action for damages arising from any occurrence at a location mentioned or addressed in such reports, surveys, schedules, lists, or data.

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