State Route 900/Martin Luther King Jr. Way South in Skyway-West Hill is a heavily traveled commuter corridor between Renton and Seattle. This corridor study focuses on the section of SR 900 between 57th Avenue South and South 135th Street and documents the lack of complete active transportation facilities and the roadway’s operational and performance issues.

The Skyway-West Hill Community
The Skyway-West Hill Community is a diverse residential community located on the hillside at the south-end of Lake Washington. It also includes a commercial district near its center as well as two neighborhood shopping districts at its eastern and western edges.

King County oversees planning and community outreach for this unincorporated section of King County proximate to the city of Renton. Part of King County’s planning responsibilities for the Skyway-West Hill Community area includes the preparation of a subarea plan. WSDOT maintains and operates SR 900 in this unincorporated section of Skyway-West Hill.

This stretch of SR 900 lacks complete active transportation facilities and has limited crossing options. It is especially notable as the majority of SR 900 is bordered by residential neighborhoods and apartment complexes, and these users have limited options to walk, bike, or roll to transit stops and community markets.

The primary access points to the residential neighborhoods from SR 900 are the intersections of South 129th Street and South 133rd Street. These intersections were highlighted through a safety performance review in this study. Identifying and documenting these concerns are a driving force behind the corridor study.

The SR 900 Corridor
SR 900/Martin Luther King Jr. Way South serves as a direct connection from Interstate 5 to the Skyway Community and the city of Renton. The SR 900 corridor has a posted speed of 50 miles-per-hour from I-5 to the Renton city limits.

There are signalized intersections on this stretch of SR 900 at South 129th Street and 68th Avenue South. This is a busy transit corridor served by Metro Transit routes 101 and 102, which provide direct commuter service between Renton and downtown Seattle from stops at South 129th Street and 68th Avenue South.
Community Outreach /Study Stakeholders

WSDOT hosted a virtual open house through the Engage WSDOT website, which provided corridor maps, an overview of existing conditions, aggregated crash data from 2015 to 2019, and an online survey. The study team advertised the online open house and survey through the following methods:

- Social media and established email lists
- Study-specific email list
- WSDOT website
- Postcard mailers to more than 3,000 households within the study area
- Local government and tribal partners, and community-based organizations that connect with low-income and limited English proficiency populations

The open house and survey – offered in English, Spanish, Somali and Vietnamese – reached a diverse audience with people of all ages from multiple ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds participating. The online open house was viewed 3,188 times, and the survey was completed by 196 respondents who shared information about how and why they use the corridor.

Four key themes emerged from the outreach: the lack of pedestrian facilities, excessive driver speeds, congestion on SR 900, and lack of illumination along the corridor.

A stakeholder committee was established as part of this study and met twice. Stakeholder partners included: King County Local Services, King County Metro, city of Renton, Renton School District, Washington State Patrol, West Hills Community Association and Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). The SR 900 Stakeholder Committee reviewed and endorsed the technical analysis, public outreach, and study recommendations at their two meetings.

Improvement Strategies

Improvement strategies for SR 900 were developed to provide equitable facilities to connect people to jobs, residences, neighborhoods and community markets along the corridor. Based on community and partner input, the improvement strategies focused on addressing speed concerns, illumination, active transportation facilities, and marked crossings - providing a calming and welcoming environment that is accessible to all users.

The study’s near/mid-term focus is on improving safety and equitable access rather than addressing congestion. There are limited opportunities to address congestion in the corridor, and any future strategies would require further study of the broader network including I-5 and I-405.

Recommended near/mid-term improvement strategies include:

A) Complete Sidewalk Paths on SR 900

The first major proposed improvement strategy for SR 900 in the Skyway-West Hill community is the development of complete active transportation facilities between South 129th Street and 135th Avenue South, at the end of the study.
limits. This concept includes 10-foot sidewalk paths on both sides of SR 900 in this area for pedestrians and active transportation, along with illumination and landscaped features. The total planning-level cost-estimate for this sidewalk package is $20.2 million.

WSDOT is also proposing installing a traffic signal at South 133rd Street to mitigate collisions, and a signalized crossing in the vicinity of South 135th Street to connect area residents to the eastbound bus stop in front of the Creston Point Apartments.

B) Roundabout at the intersection of SR 900 and South 129th Street
A roundabout at South 129th Street can serve as a gateway to the Skyway-West Hill community and aid in reducing speeds and the levels of traffic stress for active transportation users. The planning-level cost estimate for the roundabout concept is $3.8 million.

A roundabout at this intersection provides full access to the community markets from both SR 900 and South 129th Street. It also reduces crash potential at this intersection. A series of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) would be included in order to enhance crossings at the intersection.

C) Low-cost / Near Term Strategies
There are several near-term improvement strategies proposed for SR 900, some of which were already implemented:

- Reduction of the speed limit to 45 MPH. This would be implemented as an interim measure to address speed along the corridor and would be accompanied by a subsequent speed study by WSDOT in coordination with the city of Renton and King County.
- Signing and striping adjustments at several minor intersections to reduce crash potential for drivers and active transportation users.
Intersection of SR 900 and South 129th Street facing west.

**Completed Actions:**
- Installation of leading pedestrian interval (LPI) signal timing, crosswalk striping and signing at the intersection of SR 900 and the South 129th Street. Also, a supplemental signal head was installed for right-turning traffic from westbound South 129th Street to northbound SR 900.

**Next Steps**
The SR 900 Corridor Study in the Skyway-West Hill area concludes with the preparation of a final study report with key findings and recommendations. The study recommendations will also be published on the study website for public review and consideration.

The improvement strategies recommended in the SR 900 Corridor Planning Study will enable WSDOT and local partners to address identified performance issues and gaps on the SR 900 corridor. But they will need to be incorporated into state, regional, and local plans to position the proposed improvements for future funding and implementation. Currently, there is no funding identified for the recommended strategy packages in this study, so it will be incumbent upon WSDOT and local partners to determine funding options moving forward.

The near-term need is to pursue funding to initiate the design of key study strategies such as the roundabout improvement at the South 129th Street intersection as well the 10-foot sidewalk path on both sides of SR 900. The PSRC’s next federal funding grant applications (FHWA/FTA) will commence in spring 2022 and will be an opportunity to seek design funding for the SR 900 strategies. Grant funding is not certain as the process is competitive and there are numerous unfunded needs throughout the Puget Sound region.

Additional grant funding for project development and construction will likely be a multi-year process.

SR 900 eastbound just east of South 129th Street.
Roundabout Concept
SR 900 AT SOUTH 129TH STREET

SR 900 at S 129th St Roundabout Concept

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)
**Sidewalk Path Concept**

SR 900 FROM 57TH AVENUE SOUTH TO SOUTH 129TH STREET

SR 900 FROM SOUTH 129TH STREET TO SOUTH 133RD STREET
Sidewalk Path Concept
SR 900 FROM SOUTH 133RD STREET TO 68TH AVENUE SOUTH

SR 900 FROM 68TH AVENUE SOUTH TO SOUTH 135TH STREET

68th intersection treatments
- Update curb ramps
- Update pedestrian push buttons

New pedestrian hybrid beacon & crossing

Corridor illumination

Landscape

10' sidewalks

New Signal