

# SR 900

## Corridor Study

### Executive Summary



## Introduction

**S**tate Route SR 900/Martin Luther King Jr. Way South in the unincorporated Skyway-West Hill community is a busy roadway between Renton and Seattle that serves local and commuter trips, freight, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The SR 900 roadway divides the Skyway community in two. This targeted study focuses on the section of SR 900 between 57th Avenue South (milepost 7.51) and South 135th Street (milepost 8.46) and addresses and documents the lack of complete bicycle and pedestrian facilities, collectively known as active transportation facilities. This study also considers the roadway’s safety, operational, performance and environmental issues. To assess these, a crash report, traffic modeling and an environmental scan were completed.

### The Skyway 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 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 land-use master plan.

### The SR 900 Corridor

SR 900 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, just to the east of the study limits. Average daily traffic (ADT) on the corridor ranges from 21,000 east of South 129th Street to 13,000 west of South 135th Street. There are signalized intersections on this section of SR 900 at South 129th Street and 68th Avenue South. This is also a busy transit corridor, and it is served by King County Metro transit routes 101 and 102. The two transit routes provide direct commuter service between Renton and downtown Seattle from bus stops at South 129th Street and between 68th Avenue South and South 135th Street.

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.

## Community Outreach /Study Stakeholders

The study team conducted outreach to the affected neighborhoods, agencies, and residents who use SR 900. Community members shared their experiences, identified concerns and potential solutions, and provided feedback throughout the corridor study process. Because the community engagement strategy was constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic, all community outreach through the Spring of 2022 was virtual. This included virtual stakeholder committee meetings, one-on-one phone calls with constituents, and an online open house and survey. The Stakeholder Committee met twice and partners included: King County Local Services/ Planning, King County Metro, city of Renton, Renton School District, Washington State Patrol, West Hills Community Association, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), and the tribes. WSDOT hosted the virtual online 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
- WSDOT website
- Postcard mailers to more than 3,000 house holds within the study area
- Local government, 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 survey on SR 900, namely the lack of pedestrian facilities, excessive driver speeds, congestion on SR 900, and lack of illumination along the corridor.

In Fall/Winter 2021, the study team used the feedback to develop a draft list of strategies presented to the Stakeholder Committee in Spring 2022 as part of the concept evaluation process. After this presentation, there were concerns raised about two of the draft strategies: the roundabout at South 129th Street and the new protected pedestrian crossing near Creston Point Apartments. Additional outreach was conducted to seek feedback on these strategies and consisted of in-person events and virtual meetings. The feedback was used to refine the strategies.

## Improvement Strategies

A set of near and mid-term strategies were developed based upon available data and input from the community and stakeholders. The near-term improvement strategies focused on addressing speed concerns, illumination, active transportation facilities, and marked pedestrian crossings. The intent is to change the driving environment to provide a calming and welcoming space while improving accessibility for all users. The study's mid-term focus is on improving safety and accessibility rather than addressing congestion.

Recommended near and mid-term improvement strategies include:

### Near Term Strategies:

- **Speed reduction:** From South 129th Street to 68th Avenue South, WSDOT will investigate the feasibility of reducing the speed limit. This would be implemented as an interim measure to address speed along the corridor and would be accompanied by a subsequent WSDOT speed study.

From 68th Avenue South to just east of South 135th Street, WSDOT is developing a speed reduction justification in conjunction with near-term solutions.

- **Signing and Striping:** WSDOT is investigating adding striping to minor intersections along the corridor, which might create tighter intersection radii to slow down turning vehicles where pedestrians are crossing.

● **Pedestrian Crossing Enhancement:**

At 129th Street, interim pedestrian crossing improvements could include new curb ramps at the bus pullouts to reduce the pedestrian crossing distance across SR 900.

- **School Bus Loading Zone:** WSDOT, in partnership with the Renton School District, King County Local Services, and King County Metro, is developing a set of near-term solutions to address safety concerns at an elementary school bus stop on SR 900 at Creston Point Apartments.

concerns highlighted by the data, notably the crash history, as well as priorities identified by the community, the need to improve pedestrian safety, and the need to mitigate vehicle speed on SR 900. Additionally, a roundabout at South 129th Street can serve as a gateway to the Skyway-West Hill community.

Community feedback received in the second out reach phase highlighted the need for continued engagement with the Skyway-West Hill community during project planning, design, and construction to ensure the intersection improvement ultimately constructed addresses specific transportation challenges related to freight and vehicles and incorporates the community vision for a gateway for Skyway-West Hill. The center island will also house a focal point developed by the Skyway-West Hill community.

**Mid-Term Strategies:**

- **Roundabout at the intersection of SR 900 and South 129th Street:** A roundabout with enhanced pedestrian crossings is the proposed mid-term improvement strategy at the intersection of SR 900 and South 129th Street. This recommendation addresses



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## Segments 1-4



Segment 1: Between 57th Street South and South 129th Street



Segment 2: Between South 129th Street and 64th Avenue South

● **Complete Sidewalks on SR 900:** The other major proposed improvement strategy for SR 900 in the Skyway-West Hill community is the development of active transportation facilities between South 129th Street and South 135th Street, at the end of the study limits.

The recommended facilities include a minimum 10-foot shared use path with a buffer on the north side of SR 900 for pedestrians and bicyclists, along with illumination and landscaped features. The shared use paths incorporate new driveways or revisions to existing driveways to better



Segment 3: Between 64th Avenue South and 68th Avenue South



Segment 4: Between 68th Avenue South and South 135th Street

manage access and highlight pedestrians and bicyclists. A shared use path is preferred on the north side due to the low number of driveways and higher number of destinations to the north of SR 900.

On the south side, the recommended facilities include a minimum 6-foot sidewalk with a minimum of 2-foot buffer. The south side sidewalk width will increase in locations based on land use context.

- **New Traffic Signal and New Pedestrian Enhanced Crossing:** WSDOT is proposing to install a traffic signal at South 133rd Street to mitigate collisions at this intersection and add a new signalized pedestrian crossing. There is also a new enhanced pedestrian crossing recommended in the vicinity of Creston Point Apartments to connect area residents to the eastbound bus stop in front of the Creston Point Apartments and a relocated westbound stop. Feedback from the second outreach phase highlighted the importance of relocating the westbound stop to be near the eastbound bus stop, with the new pedestrian crossing serving both the existing eastbound stop and relocated westbound stop and conducting the work simultaneously.

## Phasing

Due to the anticipated overall cost of these recommended concepts, they will likely need to be designed and implemented in phases. Below is a potential phasing option and maintenance with planning level cost estimates.

- **Phase A:** Shared use path with buffer on northside of SR 900, new pedestrian crossing at Creston Point Apartments, relocated westbound bus stop, removal of bus pullouts

near Creston point Apartments, South 133rd Street traffic signal and pedestrian crossing. Cost estimate is \$20.71 million.

- **Phase B:** Roundabout at South 129th Street. Cost estimate is \$5.781 million.
- **Phase C:** Buffered sidewalk on south side of SR 900. Cost estimate is \$12.801 million.
- **Maintenance:** Cost estimate is \$19.646 million.

## Next Steps

The SR 900 Corridor Study in the Skyway and north Renton area concludes with the preparation of a final study report with key findings and recommendations. The study recommendations are also published on the WSDOT website for public review and consideration.

The WSDOT study team will continue to work with local partners (King County, Renton, King County Metro, Sound Transit, Puget Sound Regional Council, Skyway-West Hill Community, and others) to incorporate the findings and recommendations into local and regional plans as appropriate.

Another implementation action to pursue in 2023 and beyond will be to seek grant funding opportunities for further design and eventual construction of recommended strategies. But the near-term, immediate funding needs are to complete design for key study strategies.