SR 900/257th Ave S to S 135th Pedestrian and Safety Improvements

Technical Working Group Meeting

Meeting title: Technical Working Group Meeting #1

Date: January 9th, 2025

Time: 1:00-3:00

Location: MS Teams

Attendees:

WSDOT: Chad Hancock, April Delchamps, Zachary Howard, Adam Emerson, Hung Huynh, Nick Menzel, Michael Wong, Jennifer Nyerick, Wesley Streepy

Invitees: Heidi (Debbie) Lawanda (Renton School District), Wally Archuleta (King County Metro), Colin Asquith (King County Metro), Michael Harpool (King County Metro), Jacob Armstrong (King County Metro), Keith Brown (King County),David Korthals (King County Metro), Joann Kosai-Eng (King County Local Services Program), Adam Cox (City of Tukwila), Jennifer Barnes (PSRC), Kyle Leatham (BNSF), Sheri Call (WA Trucking Association), Geri Poor (Port of Seattle), Martin Pastucha (City of Renton), Gil Cerise (PSRC)

Summary:

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) hosted the first of four Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings.

1. **Study background**:
    - The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is replacing the bridge over railroad on SR 525 in Mukilteo and repaving and constructing American with Disability Act (ADA) upgrades on SR 525 from SR 525 Spur Vic to Mukilteo Ferry Terminal
    - **Study recommendations**: WSDOT worked with the community to develop a community vision; three phases were identified as a result.
        1. Phase A: Address active transportation needs on the northbound side of the road; improve the intersection at 133r ST; and improve pedestrian crossings at 129th & Creston Point Apartments
        2. Phase B: 129th intersection improvements
        3. Phase C: buffered sidewalk on SB side
    - Identified study needs:
        1. Improve active transportation facilities, improve access to transit, create comfortable and safe conditions for all users, calm traffic, reconnect neighborhoods, and find opportunities for place-building.

- Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting schedule: The TWG will meet four times throughout the project.

2. **Project overview:**

- Project scope:
  - The project is located in the Skyway area; starts just east of 57th Ave S and extends down to S 135th St (~MP 7.6 to 8.5).
  - This is Phase 1 of 3 and will primarily be focused on the north side of the highway
  - Potential improvements that we'll be analyzing:
    - A buffered, shared use path on the north side of the roadway
    - Includes illumination
  - Bike & ped improvements at 129th St
  - New signal at S 133rd St with ped improvements and possibly slight realignment at 133rd to improve operation at the intersection
  - Transit stop modifications
  - Additional protected pedestrian crossing
- Project Crossing Improvements:
  - Share use path
  - The signal at 133rd. Slight realignment – will be challenging to do much with existing terrain and right of way constraints but we'll do something there if it's feasible.
  - Improvements will be done at the 68th Ave intersection.
  - An additional protected pedestrian crossing near Creston Apartments and the community center will be constructed.
  - The location of crossings will be selected by considering where pedestrians are traveling to and from and the final location of the transit stops. The final location will be determined through our engagement process with this group as well as the community.
- Project funding:
  - Funding is coming from a variety of sources
  - We'll have ~$4.6M for the predesign and design phases, as well as any right-of-way needs.
  - No funding for construction currently
- Pre-design Process:
  - Predesign phase is where we're currently in, this is where we validate the project scope, schedule & budget.
  - Start with the project need to answer the questions "why are we here – what's the problem we're trying to solve".
  - Now we're looking at the context for this community. We want to understand what the specific needs are, any environmental factors, what's the land use and multimodal usage.
  - Then we start to consider our design controls. This is where we make decisions about design speed, access control and modal priority among other things.
  - With those goals in place, we can begin our alternative analysis which is a collaborative process with our project partners to identify the right solution.

- Lastly, we will document the design elements we've selected.
- Throughout this entire process, we're engaging with agencies and communities to make sure we're headed in the right direction in the development of possible solutions.

3. **Community Engagement**:

- HEAL Act: this project is subject to meeting the HEAL Act requirements, which includes conducting meaningful community engagement with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations to identify harms and benefits and ensure the equitable distribution of resources. An environmental justice assessment will be conducted for this project.

- Engagement milestones: The project will involve several stages of community outreach, starting with the launch of a website in the summer of 2024 and continuing with TWG and Executive Meetings, online surveys and public meetings in 2025.

3. Project context:

- SR 900 Characteristics: The land use is mixed, including commercial, residential and industrial, indicating a lot of different needs that may conflict. Transit also serves this community, so we need to provide safe and convenient access for transit operators.

- Speed limits: Operational speeds are likely significantly higher than posted speed limits; WSDOT will look to address this. Assets need be installed to encourage drivers to slow down to the target speed we want for the corridor.

- SR 900 Volumes: SR 900 has ~30k vehicles per day entering the corridor on the north sides. For the freight data, WSDOT splits the corridors into segments and classifies them based on the tonnage that's transported annually. For SR-900, 68th Ave is where the data is split into different segments. This is classified as a T-3 freight corridor throughout the project limits which means there's between 300,000 to 4M tons moved annually through this section of highway. For volumes, there are ~1100 trucks per day north of 68th Ave and 460 trucks daily south of 68th; about 10% trucks passing through the project limits.

- Complete Streets: WSDOT must incorporate the Complete Streets principals by providing street access with all users in mind, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation users.

- Level of traffic stress: WSDOT will use a safe systems approach, which focuses on contributing factors that lead to severe crashes. A level of traffic stress that is 2 or better is WSDOT's metric for determining the appropriate linear facility that will meet Complete Streets requirements.

- Complete Streets Delivery Process:

    - Program Management initiates the process by queuing projects for Complete Streets screenings, which are reviewed by the Capital Program Development and Active Transportation Divisions before proceeding to funding preparation for Pre-design.

    - Pre-design involves analyzing the context, gaps, and conditions for improvement, collaborating with Traffic, engaging the community, and developing design options that align with safety goals, while considering land use and network connections.

    - Complete Streets Management Team reviews pre-design findings, incorporating input from SMEs, Maintenance, and various divisions, making a final recommendation for the project to proceed to design after Board of Directors (BOD) approval.

        - Designers incorporate recommendations into final designs, with flexibility to re-engage the Complete Streets team for adjustments as needed to address unique conditions and ensure safety and connectivity for all users.

    - Existing conditions:

        - Pedestrian level of traffic stress: under current configuration of lates and speed, SR 900 is LTS 3 or 4 for pedestrians throughout the corridor.

        - Bicycle level of traffic stress: there are no dedicated bicycle facilities, SR 900 is LTS 4 for bicycles throughout the length of the project.

4. **Baseline and contextual needs:**

    - Baseline and Complete Streets needs:

        - Baseline needs are the primary needs for the project and must be met by the preferred alternative.

        - Each of the needs includes 3 elements: Background explains the problem we're trying to solve, the metric is how we'll measure the performance of the project, and target is the specific goal we're using for the metric.

        - Identified baseline needs:

            1. Safety
            2. Active transportation facilities
            3. Neighborhood connectivity
            4. Transit improvements

    - Question: When are targets developed?

        - Answer: After TWG meetings, we want to make sure we have identified the right needs so we can identify what the targets are.

    - Is Allentown too far from the project area for engagement?

        - Answer: No, we want to engage with any community group that is able to support the project and provide feedback that helps us better understand needs.

    - Contextual needs:

        - Contextual needs are what we uncover as we work through the development of the project. They are often determined in the planning or pre-design phase. The contextual needs enhance the project, but they're not the primary drivers of the project.

        - Identified contextual needs:

            1. Active transportation of personal security
            2. Aesthetic features
            3. Traffic calming
            4. Forward compatibility

5. **Next steps:**

    - WSDOT will prepare for community engagement, develop alternatives on the study recommendations, initiate the environmental justice assessment, and follow-up regarding the second TWG meeting and send post-meeting materials.