



REGIONAL NORTH-SOUTH TRAVEL CAPACITY STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee | Meeting #1 Summary

June 18, 2019 | Richland Community Center

DRAFT SUMMARY

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Membership (listed alphabetically by organization)

- Ben Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) (Patrick Pittenger, Tony Kalmbach, Erin Braich)
- Ben Franklin Transit (Bill Barlow)
- Bike Tri-Cities (Dave Beach, Francesca Maier)
- Fire, City of Richland Emergency Services (Randy Aust)
- Framatome (Ben Reynolds)
- Kadlec Regional Medical Center (Jacob Raleigh, Denise R Gilbert, AJ Ojeda)
- Lamb Weston (Scott Williams)
- Mission Support Alliance (Andy Foster)
- Pacific Northwest National Lab (PNNL) (Karen Blasdel, Jason Nanni)
- Port of Benton (Roger Wright)
- Richland School District (Cynthia Eskeli)
- Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce (Stephanie Swanberg)
- US Dept of Energy - Richland Office (Jeff Bird)
- Washington State University (Dr. John Mancinelli)

Project Team & Study Sponsors

- City of Richland, Public Works (Pete Rogalsky, Julie West, John Deskins)
- J-U-B ENGINEERS (Spencer Montgomery, Ben Hoppe)
- The Langdon Group (Gemma Puddy, Caroline Mellor)
- City of West Richland Public Works (Roscoe Slade)
- Washington State Department of Transportation (Paul Gonseth, James Todd Daley)
- City of Richland, Community & Economic Development (Kerwin Jensen, Darin Arrasmith)

Additional Organizations with Members Unable to Attend

- Energy Northwest (Michael Paoli)
- Benton County (Matt Rasmussen, Study Sponsor)
- Preferred Freezer (Edward Gottschalk)

Project Goals Statement

The Cities of Richland and West Richland, Benton County, and the Washington State Department of Transportation (Study Sponsors) are working with a consultant team to study north-south transportation capacity with the ultimate goal to increase mobility and reduce travel times both locally and regionally. The study includes evaluating and comparing the potential benefits of capacity improvements, such as

interchange or intersection improvements and a new corridor, in at least three distinct corridors (SR-240, George Washington Way and a new Kingsgate Way corridor) from both a technical and public input perspective.

Agenda Items Summary

Introduction and Background

- Pete Rogalsky, City of Richland Public Works, and Spencer Montgomery, J-U-B Engineers, introduced the goal of the study to identify and prioritize improvements to north-south travel capacity through Richland. The study will include evaluating and comparing the potential benefits of capacity improvements, such as interchange or intersection improvements and a new corridor, from both a technical and public input perspective.
- This study was framed as an extension of the previous M3 study on SR-240 congestion by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Paul Gonseth, WSDOT, provided an overview of the options analyzed in the WSDOT study and of WSDOT's continued analysis of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes.
- Pete explained that this study will be coordinated with another upcoming project to study the connectivity needs of the downtown and waterfront area to improve pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. Pete highlighted that this upcoming study would be the best avenue for concerns regarding different modes of transportation.
- Representatives from the Benton Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) added that BFCG analysis on population and employment growth from the Transition2040 policy framework is used in this study. BFCG stated that Travel Demand Management (TDM) is incorporated in all work that they do and that they will continue to provide an avenue for future input.

Public Involvement

- Gemma Puddy, The Langdon Group, reviewed the public involvement plan for the study.
 - Role of the TAC: Forum for representatives to serve as a conduit to their residents, employees and commuters and provide equal voice to each interest. The TAC is a key participant in the alternative evaluation process.
- Stakeholder interview overall feedback:
 - Fifteen interviews have been conducted, primarily with people in attendance at this meeting, with a few more to complete.
 - The suggestion was made that a resident in the north-south corridor should be included sooner than the open house and survey. Francesca Maier with Bike Tri-Cities may be able to fill this dual role.
 - Peak traffic congestion needs to be managed for safety and to allow continued growth.
 - Congestion on existing north-south routes cause travelers to be creative to avoid its impacts, such adjusting work schedules and using local street networks to travel around congestion.
- General public involvement opportunities:
 - Open House (August/September TBD)
 - Survey (September)

Establishment of Alternatives

- Spencer explained potential alternatives identified for J-U-B ENGINEERS to evaluate and asked for feedback from the TAC on the scenarios and to brainstorm other alternatives. These were:
 - 1) Aaron Drive/SR-240/I-182 Interchange Improvements
 - 2) George Washington Way/Columbia Point Intersection Improvements
 - 3) Kingsgate Way Extension south from SR-240
 - 4) North Richland Bridge
 - 5) Van Giesen Street/SR-240 Grade Separation –
 - a) Stand Alone
 - b) Combined with Aaron Drive
 - 6) SR-240- By-Pass Grade Separations

- New suggestions for alternatives to evaluate
 - Combination of grade separation at Aaron, Van Giesen, Stevens, and Duportail.
 - The City of West Richland’s Keene Road extension, over to Twin Bridges to SR-240 – would fit in with new roads and expected growth and tied into modeling with Red Mountain Interchange. This is currently included in West Richland’s 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- J-U-B ENGINEERS will measure travel time benefits in two ways:
 - a) Reduction of delay at specific intersections
 - b) Overall reduction in travel time for specific origin-destination pairs as reported in the regional model for each of the alternatives evaluated.

- Several options representing key intersections to measure travel time benefits were presented and discussed. Spencer asked committee members for feedback on the intersections to be included and any others to consider in the analysis. The five intersections selected for evaluation were:
 - a) George Washington Way at Columbia Point Drive
 - b) Van Giesen Street/SR 240
 - c) Aaron Drive/SR 240
 - d) Stevens Drive/SR-240
 - e) Duportail Street/SR 240

- J-U-B ENGINEERS identified six origin-destination pairs for measuring travel time benefits, that will be used to help in the evaluation of which alternatives present the greatest benefits and asked for feedback from committee members.
 - Goal to pick six pairs from the list below to serve as a regional model, with pairs kept close to capture more trips and can apply to travel time calculations for people going to Pasco or Kennewick.
 - Northern “origin” options for discussion:
 - SR-240 Vantage Highway west of Twin Bridges Road
 - Stevens Drive North of Horn Rapids Road
 - George Washington Way south of Horn Rapids Road
 - WSU Tri-Cities
 - Kingsgate Way north of SR-240 Vantage Highway
 - Other
 - Southern “destination options for discussion:

- SR-240 south of I-182 at Yakima River
 - I-182 east of SR-240 at Columbia River
 - Keene Road southeast of Queensgate Drive
 - Keene Road west of Kennedy Road
 - Bombing Range Road south of Paradise Way
 - Other
- The group decided on the following origin and destinations, which make up 8 pairs:
 - Northern “origins” = SR 240 Vantage Highway west of Twin Bridges Road, Stevens Drive north of Horn Rapids Road
 - Southern “destinations” = SR 240 south of I-182 at Yakima River, I-182 east of SR 240 at Columbia River, Queensgate Drive south of I-182 and Bombing Range Road north of Keene Road.

Discussion

- Some members suggested the North Richland Bridge is not worth studying as an alternative, since it would take several years to implement and will not provide short-term solutions. The North Richland Bridge may not be a short-term solution but is worth evaluating to (1) help the public understand relative costs and benefits; (2) to help create a public consensus on the use of moving forward with the initial steps of the long-term project. Cost is not considered a factor in determining which options to evaluate at this point in the study process. However, cost and feasibility/implementation in the short term may be criteria for selecting a proposed alternative.
- Several committee members brought up the importance of pedestrian and bicycle safety as a potential criterion for evaluating the effects of design changes for intersections, particularly when children must cross an intersection to and from school. Committee members discussed the different ways bicycles and pedestrians’ interface with traffic flow along the SR-240. Project staff highlighted that this study is focused on enhancing the flow of traffic along regional routes such as SR-240, with a parallel goal of decreasing conflicts between vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians.
- Several committee members also spoke about the different factors that affect congestion in the corridor and related Travel Demand Management solutions. Suggestions included support for work scheduling and transit programs. Project staff noted that the focus of this study is on capacity improvements and encouraged members to work with the other entities (e.g. BFCG) that are and will continue to address valuable solutions to lower demand for travel capacity.
- The Committee decided that rather than consider HOV lanes as a separate alternative, perhaps in the evaluation of alternatives selected it would be good to have a criterion that considers whether each alternative negatively impacts the ability to implement HOV in the future. WSDOT is evaluating the feasibility of HOV lanes separately as part of their SR-240 M3 Study.
- The project team clarified that the public survey will include people who live and work in Richland as well as Pasco, West Richland, and Kennewick; the intention is to capture a broad spectrum of input from both commuters and residents.
- The committee agreed that while individual alternatives may not necessarily solve all congestion issues, any reduction in travel time from changes or a combination of improvements is valuable to the overall needs of the transportation system.

Action Items & Next Steps

- J-U-B ENGINEERS will work with project sponsors to finalize the alternatives to be evaluated.

- Project Team will send a Doodle poll to schedule TAC Meeting #2.
- Committee members will engage with coworkers to encourage project interest and engagement.
- Key message that this project is an important **study** to move toward identifying solutions that should be funded in the future. *The City and partner agencies want to be prepared with regional consensus when funding opportunities become available.*

Next Meeting

- DRAFT Agenda for TAC Meeting #2 (date/time TBD)
 - Present and discuss recommended base model improvements
 - Present and discuss recommended corridor improvements for each scenario
 - Create and review evaluation criteria
 - Address other issues that may arise