

Woodland Transportation Infrastructure Strategic Plan Open House & Workshop Summary

Date and Time: August 16, 2007 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Location: Open House & Workshop, Woodland High School Commons, Woodland, WA

Staff Attendees

Jerry Sorrell, Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG)

Rosemary Siipola, CWCOG

Anne Sylvester, Parametrix

Michael Harrison, Parametrix

Mara Krinke, Parametrix

Christine Sylvester, Parametrix

Dena Horton, Normandeau Associates, Inc.

Number of public attendees: 28 signed in

The public presentation began at 6:00 PM. Anne Sylvester provided a brief introduction to the project and introduced team members. This led into a PowerPoint presentation by Anne Sylvester and Michael Harrison. The presentation included a review of recent work including the Stakeholder Interview Report, Draft Project Vision and Desired Outcomes and Transportation Existing Conditions Report. After the presentation, participants were given an overview of the Open House structure and asked to divide themselves around discussion tables.

Participants broke into four groups around project area maps for small group discussions. Michael Harrison, Mara Krinke, Christine Sylvester and Dena Horton each led table discussions. At a separate station, Rosemary Siipola solicited comments on the Draft Project Vision and Desired Outcomes. Anne Sylvester and Jerry Sorrell circulated amongst the table discussions to provide technical assistance, as-needed.

The public comments received focused primarily on recommended transportation improvements and concerns over the existing transportation system. Some of the most often cited comments included:

1. Take care of SR 503, either widening or adding turn pockets and improve multi-modal transportation facilities in the corridor.
2. Alleviate congestion near I-5 Exits 21 and 22 by providing an alternate east/west crossing.
3. Address delays caused by railroad crossings. Options included constructing under or overpasses at crossings.

Though many suggestions and observations were supported by multiple attendees, some comments were contrary to, or variants on, the comments of others. The following is a summary of the public comments received at the open house:

Lower River Road/SR 503

- Widen SR 503 to include pocket turn lanes
- Install stop lights at Insel Road, Gun Club Road, and Scott Avenue
- Widen SR 503 to have bus pull out/turn out lanes for the school buses, especially needed between 7:00am – 9:00am and 2:30pm – 5:00pm

- Widen SR 503 to three lanes (two lanes and a turn lane) within the entire Woodland city limits so that you don't create a bottleneck going from 3 lanes to 2 and then back to 3 lanes.
- Construct sidewalks along the high accident segment of SR 503
- Widen SR 503 to five lanes or construct an SR 503 bypass
- Improve signage on SR 503 at Scott Avenue directing motorists to I-5 from Old Pacific Highway rather than always going to the main interchange at Exit 21
- Make Goerig/Pacific at SR 503 a T-intersection
- Turning out of the Woodland Commerce Center is currently very difficult because of its location close to the bridge over Lewis River
- There are big access issues along Treatment Plant Road
- Pumping station on Lewis River Road may be in the way of any future widening
- Build flyover from Millard Street to I-5 southbound
- Build a new road from Cherry Blossom to Old Pacific Highway so vehicles can bypass the SR 503 / Old Pacific Highway intersection

Scott Avenue

- Davis Sales located near Scott Avenue and Pacific Avenue is concerned that the flyway of a Scott Road overpass will cut off both of their access points to Pacific Avenue unless they are granted access to Pacific Avenue via the old Wimpy's restaurant site property
- An underpass should be considered at Scott but would likely not work because of the water table and flooding issues
- Putting an overpass at Scott Avenue will help east-west connectivity if a railroad overpass at Scott is also installed, otherwise cars will back up on the overpass. However, this could be addressed if an alternative route from Scott via Downriver Drive, Mitchell Avenue, Columbia Street to Pacific Avenue is established and improvements to that route are made
 - This overpass would improve emergency safety, provide improved access to the grocery store and attract more shoppers to downtown businesses
- Build an I-5 overpass north of Scott Avenue, that would connect Old Pacific Highway on the east side to Down River Drive on the west side. This option avoids blocking business access, particularly Davis Sales, to Pacific Avenue on the west side
- Construct a four-way stop at Pacific and Scott and straighten the intersection to form right angles
- If you widen Exits 21 and 22 similar to the intersections at I-5 and 99th or 78th Streets, then you may not need to add a Scott Road overpass
- Install signage to direct motorists to I-5 from Scott to avoid routing them south through a heavily congested area
- Clogging occurs every winter in the State's storm easements under the apartments near Scott and SR 503
- Improve dangerous turns from Scott Avenue to SR 503 eastbound
- Install signal at Scott and SR 503

Dike Access Road

- Widen the exit and add more lanes, because currently it is too narrow. If additional industrial development and the building a new high school occurs, the existing road and interchange will not be able to handle the congestion caused by an increase in truck traffic or school buses
- Make it wider and similar in design to the I-5 Exit at 99th Street or 78th Street
- Address the huge railroad bottleneck issue here, especially if the 3rd Rail comes through
- Need to address flooding issue, perhaps raise the freeway between Exit 21 and 22
- Regardless of changes, there needs to be better signage for people to know where they are going when they get on or off Exit 22

- The Port is concerned that mixed use developments along Dike Road, north of Guild Road, will slow Port traffic
- There is a potential for altered Port activities and increased Port facilities to increase industrial traffic on Dike Road to I-5
- Flooding at the Dike Road interchange is a problem
- Construct a bypass connecting Dike Road or Old Pacific Highway with SR 503 in the northeast corner of Woodland. Also connect this new bypass to a new overpass near Scott Avenue

Railroad Crossings

- Build an overpass over the railroad at Scott Avenue
- Build an overpass over the railroad at Davidson Avenue
- Realign Davidson Avenue to reduce the sharp turn just west of the tracks
- Rather than having the 3rd Rail come down the existing BNSF alignment, have the 3rd rail spur off towards the port and port property
- Cowlitz County should consider railroad improvements just as Clark County has
- Build an overpass over the railroad at Whalen Road
- An underground aquifer runs east/west near Scott Avenue and would be a problem when considering tunneling under railroad tracks

Other Traffic and Community Improvements

- Raise I-5 between Exit 21 and Exit 22. Raising the freeway will allow east-west connectivity to be re-established under it and would also allow the Fleetwood trucks to access the freeway in Woodland rather than having to drive down to La Center or Ridgefield for access because of the current height restrictions
- Extend Downriver Drive to include an overpass over the railroad tracks. Connect Downriver Drive directly to Dike Access Road, or connect Downriver Drive to Dike Access Road via Schurman Way
- It is not currently identified as a high industrial truck traffic area, but Pekin Road is heavily traveled by industrial truck traffic
- Extend Schurman Way to Goerig Road to help establish more north-south connectivity
- At the intersection of Davidson Avenue, Pekin Road, Goerig Road, and the BNSF Railroad, it is very dangerous because semi-trucks are interacting with speeding cars, and many people overshoot the turn. Recommend you install a stop sign or light at Pekin where it meets Davidson/Goerig
- Implement some safety measures at the corner of Caples Road and Pekin Road because it is very dangerous for semi-trucks to turn since the speed limit is 35mph and most people drive 50mph on that stretch of road
- Build new road connecting Insel and Old Pacific Highway
- Extend Pacific and Atlantic north connecting near Dike Road
- Extend Robinson Road east to Schurman Way
- Consider extending Howard Way rather than Schurman Way to the south
- Construct new road on right-of-way currently owned by the City east of the Railroad between Davidson and Beechwood to alleviate school traffic
- Make Pekin Road and Goerig/Davidson a T-intersection
- Make turn at Buckeye Goerig/Davidson a T-intersection
- Southwest section bordered by Caples and Pekin, just outside the City limits, is the most likely location of future growth
- Consider purchasing right-of-way west of Woodland to be used for future roadways

- Extend Pinkerton Road west to serve future developments southwest of the city, and funnel the traffic from these new developments around Downtown Woodland via Lakeshore Drive or a new I-5 Interchange south of SR 503
- The failing level of service at Buckeye and Goerig may be caused by commercial truck turning movements
- Consider realigning Shurman Way southern extension to match property boundary lines as much as possible
- Project staff should coordinate this project with utility companies (gas, PUD, phone, BNSF, cable and city facilities) which may be upgrading their facilities
- Consider a ferry to St. Helens
- Involve the local diking district to evaluate runoff and flooding impacts
- Construct more parks in town and consider locating a park south of SR 503 near Insel
- Transportation system needs to prepare for more growth east of the Woodland City Limits.
- Consider creating new interchanges in Woodland area from north of Dike Road to south of SR 503. At minimum new on/off ramps should be looked at
- Work with Railroad to raise rail line and also raise Dike Road to reduce flooding
- Consider a new SR 503 bypass from a new interchange south of the city limits, east along Lewis River, connecting with SR 503 east of the city limits.
- Construct a walking path along Horseshoe Lake

Funding Options

- Don't forget that Woodland is a Historically Underutilized Business Zone, so there may be additional funding available to assist businesses

Future Developments

- Commercial development is expected between Treatment Plant Road and the Lewis River
- Commercial development is expected between Atlantic Avenue and SR 503, near Cherry Blossom (as a part of this development, a new road may link SR 503 and Atlantic Avenue, which would serve this business area and improve emergency services)
- Commercial development is expected between Columbia Street and Scott Avenue and west of Pacific Avenue
- Residential development is expected between the north end of Scott Avenue and the southern end of Bozarth Heights
- Commercial development expected near CC Street

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.