
Council Meeting Date: December 3, 2001

Agenda Item: 6(a)

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: Discussion of North 205 th Street Traffic Signal Ownership Transfer
DEPARTMENT: Public Works
PRESENTED BY: Jesus Sanchez, Public Works Operations Manager

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT: The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) would like to transfer ownership and responsibility for two traffic signals on North 205th Street to the City of Shoreline. One signal is located at the intersection of Aurora Avenue North and the other signal is at the Home Depot entrance. In return for assuming responsibility for these two signals, King County/Metro and WSDOT have agreed to fund an upgrade of the signals to current King County Traffic standards. This will include installing interconnect system equipment to tie the intersections to the Aurora Corridor system.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED: Staff analyzed and is prepared to discuss the following alternatives:

1. Continue to have WSDOT retain maintenance responsibility for these two signals.
2. Sign an agreement to transfer ownership of the two signals from WSDOT to the City of Shoreline. (Recommended)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

1. If WSDOT continued maintenance responsibilities of the two signals, there would be no financial impact on the City of Shoreline.
2. If ownership of the two signals were transferred to the City of Shoreline, the estimated cost for maintaining both signals will be approximately \$7,800 per year. The additional maintenance costs for these two intersections can be absorbed within the 2002 Street Operations budget.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required at this time. This item is for discussion purposes only. Staff will be bringing forward an agreement with WSDOT transferring ownership of two traffic signals located on North 205th Street to the City of Shoreline.

Approved By:

City Manager 

City Attorney 

INTRODUCTION

The Public Works Department has been negotiating with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and others to resolve problems and issues associated with the City of Shoreline's North and South boundaries. As part of these negotiations, WSDOT would like to transfer ownership of and responsibility for two traffic signals on the North boundary. The signals are located on North 205th Street at the intersections of Aurora Avenue North and at the Home Depot entrance. Staff is requesting Council concurrence supporting a recommendation to sign an agreement with WSDOT transferring ownership to the City of Shoreline of two traffic signals located on North 205th Street at the intersections of Aurora Avenue North and at the Home Depot entrance.

BACKGROUND

When the City of Shoreline incorporated, state law adopted in 1989 required that cities incorporate the full width of right-of-way at its boundaries or to establish its boundary at the edge of the right-of-way. Prior to 1989, annexations typically included all right-of-way to the centerline of the boundary road, with the result being that bordering municipalities shared maintenance and emergency response up to the roadway centerline, and counties were relieved of responsibility. Because of the 1989 law, half of the rights-of-way of North 205th Street and North 145th Street remain part of unincorporated King County, and the other half part of the bordering cities, consisting of Mountlake Terrace, Edmonds and Seattle.

On December 2, 1996, Kirk McKinley, at that time the City's Transportation Planner, presented a staff report to Council describing the issues, options and costs associated with resolving issues relating to the ownership maintenance responsibility of these north and south boundary roads. At that time, Council passed a motion to take control of both streets (northern and southern boundaries) as long as it fit within the budget. No additional progress was made to resolve this issue until late 1999, when Public Works took the lead to resolve it. Using the 1996 Council motion as a guideline, Public Works has been negotiating with WSDOT, the City of Seattle, King County and the City of Edmonds to reach an agreement.

As part of these discussions, WSDOT has stated a desire to relinquish ownership and control of two traffic signals on the North boundary. Public Works feels that it is in the best interest of the City to assume ownership and responsibility for these two traffic signals.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

1. WSDOT continues ownership and maintenance responsibility for these two signals.

WSDOT has been working to relieve itself of responsibility for State Highways within the boundaries of cities with a population over 25,000. Their goal is to reduce their responsibility to the actual pavement surface and facilities within the designated "limited access" areas. As such, WSDOT has no real vested interest in the signals at North

205th Street and Aurora Avenue North and at the Home Depot entrance, and has no plans for upgrading these signals nor does it have a legal mandate to do so. King County is also unwilling to fund the signal upgrades since it does not consider any part of this area to be within its jurisdiction.

The traffic signal on North 205th Street at Aurora Avenue North has several equipment and operational problems. The primary problem is that the signal equipment is incompatible with the other traffic signal equipment along the Aurora Corridor that is being maintained by King County Traffic under contract with the City of Shoreline. Because of the compatibility problem, this intersection cannot be connected to the Aurora Corridor interconnect system. As a result, this intersection is a major bottleneck to east-west travel on N 205th Street and traffic backs up for a considerable distance in both directions during peak travel times. This intersection also generates the most complaints from City residents.

Under this option of WSDOT retention of ownership there would be no financial impact to the City.

2. Sign an agreement to transfer ownership of the two signals from WSDOT to the City of Shoreline.

As a condition to the responsibility transfer of these two intersections, the City of Shoreline would be able to have the signal equipment upgraded and link the intersections to the existing Aurora Corridor interconnect system at no cost to the City. King County/Metro will contribute \$20,000 in grant funds to upgrade the signals to King County Traffic standards. WSDOT has agreed to pay the remaining costs associated with upgrading the signals to current King County Traffic standards, upon acceptance of the agreement. Shoreline will take over ownership and maintenance responsibilities.

The average cost per year for maintaining City of Shoreline traffic signal equipment at one signalized intersection is \$6,150. This average cost is high due to the fact that we have a number of traffic signals that are very old and require a high level of maintenance. The signal equipment at North 205th Street and the Home Depot entrance is relatively new and requires a lower level of maintenance. Following the planned upgrades to the intersection of Aurora Avenue North and North 205th Street, this equipment will also require a low level of maintenance. It is estimated that the cost for maintaining both signals will be approximately \$7,800 per year. This additional maintenance cost has been included in the proposed 2002 Street Operations budget. The primary points of the proposed transfer agreement are:

- The City of Shoreline agrees to accept, own and operate the two traffic signals.
- King County/Metro agrees to pay up to \$20,000 to upgrade controllers and other identified equipment.
- King County/Metro will pay to purchase and install the bus detection equipment required to operate transit priority at the intersection of Aurora Ave N and N 205th Street.
- WSDOT agrees to pay for all costs in excess of \$20,000 associated with the signal upgrades.

- WSDOT agrees to cede ownership and operation of the signals
- WSDOT agrees to retain ownership and operation of street lights on the overpass after it provides for a new and separate power feed to the signals.

This agreement has been reviewed and approved by the other interested parties, who include:

- Gary Hanson, Mayor, City of Edmonds
- Maureen Sullivan, Seattle North King County Administrator, WSDOT
- Harold Taniguchi, Deputy Director, King County DOT

This agreement will transfer ownership, operation and maintenance responsibilities for these signals to the City of Shoreline. The agreement does not include transfer of territory nor does it address boundary adjustments. Public Works is continuing to negotiate with above mentioned entities to address boundary issues and will bring proposed agreements to Council in mid-2002.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required at this time. This item is for discussion purposes only. Staff will be bringing forward an agreement with WSDOT transferring ownership of two traffic signals located on North 205th Street to the City of Shoreline.

