

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: Update on Aurora 165th-205th Strategy and Scope
DEPARTMENT: Public Works
PRESENTED BY: Kirk McKinley, Aurora/Interurban Projects Manager
Kris Overleese, Capital Projects Manager

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

The purpose of this agenda item is to discuss the proposed process and general schedule for the Aurora N 165th to N 205th project. Over the past several months staff has been meeting with our partner agencies to discuss an approach and schedule for the next section of the Aurora corridor. As you recall, the previous environmental process covered 145th -165th and analyzed cumulative impacts up to 205th. This effort combined a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment (EA). Staff is proposing to begin pre-environmental, pre-design and public outreach over the next nine months culminating in a recommended environmental process in early 2006 for the 165th – 205th project. Construction of improvements within the remaining two mile section would be dependent on availability of funding and Council direction. Staff proposes entering into a contract with CH2M Hill to provide support and analysis over the next nine months, and will return to Council on May 9 requesting authorization to enter into a contract to perform these services. For simplicity, staff is recommending that this process be entitled "Public Outreach and Pre-Environmental" (POP).

RECOMMENDATION

No action is required. This item is for information, discussion, and general direction.

Approved By: City Manager RSO City Attorney MA

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BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:

Staff has been conducting one-on-one meetings with property owners (and tenants) along the N 165th – N 205th section of Aurora for the past year. To date, approximately 40 meetings have been held. These meetings have been extremely valuable in understanding issues such as signage, access, frontage impacts and potential future redevelopment plans. These meetings have also provided property owners with accurate information on the potential next steps for this section of the Aurora corridor, and in providing them names and faces of City contacts. Staff will continue with these meetings.

Attachment A identifies a proposed pre-environmental public outreach, schedule and process. This process builds on the coordination meetings that have been ongoing. The process includes community-wide meetings, and meetings with special interest or community groups to solicit early input on issues and design ideas. We have included three Council briefings or action meetings in the pre-environmental and public outreach process. This proposed process is explained in more detail later in this memo.

There are several givens/assumptions to guide the design of Aurora, including the "32 Points" adopted by the City Council on November 23, 1999. The 32 Points provide flexibility in sidewalk width, identify the need for frequent breaks in the median, direct the design to meander if possible to avoid property takes, and many other principles of design intended to provide flexibility and respond to business/property owner concerns. Council also adopted Ordinance #326 on July 14, 2003 which provided direction for the future right-of-way in the Central Shoreline area between N 172nd and N 192nd. This ordinance amended the Comprehensive Plan to acquire needed right-of-way in this section on the east side of Aurora, thus preserving property on the west side, and providing these property owners and businesses certainty.

Because Aurora is a state highway (SR99N), and has funding from federal sources, there are design requirements of Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). These include:

- Adequate capacity
- Provide for Transit and Multimodal use
- Sidewalks
- Access control, including required medians, median access, and edges (driveways)
- State design standards for lane widths, tapers, signing, channelization, etc

PROPOSED PUBLIC OUTREACH AND PRE-ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS:

Below is a proposed process to move the City and it's partners toward a successful environmental process. Because Aurora has federal funding it requires a NEPA as well as a SEPA environmental review. The strategy of moving into a public outreach pre-environmental process has been an outcome of discussions with our partners at the Federal and State level. This process will provide the opportunity to identify alternative alignments and other design ideas that can then be explored for potential impacts and compatibility with the design requirements. Ideally, we can return to Council in early 2006 with a preferred alignment/alternative to evaluate in the environmental process.

The schedule includes a step at the conclusion of this process to meet with our partners and jointly identify the appropriate environmental process. Discussions with our partners have revealed that most other Highway 99 projects in the region have performed NEPA Categorical Exclusions (CE) or Documented CEs. One of the purposes of the POP process is to determine whether this project will utilize the CE or the Environmental Assessment (EA) process.

Continued Outreach – Staff will continue meeting one on one with property owners and business owners. These meetings offer the opportunity to informally learn about the project, identify issues or concerns, and discuss any redevelopment thoughts they may have. To date, staff has met with approximately 40 property and business owners. Staff is also always available to meet with interest groups (Chamber, Shoreline Merchants Association, Rotary, League of Women Voters), and neighborhood about the project. It is very important that staff be available to attend meetings of interest groups, meet with small groups of property/business owners, and with individuals throughout the POP process.

CH2M Hill Contract – Staff has been working with CH2M Hill to identify a scope of work, schedule, and cost to complete the Public Outreach and Pre-Environmental process (currently scheduled for Council on April 25). Fortunately, a considerable amount of work and analysis been prepared by CH2M Hill over the past several years that will be utilized in this process. This work includes base survey and mapping, and much of the “cumulative impact” analysis developed for the N 145th to N 165th SEPA EIS/NEPA EA, such as drainage basins, historical/cultural resources, and other existing inventory information. The early work effort will be to gather and organize much of the previous work and guidance in preparation for the first open house. They will establish and document “before” conditions that will be used to perform “before and after” analysis to later gauge the effects of alternative concepts. This work will include documenting existing roadway conditions consisting of geometry, intersections, signal systems, utilities, landscaping, property access, pedestrian and transit facilities, as well as site challenges like walls, rockeries, steep grades and driveway pitches. The information will be assembled into draft “discipline” reports as documentation for the environmental process. These “discipline” reports include wetland maps, soils data, land use, socio-economic data, traffic, historic and cultural resources, fish and wildlife habitat, water resources, and storm water. This information will be utilized by the City and our partners, WSDOT and FHWA, to assist in deciding which environmental review process is appropriate.

Open House #1 – This open house will be held in the latter part of June or early part of July. The intent will be to gain knowledge from the community, business and property-owners on their ideas, concerns, access needs, and designs. Aerial maps will be available with current right-of-way lines and cross-section information. Staff and consultants will be present to discuss and answer questions, but primarily to listen and learn. We will be seeking input on objectives, criteria and property specific knowledge. Planners, environmental experts, site designers, and engineers will be present. Another goal of the open house will be to communicate the design principles and guidelines already established by Council and partner agencies.

Council Meeting -- Following the open house, staff will return to Council to share what we learned, and to seek direction on project objectives and criteria in preparation for the development of alignment concepts.

Evaluate Alignment Concepts and Alternatives – This effort is projected to run for six to eight months. The Pre-Design Study completed in 1999 identified new signals at N. 182nd, and at N. 195th, and other changes to traffic flow. The City and consultant will analyze the Pre-Design recommendations, and based on input from the Open House will perform existing and 2030 traffic analysis, site analysis, gather socio-economic data, identify existing and future access needs, and prepare alignment concepts. The concepts will be mapped on aerial photographs with channelization and proposed driveway and access locations. Other analyses will occur such as studying rear access options and other methods to improve access, as well as potential sharing of driveways and cross-parking lot circulation for access to signals. The contract will include the ability of the team to be able to generate sketches of specific property frontages as needed to assist the property owners to understand the impacts or changes to their frontage. The alignment alternatives will be evaluated based on criteria approved by Council. Other considerations such as interim sidewalks, pedestrian safety, changes to intersections, topography, grade, and project termini will be addressed. It is anticipated that if there are significant impacts, they will be identified in the technical work during this stage. The concepts will be prepared in a format suitable for Council and public review.

Council Meeting – Staff and consultant will return to Council with summary of the findings on the various alignment concepts and alternatives. This presentation will provide the opportunity to brief the Council prior to the second open house.

Open House #2 – This open house will provide an opportunity for the citizens and business community to review and comment on the results of the evaluation and analyses, the alignment concepts, the access and right-of-way impacts. The alignment concepts will indicate impacts to property frontages, signs, and parking.

Coordination with Partner Agencies – Because Aurora N 165th – N 205th is funded with two kinds of federal funds, both the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration will need to be included in discussions with WSDOT and the City on the appropriate level of environmental analysis. As mentioned above, most other Highway 99 projects in King County have used the Categorical Exclusion (CE) process. CEs are generally prepared when a proposed project does not involve significant adverse environmental impacts. For instance, actions that do not require the relocation of a significant number of people or businesses or do not have a significant impact on natural, cultural, recreational, historic or other resources are documented in a CE. Based upon the experience of our partners and CH2M Hill, this process can be much shorter and much less expensive than an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The CE does require that the agencies analyze one alternative in the environmental review. If there are significant environmental impacts, the next level of Federal NEPA review is the EA. The EA is the level of environmental review used in the 145th – 165th section, and typically involves analysis of more than one alternative. The federal agencies have indicated that they will participate in funding the appropriate level of environmental analysis, but not a

process that is more involved than the regulations and identification of environmental impacts deem necessary. The goal will be to have all agencies agree on the appropriate environmental process based on the analysis and impacts by April. We are anticipating that SEPA review will follow by adopting the NEPA document.

Council Meeting – Staff will return to Council in the first quarter of 2006 with a recommendation of the agencies and the City on the level of environmental analysis. The Council will be asked to approve the environmental process. As always, during an environmental analysis if discovery of new significant impacts are found, then the environmental process can be adjusted to address the new information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Aurora Corridor Project from 165th to 205th is identified in the City’s 2005 –2010 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The following provides a breakdown of the project funding:

Grant Source	Purpose	Amount
Surface Transportation Program - Urbanized	Pre-Design/Design	\$4,815,461
Surface Transportation Program - Urbanized	Design/Right of Way	\$525,361
Federal Transit Administration	Pre/Design	\$1,475,518
King County Revenue*	Design	\$500,000
Hazard Elimination Grant	Construction	\$90,000
Gas Tax Nickel Funding	Construction	\$7,443,256
Future Funding	Const./Right of Way.	\$34,114,205
City Contribution	Match	\$11,036,199
Total		\$60,000,000

- *Official Agreement is pending.*

The estimated cost of the POP process is between \$325,000 and \$400,000. The work will be funded through the Federal Surface Transportation Program and matched with City funds.

SUMMARY/ RECOMMENDATION

Staff will review the above process with the Council, and will seek feedback on whether we are on the right track, and if the outreach and information development seems appropriate. Attachment A indicates the major steps in the process in a flow chart format. We expect the POP process to run from April of 2005 through March/April of 2006, followed by the agreed upon environmental process. Staff feels that continuously involving the public and business and property owners is extremely important in bringing support for the project and in designing and constructing a project that will benefit the community, move traffic and people efficiently and safely, and will provide incentives for property owners and businesses to improve and expand.

Should Council feel comfortable with the direction proposed in this staff report and meeting discussion, staff will return in May requesting authorization for the City Manager to enter into a contract with CH2M Hill for this process.

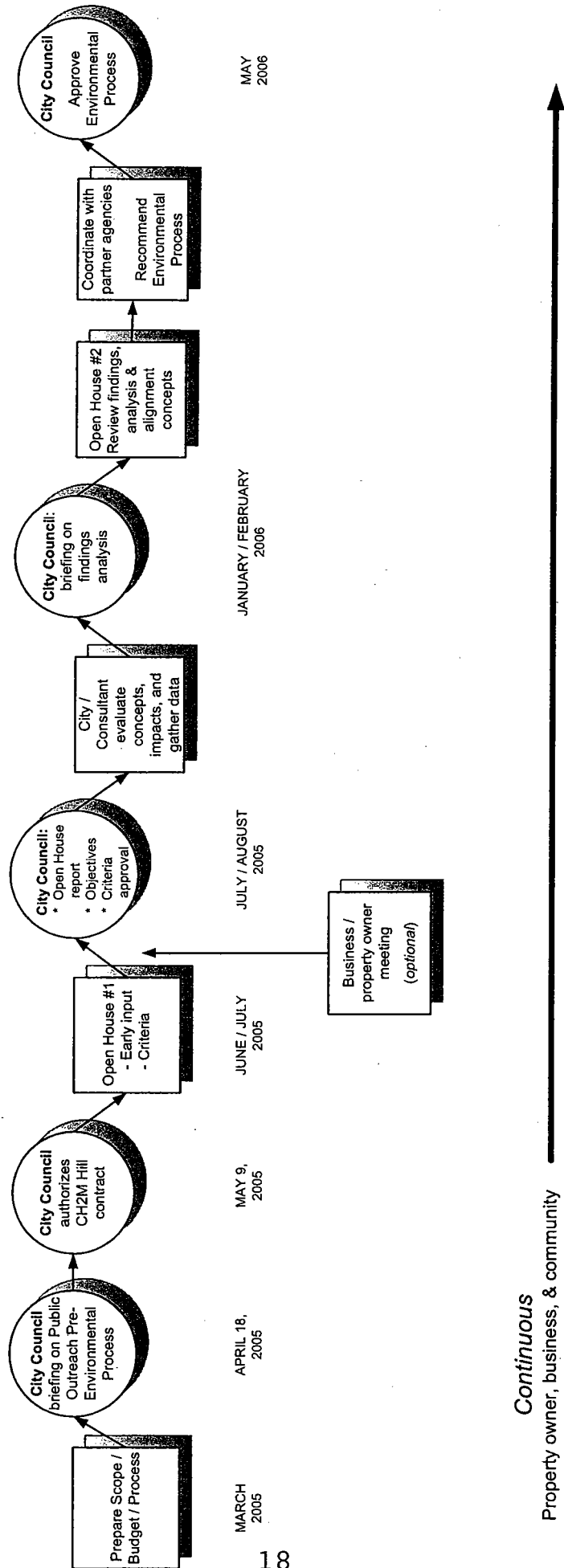
STATUS OF N 145TH – N 165TH AURORA PROJECT

The N 145th to N 165th Aurora project is moving into the final stages leading up to construction. The final plans and specifications have been completed and the project was advertised for construction bids on April 4, 6, and 11. Bids are due on May 3rd, and will be opened that day. Staff and consultants will review the bids and scheduled to return to Council for award on June 6. Right-of-way has been certified by WSDOT and FHWA and is moving forward with nine properties yet to settle with the City on compensation (all properties have signed the possession and use documents in which they grant access and permanent public rights to their property for construction of the project).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Aurora N 165th – N 205th POP Process Flowchart

**Aurora 165th - 205th Public Outreach Pre-Environmental Process
(DRAFT)**



Continuous
Property owner, business, & community
Outreach