



Aurora Business Team Meeting #2  
Aurora Corridor Project (N 165<sup>th</sup> Street to N 205<sup>th</sup> Street)

December 13, 2005 (8:00-10:00 AM)  
**\*\*Shoreline Center – Arden Room (map attached)\*\***

### Agenda

Meeting Objective: To understand the Aurora Project process and to learn the basics of NEPA and SEPA

- |    |                                                                       |                      |            |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| 1. | Welcome<br>-Aurora Project process<br>-Handout : updated Ground Rules | Kirk McKinley        | 8:00-8:10  |
| 2. | NEPA "101"<br>-Handout: Environmental Classification Summary Sheet    | Trevin Taylor, WSDOT | 8:10-9:00  |
| 3. | SEPA "101"                                                            | Joe Tovar            | 9:00-9:40  |
| 4. | Homework – Economic Info review                                       | Kris Overleese       | 9:40-9:50  |
| 5. | Choose dates for January meeting(s)                                   | Kris Overleese       | 9:50-10:00 |
| 8. | Adjourn                                                               | Kirk McKinley        | 10:00      |

#### Attachments

- Meeting #1 summary: November 30, 2005
- Map to Shoreline Center

Coffee and breakfast snacks will be provided



Meeting summary: December 13, 2005

**Aurora Business Team (ABT)**  
**Aurora Corridor Project (N 165<sup>th</sup> Street to N 205<sup>th</sup> Street)**  
**Shoreline Conference Center (8:00-10:00 a.m.)**

- ABT:** George Daher, Linda Minarcin, Perry Murless, Dan Mann, Mick Richards, Larry Steele, Rick Stephens, Sunny Hong, Tim Morris
- Staff:** Kris Overleese, Kirk McKinley, Joe Tovar, Alicia Sherman, Julie Modrzejewski, Catherine Lander
- Guests:** Ken Cottingham, Walt Hagen, Ms. Ellis
- Speakers:** Washington State Department of Transportation: Brian Hasselbach, Sam Schuyler, and Trevin Taylor
- Handouts:** Binders containing environmental documents from first Aurora project including Socio-Economic Discipline Report (NEPA), NEPA Environmental Classification Summary Sheet (ECS), Socio-Economic issues (SEPA)

## Meeting Summary

Meeting began at approximately 8am.

1. Opening comments Kirk/Kris

All team members were given green Aurora Business Team binders that would be used to secure information from each of the meetings. Tab numbers could be associated with meeting number, and under tab #2, members could find: today's meeting agenda, list of members, amended meeting ground rules, and documents listed above under handouts. Re-usable nameplates were handed out. Entire environmental documents from the first mile are on view at the City offices.

To help clarify ABT members' role, Kirk briefly went over some of the items that this group would be asked to provide feedback and discussion on in the future:

- Socio-Economic Analysis. Help define the level of review and analysis.
- Road Alignment / Traffic. Turn pocket locations, frequency, business parking impacts, signal location, rear/alternative access.

- N 185<sup>th</sup> Street Interchange concept. Re-visit this design.
- Discussion on how to tie in to the N 205<sup>th</sup> Street intersection.
- Signs. Over 90% of signs on this stretch of Aurora are non-conforming and could be impacted by the project. Are there ways to save any of these through code review?
- Water Quality/ Quantity Issues. Echo Lake. McAleer Creek.
- Right of Way Policy & Procedures Manual.

## 2. NEPA Overview

Trevin Taylor/Brian Hasselbach,

WSDOT

Trevin Taylor works for the State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) - Highways and Local Programs Division (Olympia, WA – headquarters). He will be processing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for this project and was not involved in the NEPA review of the first mile of Aurora. Trevin is the City's liaison to Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and FHWA oversees projects with Federal funding and typically has final decision on NEPA approval.

A brief history on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was given by Trevin. NEPA was enacted during the Nixon era after a time in the 1960s when large interstate projects had been undertaken. NEPA provides a procedural framework with an interdisciplinary approach to environmental review of any project with a Federal nexus (such as Federal funding). The process can appear to be a bureaucratic maze but is intended to give everyone a voice and a chance to speak out. NEPA has more teeth (i.e. more in depth review) than the state's parallel State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

No matter what level of environmental documentation will ultimately be done, which include a Categorical Exclusion (CE), an Environmental Assessment (EA), or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), WSDOT starts the process with an Environmental Classification Summary (ECS) sheet. The ECS form was handed out for discussion. The goal is to spend public funds appropriately with the correct level of NEPA evaluation.

Trevin's job is to make sure that the NEPA process is followed correctly for this new project. Trevin indicated that he is not a proponent or an opponent of this project. He supports the environmental review process and is available to get information from all and can be called directly with any concerns. Trevin is committed to being responsive and getting questions where they need to go, but does not promise that people will always like the answers they get. Trevin acts as a liaison to Elizabeth Healy who will be the regional engineer for FHWA overseeing NEPA for this project.

*During the discussion, the question was raised as to whether it was unusual for a SEPA EIS to be done with only a NEPA EA as the City did for the first mile of Aurora. It is not uncommon to do a SEPA EIS and a NEPA EA as was done with the first mile of Aurora. Trevin explained that with the NEPA process, an EIS does not indicate a better process. Both processes require and begin with the same Discipline Reports which would include socio-economic analysis.*

Part of the idea behind NEPA is to get the most qualified people to look at these different disciplines.

Trevin explained that Value Engineering is not a NEPA requirement and is typically completed after environmental review is complete. The intent of Value Engineering is to find opportunities in costs savings (to find alternative ways to build the same thing that may result in a cost savings).

Environmental work is typically done by approximately 30% design. If a re-design significantly changed what was originally submitted, it might warrant re-evaluation of the environmental process.

The city cannot purchase property with federal funds before the environmental process is complete. *What happens if a parcel is made unable to sell (uneconomic remnant) or a business is affected as a result of the project?* The need for property acquisition does not automatically raise the environmental documentation from an EA to an EIS. A professional will be hired by the City to complete the Discipline Reports. If the community or citizens disagreed with the findings of Discipline Reports, any of those entities could hire a professional to review the Discipline Report or recommend addition of information to the report. If the two experts disagreed in their reports, FHWA would take a look as to whether the level of environmental review needs to be raised. All levels of environmental review use the same Discipline Reports. It is only when there is a significant impact identified in the Discipline Reports that the level of environmental process is raised. There is no sharp threshold for determining significant impact; it is purposely left fuzzy to allow a closer look on a case to case basis. It was clarified that no project can leave an uneconomic remnant or piece of private property that cannot be used or developed.

The City needs to provide Discipline Report documents in order to give the public time for review and comment. It is not uncommon to extend the comment period if the agency fails to do so. FHWA wants the public to be able to review the environmental documentation.

Kris went over a very brief schedule of the project process as outlined in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP):

- Public Outreach and Pre-environmental (POP) → current
- Draft alignments → creating now, show ABT early 2006
- Collection of data for Discipline Reports → once alignments are created and reviewed by community, start putting discipline reports together
- Decide on level of environmental documentation → spring 2006
- Environmental Process → 2006
- Right of Way process → estimated 2007 (environmental process must be complete first )
- Final Design → estimated 2007
- Construction → estimated 2008

### 3. SEPA Overview

Joe Tovar

Joe Tovar was introduced as the City's new Planning and Development Director and SEPA responsible official for this project. Joe Tovar re-iterated that the NEPA process is more comprehensive than SEPA. In order not to waste tax payer money, he would be looking at the appropriate SEPA threshold and determining if SEPA could adopt NEPA, whatever that outcome should be. The process will provide environmental full disclosure and must discuss any consequences as a result of the project. Joe Tovar also stated he is interested in learning what the citizen's concerns are.

### 4. Review future ABT agenda topics

Kirk McKinley & Kris Overleese

The green ABT notebooks contain economic analysis components from the first mile of Aurora environmental process **for review by ABT prior to the next meeting**. Each person is asked to read through the documents to see what, if anything, they feel is missing from the analysis. The ABT will be specifically asked what additional analysis should be conducted for this component of review. Please

contact Kirk or Kris with any questions about this prior to the next meeting. The full environmental documents are available for review. Call Kirk or Kris if you'd like to see them.

Staff is working on developing a detailed process schedule. Staff would like the ABT to think of this project as a new starting point and not focus on issues with the last mile. Staff is looking to conduct a fair process that will not alienate, which is part of the purpose of this group. Staff recognized that the first two meetings were a lot of information dissemination and stated that beginning the next meeting, ABT members would be doing more talking.

5. Questions

All

There were questions as to whether the alignment is already set for this project, and if this is a negotiable item. Is it set in stone that property needed from approximately N 172<sup>nd</sup> to 192<sup>nd</sup> would be purchased from the east side?

Kirk stated that Council has made decisions over the past years which have been helping to guide alignment issues and to try to give property owners a sense of what to expect. Kirk will look into past ordinances and provide this information to the group. Kirk will look further into whether any flexibility of past ordinances would require any ordinances to be repealed. ABT members asked for clarification on what is negotiable for design, asking for information on project standards so that the team does not waste time on suggestions and input that would not meet State/Federal standards.

Kirk stated that he would work to get information together for the group.

6. Choose dates for future meetings

Kris Overleese

The ABT agreed that morning meetings worked best. The next three meetings were then set for **January 18 (Wednesday), February 1(Wednesday), and February 14 (Tuesday). All three of these meetings will be held at the Fire Department Headquarters conference room (17525 Aurora Avenue N) from 8:00 am – 10:00 am.**

7. Adjourn

Kirk McKinley

Meeting ended at approximately 10 am.