



RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Shoreline's Aurora corridor is scheduled for a major reconstruction. In August 1999 the City Council unanimously adopted a design concept for the redevelopment of Aurora's street infrastructure from the Seattle city limit (North 145th Street) to the Snohomish County line (North 205th Street). Construction of the first section, between North 145th Street and North 165th Street will begin in late 2001 or early 2002. The design includes continuous sidewalks, improved access, landscaping, public art, underground utilities, and a new lane in each direction for access to businesses and transit. The entire three-mile project includes up to four new signalized intersections and up to four new signalized pedestrian crossings.

In addition to the street project, Shoreline will soon be constructing a major pedestrian/bicycle trail within the interurban right-of-way, which parallels Aurora. This trail will serve as a segment of a 30-mile regional trail that will eventually connect Everett to Seattle. The City is currently working to determine how much and what type of property is necessary. Once the preliminary design is established, right-of-way needs will be known in greater detail. However, actual right-of-way needs will not be established until the final design stage of the project.

PROPERTY RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

State law controls the process of acquisition of property. During this process a City representative will meet with affected property owners to discuss right-of-way and easement needs as well as other issues that might involve the property owner and tenants. If real property needs to be acquired, the price the City offers for the property will be established by an appraisal. The appraiser's task is to determine "just compensation" for the property based on fair market values. Upon completion of the appraisal process, the City representative will offer to purchase the property. When a settlement is reached, the necessary paperwork and signatures will be completed. It is only after these details have been completed that rights to the property will transfer to the City.

RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

In the event that a structure requires removal, the occupants (tenant or owner) of that structure may be eligible for certain relocation services. Relocation eligibility must comply with federal and state regulations. Typically these benefits may include advisory services and reimbursements for moving expenses incurred as a result of the project. Since each property, ownership, or occupancy is unique, there may be considerable variation in procedures and time requirements.



TENANT COMPENSATION

Additional assistance might be provided to business tenants who are displaced as a result of the project and who choose to relocate in the City of Shoreline. Assistance in these cases is not specifically required by law. This is an extra benefit, authorized by the City Council, to accommodate the needs of business owners in Shoreline.

OTHER ISSUES RELATED TO RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

The reconstruction of Aurora Avenue will adhere to established City codes and standards. These might include signing standards, undergrounding of utility distribution lines and service connections, property interface standards such as parking buffer areas, setback and overhang design standards, and parking design allowances.

ACCESS STANDARDS

A major goal of the Aurora Corridor Project is safety improvement. One of the ways this will be accomplished is through access management, which controls where and how vehicles can move in the roadway. Controlling the movement of vehicles limits the potential for conflicts and resulting traffic accidents. Improvements to access along the roadway will include driveway width and spacing standards, conversion of the two-way left-turn lane to a focused left-turn and U-turn lane with pedestrian refuge areas, and limiting most driveways to right-in/right-out movements.

CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC CONTROL – SIGNING AND MAINTAINING ACCESS

One of the measures of the success of the Aurora Corridor Project will be how well it supports existing businesses during construction. The construction phase will be a critical time for businesses whose livelihood depends on their patron's access. Measures to ensure minimal impacts to businesses will include special signing to alert patrons that businesses are open during construction, clearly signed bypass or detour routes, construction staging and scheduling to minimize impacts to business operations, and constant communication with business and property owners regarding construction activity.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information on the Aurora Corridor Project please contact Anne Tonella-Howe, City of Shoreline at (206) 546-1700.