

MINUTES FROM WSDOT/HWY. 2 SAFETY COALITION/LOCAL LEADERS MEETING

Date: May 27, 2002
Memo To: (Distribution)
From: Liz Loomis (City of Snohomish Councilmember and Public Info Liaison for Cadman/Rinker)
Re: WSDOT Meeting

On Friday, May 24th, I attended a meeting with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). WSDOT had called the meeting and invited the Highway 2 Safety Coalition and other East County communities to attend. The subject was “Developing Scope of SR-2 Improvements.” WSDOT is holding meetings like this around the state to help communities plan projects for future transportation improvement dollars that would be forthcoming if Referendum 51 and the Snohomish County Executive’s portion of the regional plan were both passed at the ballot box. Snohomish County was there to work with WSDOT on an approved list of projects.

Attendees included:

- Klara Fabry, Regional Director, WSDOT
- Tim Smith, Project Engineer for Hwy 2, WSDOT
- Marshel Delwar, Engineer, WSDOT
- Rick Cisar, Planning Director, City of Sultan
- Carolyn Eslick, Candidate for 39th LD State Representative
- Dorothy Croshaw, Councilmember, City of Gold Bar
- Steve Thomsen, Snohomish County Public Works
- Donnetta Walser, Mayor of Monroe
- Fred Walser, Chief of Police, City of Sultan
- CH Rowe, Mayor of Sultan
- March Mechling, Councilmember, City of Monroe
- Gary Bourne, Acting City Engineer, City of Sultan
- Connie Dunn, Planner, City of Sultan
- Donna Murphy, Grants Coordinator, City of Sultan
- Mark Beardslee, Community Services Director, City of Snohomish
- Hiller West, Planning, City of Monroe
- Rahm Something, Economic Development Committee, City of Sultan

The objective of the meeting, according to WSDOT, was to find out where community interest lay in spending the \$25 million that has been allocated to “US2 Everett to Stevens Pass Corridor Improvements” in the Snohomish County Executive’s regional plan if it passes. Marshel Delwar covered the four different studies that have been done on Highway 2 since 1989.

From there the group was led to agree that the \$25 million should be spent to improve “chokepoints” on Highway 2. WSDOT told us they had been compiling data of capacity deficiencies in the statewide transportation system. They produced two handouts that showed

excess capacity on Highway 2 at key mileposts and how those problems would increase by 2022 if no improvements were made. The data indicated that the following areas were problems, i.e. dramatically exceeding capacity on Highway 2 in order of priority:

- The “Trestle” from I-5 to Highway 2
- Coming into and coming out of Monroe
- Coming into Sultan
- Intersection of Highway 2 & Highway 9
- In and out of Gold Bar

I made the point that any chokepoint improvements had to be through and past Gold Bar. We didn't want a situation where chokepoints were resolved in Sultan, but causing problems down the line in Gold Bar. Gold Bar Councilmember Dorothy Croshaw and Candidate Carolyn Eslick echoed my concerns.

Points of interest:

- There are no improvements planned for Highway 2 in the Governor's plan.
- The Snohomish County Executive's regional plan calls for \$115 million and another \$50 million in Trestle improvements; \$6 million to realign the Sultan Basin Road; \$15 million for the Monroe Bypass; and, \$25 million for improvements to Highway 2, which are as yet undetermined.
- WSDOT acknowledged that the paltry amounts reflected the need to “phase” in improvements. The final budget amounts for the project phases will be determined by WSDOT and released to the public on July 3rd.
- The Governor's plan is scheduled to be on the ballot this fall. It's unclear when the regional plan will be put to the voters.
- WSDOT recommended that we ask for \$6-8 million for an EIS for increasing capacity on Highway 2, which would take approximately three years. They said any chokepoint improvements we did would require EISs (plural) for each anyway. They felt it was better to do the whole study rather than piece meal it by community.
- The \$25 million is not a sure thing, and the group acknowledged the need to lobby those who would represent us on the regional plan side of things. Those individuals are not known yet. WSDOT said that we should continue to have involvement in Snohomish County Tomorrow, and the Puget Sound Regional Council.