

**MINUTES – June 27, 2005**  
**Highway 2 Safety Coalition Meeting**  
Community Center Room, 319 Main Street  
Sultan, Washington 98294

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Meeting called to order at 7:04 PM

**Attendees:**

- Chairman Fred Walser
- Donnetta Walser, Mayor, City of Monroe
- Richard M. Mitchell, WSDOT
- Rene Zimmerman, WSDOT
- Tina Rogers, Snohomish Co. Public Works
- John Seehuus, City of Sultan Councilman and Coalition founding member
- Connie Dunn, City of Sultan Public Works Director
- Kirk Burdeen, Washington State Patrol
- Chester Marler, Stevens Pass Ski area
- Loretta Storm, acting H2SC secretary

Self-introductions were made.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Rene Zimmerman gave an update of the RDP** (Route Development Plan). The grant application proposal was approved by both the PSRC's Policy and Executive boards, which will result in \$100,000. This will fund the public involvement segment of the process, which will be tremendously important. The consultant's scope of work is still under development, so the consultants will probably not get started in earnest until approximately August. She indicated that Mr. Mitchell will be taking the consultants and others on a tour of the U.S. 2 corridor.

**Chairman Walser** asked about the matching funds for the PSRC grant. **Zimmerman** confirmed that the \$15,000 to \$16,000 match will be in-kind rather than actual funds, thus the time and labor provided by the corridor cities' staff will go towards meeting this match. Rene is the point person to receive this information and track it. **Tina Rogers** stated that this documentation cannot begin until the program is enacted in January, 2006. In the possible event that the cities' contributions will fall short, the county will assist. They are trying to avoid having to do interlocal agreements, as that will cost more than making up any shortages for some direct costs (like for printing, etc.) at the end of the process. But if all cities account for their time correctly, the required match should not be any problem.

**Mayor Walser** asked for clarification as to whether the City of Monroe's staff time could be used as a match, as they have acted as the point-agency on start-up of the RDP grant application. **Rogers** confirmed that the expenses only begin after the grant has been executed. She then asked Mayor Walser if there was going to be a technical advisory committee-type of group formed, to which Mayor Walser responded positively. **Zimmerman** responded that the Corridor Working Group will be comprised of selected

staff of all involved corridor cities, and that an official from PSRC will be part of the group. The anticipated start date is sometime in August.

### **Update on U.S. 2 Construction and Improvements**

**Mayor Walser** then offered a summary of the WSDOT construction through Monroe. She stated her Domino theory that anything that affects U.S. 2 anywhere affects everyone. In Monroe, the current WSDOT plan is to eliminate the two-way left turn center lane, and construct a raised concrete curb and/or median to restrict left turns in the area between the SR 522 signal to 150 feet east of the Main/Old Owen Road intersection, which has become a High Accident Corridor (HAC), and triggered the safety improvements. Most of the accidents were a result of left turns. Monroe businesses are not thrilled with these changes. Left turns will be restricted to the following intersections: Kelsey, Lewis/Chain Lake, Main/Old Owen, and into a driveway near Sky Valley Traders on the south side of U.S. 2 adjacent to Fred Meyer. There will also be a new driveway between Petosa's and Berger King. Kelsey, Lewis/Chain Lake and Main/Old Owen Road intersections will be widened for U-turns. There will also be new video traffic cameras on U.S.2 at 522, Kelsey, Lewis and Main, which will be connected to WSDOT's remote arterial management unit located in Shoreline, and has the potential to increase traffic flow, but probably not in any dramatic manner.

There will also be an overlay from 522 to East Main Street, and Lakeside Industries was awarded that contract. Lanes will be closed only during the night. Rick Mitchell then offered the hours of construction and said people could call a county hotline (no number was given) for information. General discussion ensued related to hours of construction, road constraints and the name of the WSDOT engineer responsible for this construction, Amir Ahmadi.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Mayor Walser reported on status of funding for several projects.** Congressman Larsen secured funding for two Monroe projects; \$480,000 for the reconfigured U.S. 2/Main Street-Old Owen Road intersection, and \$1,040,000 for the U.S. 2/Kelsey Street intersection. Unfortunately, Rep. Larsen is not on the House Transportation Committee and the current extension of TEA-21 expires July 1<sup>st</sup>. She's hoping to have a completed bill by then. If not, negotiators anticipate one by August. Additionally, Congressman Larsen's office called to ask about any other needed projects for U.S. 2, to which she responded "anything" from Monroe to Stevens Pass. She offered an idea to Larsen which the City of Monroe has been discussing as a possible project, which is a "bypass" or connector road from approximately the Galaxy Theater eastward, behind Safeway Foods and eventually to Woods Creek. However, purchasing the right-of-way from Barclays North, the current owner of that land, would be substantial. Traffic engineers estimate that this connector road would redirect approximately 10,000 vehicles per day off of U.S.2. This is currently in Monroe's TEA-21 funding request, even though it's not precisely a major highway, it is an alternative that will facilitate a decrease in capacity off of U.S. 2, which is a major highway.

Leverage for federal funding or other grants could result from the long-delayed 522 bypass, in addition to safety concerns because of constrained access to fire and EMT vehicles in an emergency.

General discussion regarding specifics of the alignment alternatives and other site-specific development issues ensued.

**Connie Dunn then gave an update of WSDOT'S Sultan projects.** They are currently reconstructing the **5<sup>th</sup> street/U.S. 2 intersection** to prepare it for signalization. The poles for the traffic signals will be delayed until Fall. There have been some one-lane traffic during the day, but no construction was performed during weekends, so construction delays have been minimal.

**The Sultan Basin Road intersection** is being performed in three phases. The first phase is lagging behind a bit, as the city is still in the throes of negotiations to secure the right-of-way from a single property owner. The second phase appears to be catching up to the first phase, as far as construction; WSDOT has reviewed the signal and possibly as early as this fall it could go to bid for construction. Minimum shoulder work will be needed, so no major delays are anticipated.

**Chief Walser asked about the WSDOT video cameras** and whether they could be used to synchronize the traffic flow during peak/weekend periods. **Rick Mitchell** said the cameras are not automatically synched to the signals, it is manually adjusted via remote control at a control panel and can do some minor, but limited, revisions. **Mitchell** said using video cams are not cost-effective for ticket-issuing purposes, but there is an official report being issued later this year on that procedure.

**Stevens Pass Project Report:** Mr. Marler reported that the Forest Service, with WSDOT's help, has requested a \$20,000 grant for a pedestrian overpass at Stevens Pass Summit, but that is still several years off. Another project they're working on is the **development of a new master plan**, part of which deals with traffic flow to/from the parking lots. **Tina Rogers** suggested that some of these improvements could be a candidate for safety enhance grants, especially pedestrian-related projects.

### **Miscellaneous Issues and Closing Discussion & Comments:**

- **From Chair Walser:**
  - **He would be amazed if Initiative 912** did NOT get onto the ballot. Taxpayers are fairly upset.
  - **General strategy for 2006** – Need to focus on legislature to at least raise their awareness of this area of U.S. 2, as well as educate the public. Has spoken with Mary Margaret Haugen in this regard.
  - **There will be no meetings during July and August;** will take up again September 26<sup>th</sup>.
- **Rick Mitchell** advised that WSDOT's budgeting cycle for additional safety projects begins late summer/early fall (for intersection improvements, etc.). But nothing's been identified yet, but he wished everyone to learn it's their normal operation. **Chair Walser** asked whether individual cities need to provide input after WSDOT notification for information? **Mitchell** said they first collect accident and traffic data to identify problem intersections, then a scoping process develops basic approaches for solutions. They then review them from a cost-benefit ratio perspective. And at a time when they move forward, i.e., for the special legislative session or whatever, then WSDOT sends a general notification to the local jurisdictions.

- **Loretta Storm** asked for feedback on the possibility or value of creating a Coalition website. All members felt strongly that this was an important communication and educational tool for the group. (Chester Marler stated, "It's really essential. I can't see having an organization like this without a website.") **Rene Zimmerman** asked how a website could be supported financially. Loretta responded that a Yahoo.com website was only about \$15 per month and she'd be willing to contribute that herself. **Chair Walser** stated that the cost could come from a bit of fundraising.
- **Kirk Burdeen** reported they have a new department chief (did not give his name) who is very supportive of the troopers and the communities within which they work, and has direct access to people in Olympia. Because many improvements are "squeaky wheel" type of stuff, the closer people can work together on issues and communicate, the faster things can happen and be improved, hopefully.

*[Respectfully submitted by L. Storm 9/23/05.]*