

Appendices

B. Stakeholder Interview Summary



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 29, 2019
To: Jeff Wilkens, Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council
From: Kara Hall, Kendra Breiland, Fehr & Peers
Subject: **US 2 Upper Wenatchee Valley Corridor Transportation Study - Stakeholder Interview Summary**

SE18-0649

The US 2 Upper Wenatchee Valley Corridor Transportation Study will propose short-term, mid-term, and long-term solutions for managing congestion and expectations along the US 2 corridor between Coles Corner and Hay Canyon Road, just west of Cashmere. The goal for this study includes identifying both temporary and permanent solutions that provide transportation for all modes and improve travel reliability along the corridor. The first phase of the corridor study is focused on understanding and documenting existing challenges and opportunities. An important component of this first phase is to engage the community. Part of the initial community engagement is to evaluate existing conditions through interviews of stakeholders and representatives of the project's advisory committee.

The full list of representatives interviewed as part of the initial outreach is below.

STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

Stakeholders interviewed included residents, local business owners, local community group representatives and agencies responsible for operations along the US 2 corridor.



Festival Operators

- Chantell Steiner, *Leavenworth Feshalle Civic Center Oversight Committee*
 - Steve Lord, *Chair of Oktoberfest*
 - Nancy Smith, *Executive Director of Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce*
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Community Groups

- Wilma Cartagena, *President of NCW Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*
 - Doug Clarke, *Vice-Chairman of Peshastin Community Council*
 - Tim Bentz, *Transportation Supervisor with Cascade School District*
 - Josh Harmening, *House Manager with Tierra Village*
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Businesses

- Dan Carr, *Owner of Visconti's Restaurant*
 - Chris John, *General Manager of Posthotel*
 - Gary Planagan, *Owner of Osprey Rafting Company*
 - Ed Rutledge, *Owner of Eagle Creek Winery*
 - Brian Pulse, *Director of Emergency Medical Services with Cascade Medical Center*
 - Lisa Worthen and Eric Worthen, *Owners of Dan's Food Market*
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Agencies

- Lieutenant Kelly Gregerson, *Washington State Patrol*
- Terry Van Hoven, *WSDOT Maintenance*
- Steve Burger, *Link Transit*
- Monica Lough and Craig Larson, *Port of Chelan County*

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Stakeholder interviews were conducted by EnviroIssues, Fehr & Peers, and Pertee. Interviews were held both in person and over the phone. The full list of questions asked during each interview are in **Attachment A** and highlights of the interviews are summarized below.

Study Awareness & Concerns

- Roughly half of the stakeholders were aware of the study.
- Stakeholders were most concerned with congestion in Leavenworth, particularly on the weekends and during peak tourism season. Many expressed a desire to separate visitor traffic from local traffic.



- Additional concerns along the corridor include: congestion on alternate routes, parking for visitors, frequency and reliability of public transportation, and emergency response and evacuation.
- The effect of frequent pedestrian crossings combined with poor timing between signals within Leavenworth was noted as a cause of congestion within the city.
- Almost all stakeholders interviewed agreed that gridlock in Leavenworth is the worst during the Christmas Tree Lighting Festival, particularly when the lighting ceremony concludes and visitors leave the area.
- Many stakeholders expressed a strong desire for cooperation between the City of Leavenworth and festival organizers regarding the capacity of Leavenworth to accommodate the large number of visitors.
- Almost all stakeholders understand that the project area is geographically constrained by the Wenatchee River and mountains, so widening US 2 is unlikely going to be a promising alternative. As a result, they expressed interest in an innovative solution that incorporates transit, off-site parking and shuttles, and alleviates congestion so residents can move more effectively through the project area during peak tourism seasons.
- One stakeholder noted that while planning around Christmas Tree Lighting Festival has improved conditions, the hospital must be engaged as they operate ambulance services in the area.
- Currently, delivery trucks for businesses in Leavenworth unload in the two-way-left-turn-lane. This causes challenges in winter months when snow plows are operating along the corridor and do not have enough room to pass unloading trucks, resulting in back-ups and delays along the corridor.

Alternate Routes

- Many stakeholders mentioned needing alternate routes between Peshastin and Dryden, and through Leavenworth to Chumstick Highway.
- Several stakeholders suggested exploring the opportunity to identify North Road as an alternate route open only for locals during events and festivals, noting concerns about GPS maps and law enforcement directing traffic onto North Road during major festivals.
- An alternate route that runs south of US 2 from Tumwater Canyon to Peshastin to bypass Leavenworth was also suggested.



- Stakeholders expressed concern that other routes do not have the infrastructure and capacity to safely accommodate more traffic volume as many of these routes also serve local agricultural needs.
- Several stakeholders noted that this corridor is greatly impacted by frequent closure of both Snoqualmie Pass and Tumwater Canyon during the winter seasons.

Parking

- Most stakeholders noted that there is insufficient parking in Leavenworth, especially for visitors, and the spillover into residential areas negatively impacts residents' ability to find parking and access their homes.
- Several stakeholders suggested building a multi-level parking garage in town or a designated parking area outside of Leavenworth, running a shuttle to the facility that could be staffed by locals, specifically Tierra Village residents, which serves adults with developmental disabilities.
- Tourists parking along Tumwater Canyon create safety and maintenance concerns during all seasons.
- One stakeholder noted that often the parking available in downtown is being fully utilized by employees, limiting visitor access to prime parking.

Future Developments and Changes

- Approximately half of the stakeholders interviewed mentioned the Adventure Park and concern for traffic problems associated with the development of that project.
- Other developments that were mentioned include: condominium/apartment developments and a new bus stop/transfer park-and-ride near Safeway, housing development in Peshastin, and new hotel/motel development in the area.
- One stakeholder noted that expected growth in Peshastin, includes warehousing, distillery, and manufacturing. There is also potential for the Winton Mill, near SR 207, to accommodate more employees, and a planned business park near the West Cashmere Bridge.

Public Transportation

- Some stakeholders expressed concern over the accessibility and frequency of public transit.
- Business owners thought that if public transit were more accessible and frequent, more employees would use it.



- One community organization identified the lack of transit access as the biggest barrier for their programs and residents.
- The lack of transit access to Chumstick Highway was also identified as a barrier to public transportation use.
- One local business owner mentioned that due to frequency and service times there is no viable public transit option between Wenatchee/Cashmere/Dryden to Leavenworth and therefore, most employees commute by driving.

Community Outreach

- Most stakeholders reported that residents within the study area are a tight-knit community and are highly engaged in local issues. As a result, stakeholders noted several strategies that would be effective in the study area:
 - Direct mailers and electronic newsletters
 - Staffing local community events, like farmers markets
 - Conducting outreach through different Facebook groups (i.e. Mamas and Papas, City of Leavenworth, Friends of Leavenworth)
 - Using the Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce network
 - Advertising through the Leavenworth City Council and its newsletter
 - Public forums and briefings, specifically with community and agriculture groups
 - Distributing project information in community hubs, like cafes and restaurants frequented by both tourists and locals
 - Local radio
- Several stakeholders suggested translating materials into Spanish, particularly surveys and factsheets.
- Some suggestions for additional stakeholders that should be engaged throughout the process include: Icycle Brewing, Borealis Builders, Sage Mountain, communities between Leavenworth and Cashmere, community outreach groups like CAFÉ, the City of Wenatchee, and local school districts.

Safety

- Residents of the City of Leavenworth stated their primary concern is evacuating the area in the event of a wildfire or other emergency and providing emergency response during periods of high traffic congestion.



- Narrow road width and lack of shoulder along US 2 was identified as a concern by several stakeholders.
- One stakeholder reported that the 60 mile per hour speed limit on US 2 through Coles Corner is too high and described seeing several moderate-to-severe accidents at the turnoff to SR 207.
- While speed along the US 2 corridor from Peshastin to Cashmere was a noted concern, one stakeholder stated that the recent prioritization of speed limit enforcement along that segment has improved concerns.
- Flashing red-light early warning systems are believed to have lowered the number of high-speed impact collisions.
- One stakeholder noted concern over summer rafting companies not observing typical safety procedures for passenger transport. This results in overwhelming the pull-outs along the corridor at disembarking areas upstream of common take-outs for rafting on the Wenatchee River.
- One stakeholder noted that signals along US 2 within the City of Leavenworth do not include emergency preemption; however, within Wenatchee signals do have emergency preemption.

Study Aspirations

- Stakeholders agreed that the most favorable outcome of this study is one that addresses the challenges of Leavenworth tourism during peak seasons.
- Stakeholders also agreed that no workable solution has been identified to date and that creative solutions are highly encouraged.
- Addressing parking concerns in Leavenworth was a desire expressed by most stakeholders.
- Some stakeholders hoped that the project team would consider alternatives to evenly distribute tourists throughout the region, such as concentrating additional lodging development in nearby areas and shuttling visitors into Leavenworth for recreation and special events.
- Improving transit operations for both residents and tourists was identified as a favorable outcome by some stakeholders.
- One previous enhancement along the corridor identified as successful by stakeholders was the improvements at the US 2/Highway 97 interchange.
- Several stakeholders noted their ideal outcomes of this study would be to expect more reasonable and reliable travel time along the corridor.



ATTACHMENT A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How much do you know about the traffic study being done?
2. What are your concerns about this corridor? How do the current corridor traffic patterns affect your business and/or people you represent including, but not limited to, residents, commuters, freight, recreation, etc.?
3. How could the corridor be improved to help you and/or your constituents? What are your priorities for this corridor? For the study?
4. Are you aware of any major changes planned along the corridor? (development)
5. How would you recommend we communicate with and involve the community in this study? Do you have specific suggestions or communications methods that have been successful in the past?
6. Are there specific people, organizations or group we should be reaching out to? Whom?
7. What languages are spoken within the study area?
8. Are there specific minority and low-income groups that we should be aware of? If yes, which?
9. What would be the best possible outcome from this study?
10. Are there any other topics, interests or concerns that we have not discussed that you would like us to address?
11. How can we best communicate with you about the process moving forward?