

# Chapter 6 Preferred Alternative

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*This chapter explains how the four alternatives were compared in order to recommend a “preferred alternative”.*

## **1 What are the results of evaluation efforts so far?**

By April of 2007, four alternatives had been evaluated, rated and ranked in the categories of *traffic and mobility*, *built environment impacts* and *natural environment impacts*, as detailed in preceding chapters of this Draft EIS.

Results of the screening showed Alternative B ranked highest in the *traffic and mobility* category. Alternative D would perform nearly as well; the primary difference between the two would be related to where each connects to SR 162. While Alternatives B and D would substantially reduce traffic on Rhodes Lake Road and 198<sup>th</sup> Avenue E, and both would add traffic to the northern portion of SR 162; Alternative D adds substantial traffic to SR 162 between Military Road and 128<sup>th</sup> Street E, causing this link to be well over capacity. Travel demand forecasts indicate that while Alternatives B and D will promote mobility to and from the plateau, the future traffic will exceed the capacity of either new corridor. In order to accommodate the assumed levels of development, it is likely that additional roadway facilities would be constructed to maintain an adequate transportation service level.

While all build alternatives will provide some level of benefit in reducing congestion on the Plateau, Alternative E was ranked the worst performer of the build alternatives. It would

provide the least overall reduction in delay, add slightly to congestion on SR 162 and add significantly to congestion to Calistoga Street in Orting.

Alternative A (Baseline) was judged by the PLT to be unacceptable in meeting the project objectives, in that it does not accommodate the travel demand for the future land uses. It would result in severe congestion on Rhodes Lake Road, SR 410, and 198<sup>th</sup> Ave. E.

In the *built environment impacts* category, Alternative E ranked highest because it is the shortest alignment and has the fewest effects. Of the remaining two build alternatives, Alternative D scored nearly as well as Alternative E and also would result in the lowest number of residential and business displacements. Alternative D also ties into an existing arterial (128<sup>th</sup> Street E), while Alternative B would connect to SR 162 via a narrow, dead-end roadway.

Alternative B received the highest score in the *natural environment impacts* category, meeting or exceeding scores of the other build alternatives for all of the criteria except the number of acres of filled floodplain. All of the build alternatives would involve river crossings; Alternative B includes a new clear-span Puyallup River bridge, Alternative D would widen an existing Puyallup River crossing and Alternative E would require a new crossing over the Carbon River.

## **2 What additional criteria were considered in order to recommend a preferred alternative?**

Although the process summarized above was thorough in screening the four alternatives, rating scores for all of the build alternatives remained within close range - no one alternative emerged as the clear overall best in meeting the primary objectives of the Corridor Study.

In order to recommend a preferred alternative a new criteria category was added for consideration by the Project Leadership Team (PLT) – *implementability*. The same basic process used

for the previously described evaluation categories was used to compare alternatives for this new category; an evaluation criteria matrix was used to assign scores in each area of focus, and scores were tallied and compared to rank the alternatives.

#### Community Support

Public input has played a vital role in this process. This evaluation element considered the degree to which a specific alternative is preferred by Alderton-McMillin community residents and the cities of Orting and Bonney Lake.

#### Partner Agency Support

Building a new roadway to meet travel demand in the study area would impact traffic patterns miles away from the actual roadway. Effects of a Rhodes Lake Road Corridor will be regional in nature; therefore, it is imperative that policy positions of nearby jurisdictions be considered. This element looked at the level of support or opposition of other public agencies for a particular alternative, based on agency comments as well as their adopted capital and operating plans regarding existing and planned infrastructure and public services.

#### Permitability

This portion of the evaluation focused on the relative ease of obtaining necessary permits and approvals in a timely manner. Discussions with staff of pertinent permitting agencies as well as expertise of the study team were factors in rating the alternatives in this area. The primary issue considered for this element was the permitability of the proposed river crossings for each alternative. Although Alternative B includes construction of a new bridge over the Puyallup River, that crossing would be designed to clear span ordinary high water levels; as opposed to the bridge widening and new crossing associated with Alternatives D and E, respectively, which would both involve in-water construction.

#### Total Project Cost

This rating was based on total estimated cost to design and construct a roadway; including the bridge crossing or improvements, relocation of homes and/or businesses,

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#### Implementability

Constructing a major project requires a combination of funding, permits, and community support. The final category of evaluation criteria weighs the elements which affect implementability – the ability of a project to be completed.

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mitigation required for impacts to critical areas and purchase of right-of-way. Planning-level cost estimates were developed based on preliminary alignment drawings, and relative cost figures were compared among each of the build alternatives.

#### Private Partnership Potential

Design and construction for a roadway project is often funded through a combination of public and private sources. The study team talked with various individuals and developers to determine the degree to which the private sector would support and participate in directly funding a specific alternative.

#### Phasing Potential

Elements such as river crossings and steep slopes present challenges that suggest construction of any of the three build alternatives would not happen “overnight”; however, the need for mobility in the vicinity of the Corridor will remain and continue to grow during design, permit, and construction stages of the project. Ratings in this category assessed the degree to which a particular alignment could efficiently accommodate existing and expected traffic volumes while being constructed with a phased approach.

#### Time for Implementation

The final issue considered in the *implementability* category compared the estimated amount of time required to obtain funding and permits, and design and construct a particular alternative. Agency or citizen opposition to a specific alignment can result in project delay. Potential funding opportunities may also be affected by these timeframes; an opportunity may sunset before a project has progressed enough to secure the funding it offers.

### **3 How did the three build alternatives rank in the *implementability* category?**

Alternative D ranked highest in overall *implementability*, followed by Alternative B. While Alternative E scored highest in the categories of “community support”, reflecting the comments from Alderton-McMillin residents who would prefer no roadway through the Valley, and “total project cost”, since it

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#### **Implementability Rankings**

The last section of Appendix A has more detailed information on the ranking of the build alternatives based on Implementability.

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is the shortest alignment; however, it ranked last in overall implementability. Reasons for these rankings are discussed below.

Both the Cities of Bonney Lake and Orting support Alternative D, and are in opposition to Alternative E. Although total construction cost estimates for Alternatives B and D are similar, it is likely that permitting related to a river crossing would be easier to obtain for a location where a crossing already exists. Comments provided by developers of permitted projects in the study area indicate that a strong potential for private partnership exists with Alternative D. The fact that Alternative D expands an existing river crossing instead of requiring a new crossing, along with the fact that it ties into an existing arterial near its connection to SR 162 led to a determination that it has the most potential for providing a workable corridor during a phased construction process.

While Alternative B was previously ranked highest in terms of *traffic and mobility*, both it and Alternative E earned low scores for “permitability” due to their requirements for new river crossings. That issue lead to concerns regarding “time for implementation”, based on past experience with the length of time required to obtain permits for new river crossings. This, in turn, lead to the lower score assigned to Alternative B in the “private partnership potential” category. Although local jurisdictions acknowledge the mobility benefit potential of Alternative B, they also recognize the higher potential for private partnership associated with Alternative D, and have therefore declared it to be their preference.

Alternative E scored lowest in the “private partnership potential” and “partner agency support” categories; it provides the least mobility benefit which, in combination with the issues connected to the new river crossing, resulted in its being the least favored by both public agencies and developers in the local area.

#### 4 Which alternative is recommended as the “preferred alternative”?

Alternative A (Baseline) was judged by the PLT to be unacceptable in meeting the project objectives, in that it does not accommodate the travel demand for the future land uses. It would result in severe congestion on Rhodes Lake Road, SR 410, and 198<sup>th</sup> Ave. E. Therefore the decision of a preferred alternative came down to a judgment of which build alternative offers the best balance of benefits, impacts, and implementability.

Based on the evaluation process and resulting scoring, Alignment D was designated as the preferred alternative. A comprehensive view of all evaluation criteria elements shows Alternative D to be the most efficient in not only completing this vital new component of the roadway network, but doing so in a way that utilizes existing infrastructure, garners support of local public agencies and the development community, and maximizes potential funding opportunities.

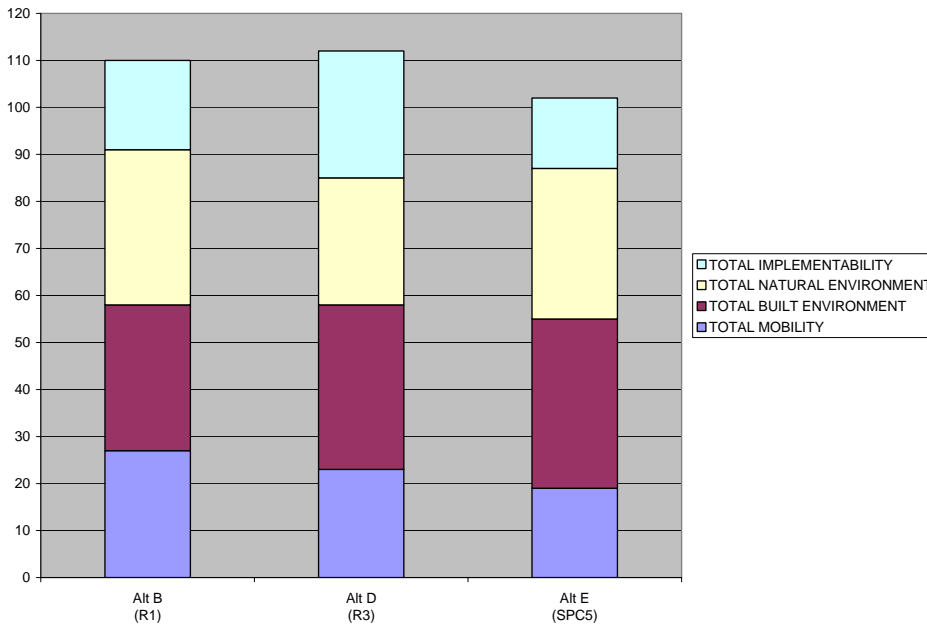
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#### PLT Recommends Alternative D

Since total scores of the build alternatives are very close, the Partner Agencies were asked for their specific preferred alternative. All those present (Bonney Lake, Sumner, WSDOT) at the April 20, 2007 PLT meeting recommended Alternative D.

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**Exhibit 6-1  
Total Rating Scores – Build Alternatives**



*Alternative D scored the most points during the evaluation process, and was identified as the 'preferred alternative'.*