

# RHODES LAKE ROAD

## Corridor Study

Project Newsletter ————— Spring 2003

### Why Study Rhodes Lake Rd Corridor

*Looking Back*

In 1992, Pierce County's Transportation Plan first identified a potential new east-west corridor connecting the area south of Bonney Lake with SR 162. Then in July 2001, the County Council passed Resolution No. R2001-80, declaring its intent to establish a roadway in the vicinity of Rhodes Lake Road East. The resolution directs the County Engineer to investigate the possibility of a new road alignment and report back to the Council.

#### The Purpose of the Study

The study is meant to answer two basic questions:

1. Should a new road be built?
2. If so, where should the road be built?

If a new road proves to be sufficiently beneficial, and a feasible route is identified, the County would proceed through environmental documentation and a formal "Route Establishment" process.

### Where We Are Today

*Current View*

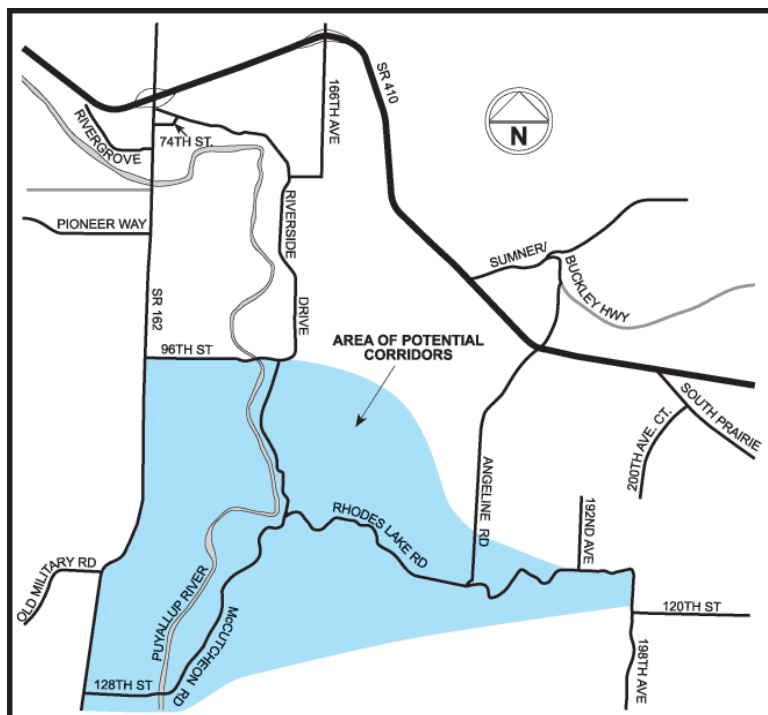
Since early February 2003, we have been gathering maps, aerial photos and other background information within the study area. We have:

- Performed field visits to confirm the location of sensitive areas (like wetlands and streams).
- Estimated the future traffic volumes on the potential new road and on the existing roads in the vicinity.
- Prepared about 20 potential alignments for a new road.
- Formed a Project Leadership Team to provide guidance and information.
- Established a Community Forum to exchange information on the project.

### Where We're Going and How

*Vision*

By the end of June, the first phase of the Corridor Study will be completed – Development of Alternatives (see sidebar above). We will have identified a broad range of potential alignments for a new road.



### The Corridor Study Will Be Completed In Phases

We are planning to complete the Corridor Study in four phases over the next three years:

- ▶ **Phase 1** – Developing Alternatives (Feb. – June 2003)
- ▶ **Phase 2** – Screening Alternatives (July – August 2003)
- ▶ **Phase 3** – Evaluating Alternatives (September – November 2003)
- ▶ **Phase 4** – Environmental Documentation (December 2003 – December 2005)
- ▶ Council Ordinance to Establish Corridor (Early 2006)



Pierce County

We will:

- screen those alternatives down to a more manageable number of the most promising ones – hopefully four or five.
- evaluate those promising alternatives in more detail, and possibly discard some more.
- prepare environmental documents to describe the impacts of the remaining, most promising alternatives.

After review and approval of the environmental documents, the County Council could pass a "Route Establishment Ordinance" for the new road. This ordinance would confirm the Council's decision to build a new road, and establish the basic location of that road.



# Pierce County

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## RHODES LAKE ROAD

## Corridor Study

### Project Schedule

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| ▶ Project Open House                   | Evening of May 13, 2003 |
| ▶ Completion of Alternatives Screening | August 2003             |
| ▶ Project Open House                   | November 2003           |

*Pierce County Public Works and Utilities invites you to give your input in the development of this project. A public Open House will be held on Tuesday, May 13, 2003 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the multipurpose room at the McMillin Grange, 12615 SR162, Puyallup, Washington.*

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### ***1*** *Is the decision to build a new road a foregone conclusion?*

No. Based on what we know today we think a new road would be beneficial, but we don't know exactly how it would redistribute traffic flow in the region. More importantly, we don't know what a new road would cost or what impacts it would have to people and to the environment. Until we can answer these questions, we won't know if there is enough benefit to move forward with a new road.

#### ***2*** *How does Rhodes Lake Road address traffic congestion?*

A new Rhodes Lake Road corridor would provide a direct connection between SR 162 and the plateau area south of Bonney Lake. Without a good connection to SR 162, traffic from the rapidly-growing plateau area would have only one route to reach a State highway – traveling north through Bonney Lake to reach SR 410.

#### ***3*** *How does the Corridor Study relate to plans for development on the Plateau?*

Under the Growth Management Act, cities and counties are required to designate areas which will accommodate the anticipated population growth in the state of Washington. Under this process the plateau has been designated as an area that will be developed at urban densities, while most of the valley north of Orting is designated to remain rural. There are two significant planned developments on the plateau (Cascadia and Falling Waters), as well a large amount of additional land which could be

developed. Our traffic projections are based on the plateau developing according to the land use decisions that have already been made.

#### ***4*** *Is a new Rhodes Lake Road Corridor dependent on an expansion of SR 162 or SR 410?*

No. WSDOT has long-range plans for improvements on both SR 162 and SR 410, but the Rhodes Lake Road Corridor could provide benefits that are independent of improvements to the local state highways.

#### ***5*** *Will there be another bridge crossing the Puyallup River?*

We don't know at this time. We are looking at alternatives that have a new bridge, and we are looking at alternatives that cross the river at the existing bridges on 96th Street or 128th Street. Even if we use one of the existing bridge locations, we may need to widen or replace the bridge to provide more capacity.

#### ***6*** *How will my interests, concerns, or comments get addressed in the decision-making process?*

We will have a number of public open houses at which we will gather input from interested parties. There is a Community Forum that meets monthly at the McMillin Grange (typically at 1:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month). You may also contact Pierce County's staff directly.

*If you have other questions or comments, please contact Douglas Thompson, P.E., Pierce County Public Works and Utilities, at 253-798-7250.*