

March 1996

Cross-Base Highway Alternatives Narrowed from Eight to Four

Alternatives to build a highway to connect I-5 to SR-7 between Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base were narrowed from eight to four on March 6 as part of the environmental and major investment process now underway. With input from a series of open houses and community briefings held in February, the Cross-Base Steering Committee dropped from further study three alternatives in American Lake Gardens, as well as the 176th Street Alternative in Spanaway.

Community Input - Open houses were held on February 15 and 20 to review the potential environmental impacts and to gather public comments on eight alternatives to reduce congestion on existing roads on both sides of Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base. Comments from these meetings (see article below) and from a series of briefings with affected communities, equestrians, jurisdictions, the two military bases and other stakeholders were presented for review to the Cross-Base Steering Committee on March 6.

The Process of Elimination - The multi-jurisdictional Steering Committee compared the eight alternatives on the basis of their transportation benefits and impacts in three areas—land use, displacement, and the natural environment. The Steering Committee eliminated alternatives on the basis of this comparative analysis. The following alternatives were dropped as a result of this process.

Alternatives Dropped within American Lake Gardens

The Northern Alignment: This option generally follows I-46th Street SW in the northern section of American Lake Gardens. It was dropped because of impacts to residences, potential impacts to the Military Radio Transmission Facility located on McChord Air Force Base, and because it would bisect a portion of the Westcott Hills. This option would also limit the potential for future expansion of Air Force Base housing.

South 1 Alternative: This option generally follows the boundary between Fort Lewis and American Lake Gardens, turning north before reaching Murray Road. This option was dropped because of its noise impacts to Woodbrook Junior High School property, and because it would make it difficult or impossible for the School District to maintain the contiguous land mass required for certain funding for this facility. This option would preserve most commercial and residential units located along Murray Road, but these properties would be isolated to the west of the highway, with access provided only at the intersection of Murray and 150th Street SW.

South 3 Alternative: This option also follows the boundary between Fort Lewis and American Lake Gardens, turning north as it approaches Murray Road, and crossing onto Fort Lewis property. This option was dropped because it would encroach on the Clover Park Technical College on Fort Lewis property west of Murray Road. The alignment would also constrain military uses on Fort Lewis property.

Alternatives Dropped within the Spanaway Area

176th Street: This alignment would follow the existing 176th Street South as it approaches Pacific Avenue (SR-7) in Spanaway, expanding the road on both sides to accommodate traffic. This option was dropped because Fort Lewis property is available for the "South of 176th Street" alternative. The south alignment provides the same transportation benefits without affecting access to existing properties, along 176th Street S.

Remaining Alternatives

Alignments slated to receive full environmental and investment analysis and evaluation include the South-Central, Central, and South 2 Alternatives in American Lake Gardens. In the Spanaway area, the "South of 176th Street" alternative will also be analyzed. These alternatives are depicted on the map on page two. A more precise location for each alignment option will be refined during the EIS process.

Next Steps

The major investment study (MIS) and a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared over the summer, with public review and comment requested this fall. A final environmental impact statement (FEIS) will then be prepared, with project decisions to follow in 1997.

Tell Us What You Think!

The Study Team invites you to comment on the proposed highway. Let us know if there is additional information you recommend we make available. We invite your comments on the proposed improvements. Please direct your comments to Patrick Baughman or Chris Beckman at the address below:

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Pierce County Public Works and Utilities
Transportation Engineering Supervisor
2401 South 35th St., Room 150
Tacoma, Washington 98409
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Future open houses, newsletters and community briefings are planned throughout 1996 for residents of Lakewood, Fort Lewis, McChord Air Force Base, Spanaway and surrounding areas. These forums are planned to give communities ample opportunities to discuss their needs and the potential impacts of a new road.



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COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

☞ "...if such a freeway were to pass through the Woodbrook Hunt Club area, we will lose a valuable asset to our community..."

☞ "I am very much in favor of this project. It is long overdue. It will ease the traffic both on the loop road & on the freeway from I-5 to Pacific Ave..."

☞ "...would also serve the rapidly growing residential areas of Berhel, South Hill, Orting, Sumner & Bonney Lake..."

☞ "...it is the position of the Hunt Club that, if there must be a Cross-Base Highway, that it should be located to the north of our location on 150th street..."



Pierce County
Pierce County Public Works and Utilities

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