SR 3 Gorst Area Planning and Environmental Linkages Study

Technical Advisory Group Meeting #3 Summary

Meeting purpose

The purpose of the second Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting was to:

- Share environmental existing conditions findings
- Share the results of Level 1 alternatives evaluation

Meeting logistics

May 29, 2025, 9 to 10:30 a.m.
Virtual meeting via Zoom

Study team members in attendance: Ashley Carle (WSDOT), Ally Bradley (WSDOT), Grace Amundsen Barnkow (WSDOT), JoAnn Schueler (WSDOT), Sandy Glover (Parametrix), Erinn Ellig (Parametrix), Kirk Wilcox (Parametrix), Lisa Danielski (HDR), Sharese Graham (SCJ Alliance), Hayley Nolan (PRR), Lauren Wheeler (PRR)

TAG members in attendance: Amy Asher (Mason County Transit Authority), Anna Whalen (Naval Base Kitsap), Avery Szewczak (WDFW), Becky Erickson (City of Poulsbo), Bradley Shellito (Kitsap Transit), Caroline Corcoran (Department of Ecology), David Forte (Kitsap County), Gunnar Fridriksson (City of Bremerton), Jason Rowe (Mason County Transit Authority), Jennifer Barnes (Puget Sound Regional Council), Jim Rogers (Kitsap County), Julie Fisher (WSP), Lindsay Wourms (Department of Fish and Wildlife), Matthew Pahs (FHWA), Melynda Beam (EPA), Ray Scott (Kitsap Transit Ferries), Rob Atkinson (Washington State Patrol), Sharon Love (FHWA), Steffani Lillie (Kitsap Transit)

Meeting opening and goals

The study team led welcome and introductions, followed by an overview of the meeting goals to share environmental existing conditions and Level 1 evaluation results. Desired meeting outcomes included:

- Collect input on environmental existing conditions and Level 1 alternatives evaluation results
- Understand Level 2 alternatives evaluation methodology
- Understand alternative refinements for Level 2 analysis

PEL process and schedule

The study team reviewed the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process and schedule, sharing that the team has completed concurrence point #2 to confirm the study Purpose and Need.

Community engagement

The study team shared a summary of recent outreach to business owners in the Gorst commercial area. The goal of this outreach was to gather early input from businesses regarding the range of alternatives and how much businesses rely on regional versus local traffic.

The team contacted 70 businesses, conducted two listening sessions, and collected 14 survey responses. Key takeaways include:

- Most survey respondents (9 of 14) say their business relies heavily on regional traffic
- Traffic congestion in Gorst affects safe access for employees and customers
- Customers avoid accessing businesses due to uncomfortable traffic conditions

Environmental existing conditions
The study team reviewed information on the environmental existing conditions reports.

Built environment

Visual quality
The team looked at three Landscape Units (LUs): Bremerton, Gorst, and Port Orchard. The team understands that visual resources will be of particular concern to the local community and will continue to study how alternatives may affect different neighborhoods.

Section 4(f)
There are three park areas in the study area. There are also historical and cultural sites in the study area, which the study team will collect more information on during the NEPA environmental phase.

Air quality, energy, and greenhouse gas emissions
Despite projected increases in traffic volume, vehicle emissions are expected to decline due to improvements in vehicle engine efficiency, adoption of cleaner fuel technologies, and regulatory controls.

Greenhouse gas emissions in the study area are the result of fuel consumption, which is closely related to vehicle miles traveled (VMT). These emissions also indicate a declining trend over time.

Noise
Traffic noise is the main noise source in the study area. The study team is analyzing the noise in the study area and will have more information in the coming weeks.

Cultural and historic resources
The entire study area is ‘very high to high’ in sensitivity to archaeological resources. The study team is continuing early coordination with the Suquamish Tribe. Previous studies found two archaeological sites and five eligible historic built resources in the area.

Land use, farmlands, and Section 6(f)
The study area includes part of the City of Bremerton, unincorporated Kitsap County, and the City of Port Orchard. There are some prime farmlands and soils in the area, but currently no agricultural uses.

Ross Point is the one Section 6(f) property in the study area. It was acquired using federal Land and Water Conservation funds in 1978.

Socioeconomics
Data shows that populations that are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color make up about 34% of the study area. About 2% of the population have limited English proficiency. The Socioeconomics Existing Conditions Memo also looks at environmental health disparities. The

study team uses demographic and socioeconomic information to inform community and partner engagement.

Hazardous materials
Land in the study area has historical industrial, maritime, railway, naval yard, and commercial uses. There are 334 regulatory-listed sites; 58 sites show 'high impact' and risk of contamination during construction.

Natural environment

Wetlands and other waters
There are 49 wetlands in the study area; five of those are estuarine wetlands surrounding Sinclair Inlet.

The Kitsap Umbrella Mitigation Bank includes several mitigation sites on the waterward side of SR 3. It is publicly available information and is currently under review with the interagency review team.

Fish, wildlife, and vegetation
Sinclair Inlet supports a variety of wildlife. The study team did desktop reviews of endangered or threatened species and habitat in the area and confirmed there are listed aquatic species and critical habitat in the Sinclair Inlet and streams that drain to it. Preliminary findings show there are no known terrestrial species or critical habitat in the study area.

Geology and soils
There is a high liquefication susceptibility area near existing SR 3. There are landslide hazard zones on the south side of the study area. The entirety of the Gorst area is within a tsunami inundation zone.

Fluvial geomorphology and fish passage
The study team identified 25 WSDOT-owned stream crossings. Streams and estuaries in the study area are confined by development.

Wider structure widths (highways and railroad) could accommodate and restore streams and estuaries. This would require increased coordination with property owners.

Coastal geomorphology
Development in the study area has resulted in a loss of self-sustaining beaches along the north study area and disconnected several historical streams from Sinclair Inlet.

Level 1 evaluation results
The study team reviewed the study area limits, which extend to the Tremont Street West interchange in Port Orchard.

The study team briefly reviewed the roadway range of alternatives:

- Active Transportation Alternatives: On- and off-corridor
- Alternative A: Widening SR 3 along the existing alignment
- Alternative A1: Regional traffic bypass via viaduct structure in Gorst

- Alternative A2: Regional traffic at grade, frontage roads and elevated roundabout in Gorst
- Alternative B: Variations covering different bridge alignments over the Sinclair Inlet
- Alternative C: High-elevation direct bridge from SR 16 to SR 3 and SR 304
- Alternative D: Inland bypass west of Sherman Heights

The study team briefly shared that the active transportation range of alternatives is compatible with all roadway alternatives and includes safe routes and connections for people walking, biking or rolling.

The team has consulted with City of Bremerton, City of Port Orchard, Kitsap Transit, and the Navy to identify Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) alternatives. Many of these strategies are already in place, so it would not have a significant impact on system operations.

The study team reviewed the alternatives evaluation process. The team is currently in Level 1 evaluation and screening. The process to identify alternatives to eliminate includes these elements:

- Alternative performance on needs criteria is the primary input.
- Alternative performance on goals will be a secondary input to help understand impacts.
- Alternatives will not be screened based on goals.
- Other measures criteria summarize feasibility, construction impacts, maintenance complexity, and consistency with local planning efforts.
- Alternatives may be screened based on fatal flaws, such as construction impacts and maintenance complexity.

The design items included in all alternatives are:

- Roadway elevations to address flooding, sea level rise and fish passage.
- Railroad bridge clearance to 16.5-feet minimum height to accommodate regional truck traffic.
- Fish passage improvements if the footprint touches a barrier.
- Active Transportation facilities.
- Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) 2 for Active Transportation.

Level 1 screening outcomes

Alternative	Description	Level 1 outcome
Active Transportation – Off-Corridor	Potential for substantial property impacts, inconsistent with local planning efforts, introduces more conflict points and includes substantial elevation gain and out-of-direction travel for users compared to on-corridor facilities.	Recommend not advance
Active Transportation – On-Corridor	Provides active transportation facilities with minimal elevation change and fewer conflict points with motorized vehicles compared to the off-corridor facilities. The on-corridor active transportation facilities also have fewer property impacts and are more consistent with local planning efforts.	Recommend advance

Alternative A	Lower performing for mobility but high construction and maintenance performance.	Recommend advance
Alternative A-1	Potential constructability challenges; exploring a design revision to confirm feasibility.	Recommend modify
Alternative A-2	Provides mobility and local access improvements but confirming resiliency impacts.	Recommend advance
Alternative B-1	Provides mobility improvement but propose it is fatally flawed for construction impacts to the natural environmental and long-term maintenance access due to water depth (in tide flats).	Recommend not advance
Alternatives B-2 and B-3	Provide same mobility improvement as B1 without construction and maintenance fatal flaw. Two lanes make it less compatible with high-occupancy vehicle.	Recommend advance
Alternative C-1	Provides mobility improvement. Need to determine what happens with turn back SR 3 (could provide access to driveways, emergency route for resilience, and active transportation facilities). Higher cost.	Recommend advance
Alternative C-2 (new)	Modified alignment over Sinclair Inlet. Maintains existing SR 3/SR 304 interchange. Reduces impact to planned mitigation bank	New

Comments and questions

Rob Atkinson (Washington State Patrol) asked if there is a reason that the C options close off SR 3 between SR 304 and Gorst? He said that law enforcement and fire protection services use that section for speed and for getting south fast.

- Kirk Wilcox (Parametrix) responded that the bridge in the C alternatives would be six lanes (three in each direction). It allows the state to not have to maintain two parallel facilities and would improve travel times. It also simplifies the SR 304 interchange to reduce the number of directions of travel.
- The existing SR 3 roadway will likely become a local street connection, shared use path, and/or connection for emergency services. It would not remain a state highway.

David Forte (Kitsap County) asked if the bypass (Alternative D) would be a four or six-lane facility.

- Kirk responded that it would be a six-lane facility.

David Forte asked if the updated C alternative (Alternative C-2) would shift all SR 3 and SR 16 traffic across the bridge.

- Kirk confirmed Alternative C-2 would shift traffic across the bridge.

David Forte asked how the team is considering improved access to Anderson Hill Road.

- Kirk responded that currently, there is limited movement to Anderson Hill Road. With C-2, the study team proposes constructing a roundabout at Anderson Hill Road to allow a full range of movement.

Jim Rogers (Kitsap County) shared that sea level rise mapping is nearly complete and shows predicted risk results along SR 3. Jim shared a link in the chat to view an interactive web map. He said GIS files will be available by the end of June.

- Link to: Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Risk Assessment.
- Kirk noted that this will be a great resource to compare study findings.

Gunnar Fridriksson (City of Bremerton) asked the study team to confirm that WSDOT would not be addressing any southbound SR 3 connections to eastbound SR 304.

- Kirk confirmed that WSDOT is not pursuing that movement in this study.

Gunnar Fridriksson asked about multimodal connections for the West Sam Christopherson Avenue roundabout.

- Kirk responded that the roundabout is being built with 10-foot sidewalks to connect to a future shared-use path. It would be built to the same WSDOT standards, and WSDOT intends to tie into those roundabouts.
- Erinn Ellig (Parametrix) added that all active transportation options would tie into local access connections, not just where the roadway alternatives end.

Anna Whalen (Naval Base Kitsap) asked how the connection to SR 166 would function in Alternative B. Specifically, what path would Naval Yard employees use?

- Kirk said the connection would function similarly to how it is currently. Employees would continue through Gorst, not across the bridge.

David Forte noted that Alternative C could put a lot of pressure on getting into Port Orchard and how people access Tremont. He advised that the study team coordinate with the City of Port Orchard.

- Erinn responded that the study team is looking at the traffic operations model now and will consider those elements of the system. She added that the study team will look at those data elements during Level 2 evaluation.

Level 2 evaluation criteria

The study team shared information about the Level 2 criteria. It is generally the same criteria, but the Level 2 methodology is more detailed and quantitative than Level 1. Scoring shifts from three points to five points to allow for more detailed evaluation.

Next steps

The study team closed the meeting by reviewing next steps.

- TAG comments on the Level 1 evaluation results and Level 2 methodology are due by Thursday, June 5.
- TAG meeting #4 will take place in fall 2025. Meeting topics include:
    - Review and comment on Level 2 evaluation results
    - Discuss alternatives recommended for further study in NEPA
    - Review plan for programmatic mitigation and implementation
- Upcoming engagement
    - CAG meeting #2 will be held on Wednesday, June 4.
    - A second public open house will be held in winter 2025/2026.

The meeting ended at 10:18 a.m.