

# SR 167 Master Plan Planning and Environmental Linkages Study

## Introduction

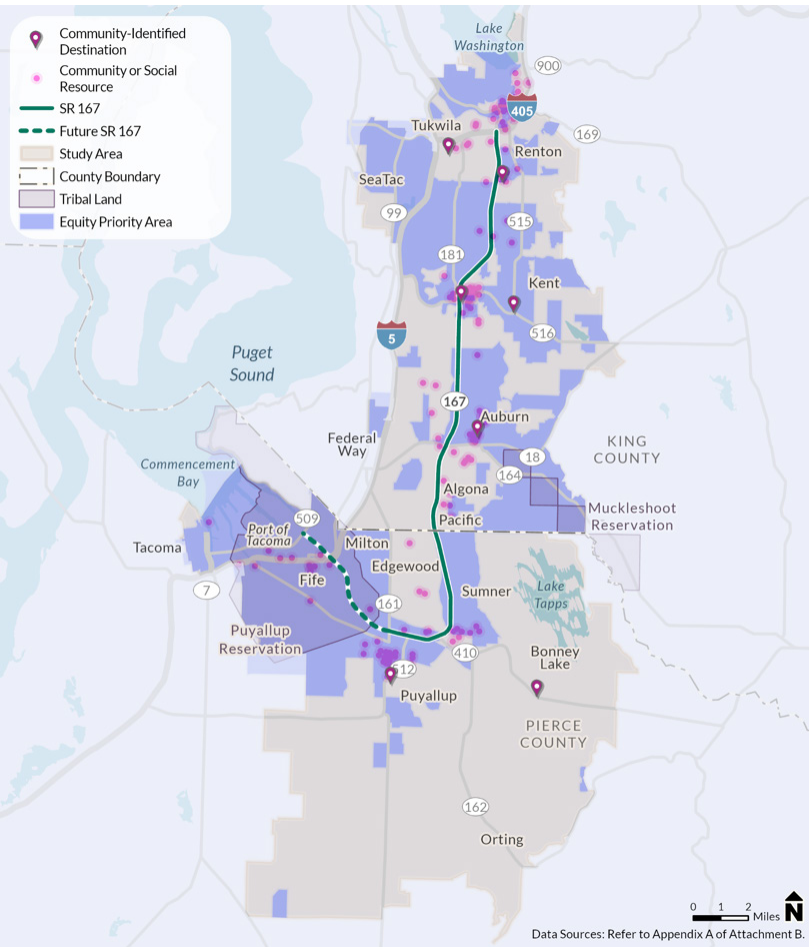
State Route (SR) 167 serves some of the fastest growing and most diverse communities in the state of Washington as well as the largest cluster of warehousing and distribution centers in the Pacific Northwest. The combination of rapid population and employment growth has resulted in substantial congestion on SR 167 and surrounding local streets. This congestion negatively impacts mobility for people who drive, deliver freight, walk, bike, or roll.

In response to the challenges on SR 167, in 2019 the Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5825, directing \$3 million to develop a multimodal SR 167 Master Plan. Following the guidance outlined in Washington State’s HEAL Act, the SR 167 Master Plan used an equity-focused, community-centered outreach approach to identify issues and develop a set of recommended transportation projects and strategies that serve the needs of those living/working in and around the corridor, including vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. **Figure 1** shows the SR 167 Master Plan Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study area and equity priority areas.

## Centering Equity

While listening to all voices in the corridor, the SR 167 Master Plan PEL sought to elevate the voices of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities and integrate them into the planning and decision-making process. Equity Priority Areas (Figure 1) were identified based on factors such as income, minority population, limited English proficiency, youth/senior population, disability status, cost-burdened households, households without a vehicle, and foreign-born population.

Equity-centered community engagement included traditional in-person and online engagement plus “co-creation” workshops intended to engage specifically with vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. In the workshops, the participants shared barriers to travel, identified key destinations, and identified projects and strategies to improve transportation. The Equity Advisory Committee and co-creation participants were compensated for their time, recognizing the value of their lived experience and the many demands on their time. **Figure 2** summarizes the committee and engagement structure and **Figure 3** shows statistics from the engagement process.



**Figure 1. SR 167 Master Plan PEL Study Area and Equity Priority Areas**



## What We Heard: Community Conversations



The input from the Equity Advisory Committee and co-creation workshops provided insight about issues and opportunities to improve transportation within the SR 167 study area. **Table 1** includes a sampling of some of the direct feedback received from the public. Full details are in the Master Plan PEL Final Study.

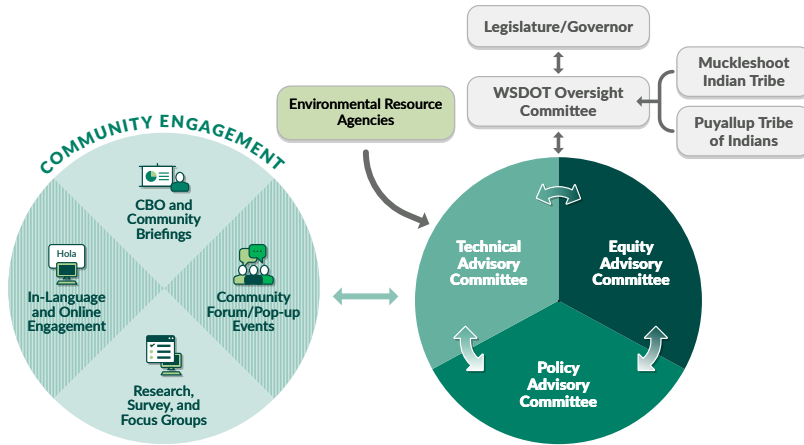


Figure 2. Committee and Engagement Structure

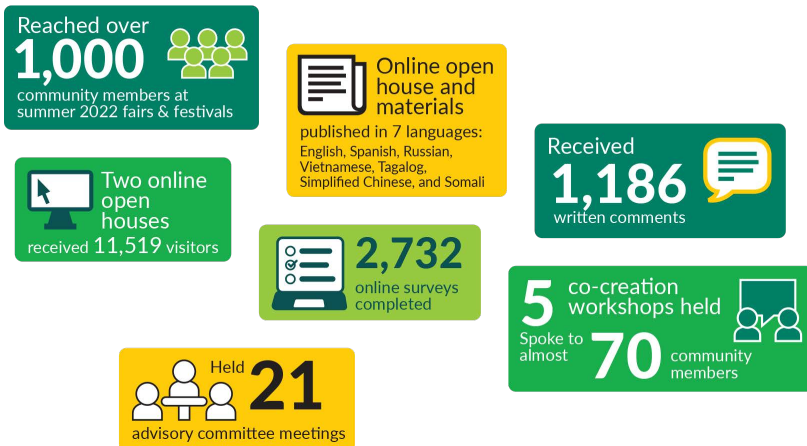


Figure 3. Engagement Statistics

Table 1.  
Equity Feedback on SR 167 Transportation Issues

Topic	Specific Public Feedback
 <b>Transit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Nighttime transit service is needed. Buses are not present in industrial areas during night times for swing shift workers (10 p.m. to 6 a.m.).</li> <li>▶ There is bad congestion in Auburn and transit is needed, especially to serve senior communities.</li> <li>▶ Need transit to essential facilities (health care, parks, retail, etc.).</li> <li>▶ Need transit service in Renton to the Highlands and other residential areas.</li> </ul>
 <b>Sidewalks and Trails</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Need separation between cars and people due to fast vehicles; people try to walk on the primary route to Muckleshoot Casino – sidewalks are critical here and in other areas of the corridor.</li> <li>▶ Need more connections for people to use the new light rail station in Tacoma.</li> <li>▶ Need trails that can get people to schools.</li> </ul>
 <b>Safety and Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Need to add lighting with pedestrian/trail projects.</li> <li>▶ Bicycle theft is a deterrent from making bike-transit trips prompting need for better lighting and visibility.</li> </ul>
 <b>Traffic Congestion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ High traffic/truck traffic present; there is bad congestion at multiple interchanges.</li> <li>▶ There is bad congestion at the I-405 interchange; people use the carpool lane to avoid the ramp area/interchange.</li> <li>▶ SR 167 north to Kent does not have pull out areas for emergencies.</li> </ul>
 <b>Tolling on SR 167</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Tolling in the lower income Auburn/Kent area should not be as expensive as in Bellevue.</li> <li>▶ Tolling funds could be used for driving training programs for immigrant populations since some noted that it is difficult to understand how to use toll lanes.</li> </ul>

# Final Study Recommendations



The data-driven, partner-refined process utilized data analysis and feedback from the community and committees to identify a package of transportation projects and strategies that strongly align with the Master Plan vision. The Final Study Recommendations are multimodal and would be implemented by multiple agencies representing SR 167 study area communities. Key projects and strategies developed from community, partner, and equity feedback include:

- ▶ A new express toll lane in each direction of SR 167 creating a dual express toll lane system.
- ▶ New auxiliary lanes on SR 167 and SR 18.
- ▶ Eight interchange improvements to remove bottlenecks and better accommodate all modes.
- ▶ Planned transit services envisioned in our transit agency partners' long-range plans, including 20 new or enhanced transit routes, more night/weekend service, and new on-demand transit services with a focus on equity priority areas and employment areas that are not served by fixed-route transit.
- ▶ A new bus rapid transit service that complements increased Sounder commuter rail service and leverages the express toll lane system.

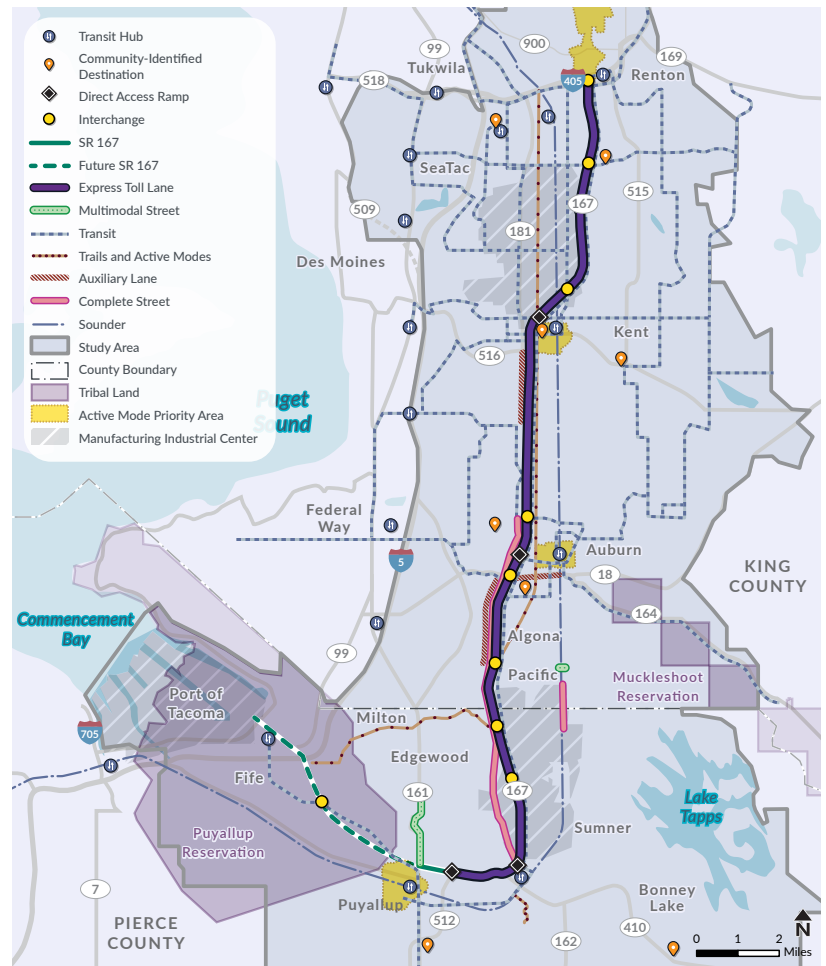


Figure 4. Final Study Recommendations

- ▶ Sidewalk, bicycle lane, and trail investments that close gaps in the system with an emphasis on facilities that connect to equity-partner-identified destinations and improve safety.
- ▶ Work with the Washington State Transportation Commission to establish a state-wide low-income toll program.



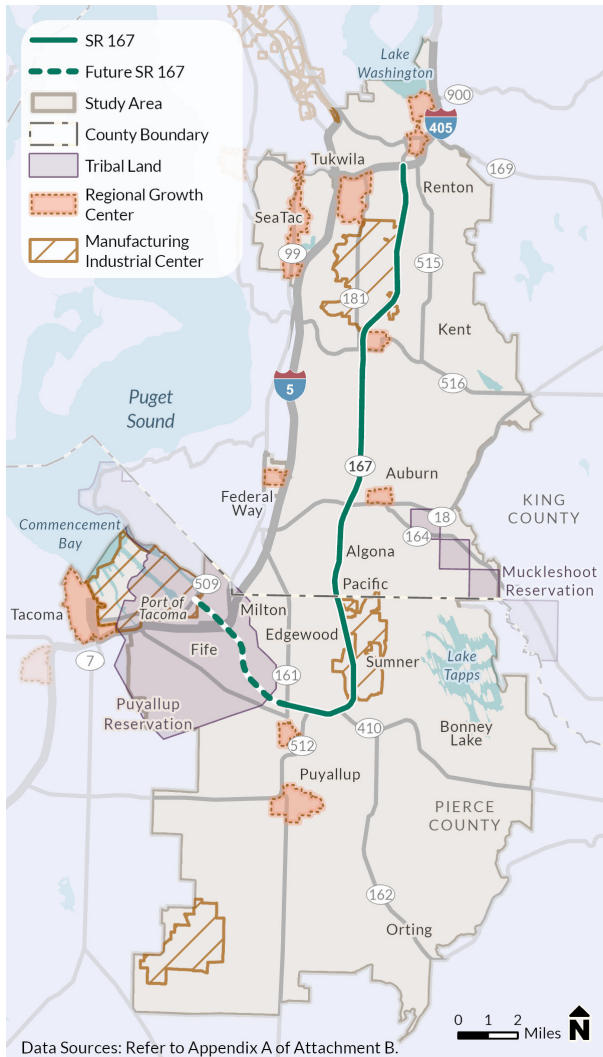


Figure 5. Study Area

## Letters of Support



Consensus was reached on the Final Study Recommendations with eleven letters of support received as of June 30, 2023, and with four other agencies/tribes/jurisdictions also voicing support.

## Next Steps

The Final Study Recommendations represent a bold yet realistic plan to address existing and future transportation challenges on SR 167. However, funding has not been identified for the \$5.5-\$6 billion in improvements or the maintenance of existing and planned facilities. As shown on the timeline in Figure 6, the next step is to obtain funding to develop a SR 167 Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan will include coordination with partner agencies, corridor stakeholders, including equity representation, and Equity, Technical, and Policy Advisory Committees to develop a prioritized phasing and funding strategy. To deliver the critical mobility improvements for SR 167 communities, \$2.5M in legislative funding is needed for the SR 167 Implementation Plan. For more information, please visit the WSDOT SR 167 Master Plan site: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-studies/sr-167-master-plan>



Figure 6. Timeline to Implementation

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