



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: Why is this project being done and what is involved?

A: The congestion currently experienced along the NE 137th Avenue and NE 138th Avenue corridor is anticipated to increase to unacceptable levels in the next 20 years. The corridor will be widened and roundabouts are proposed NE 32nd Circle, NE 39th and NE 44th Streets to help ease congestion and increase efficiency. This project will enhance safety for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists with the installation of better lighting, sidewalks, and bike paths.

Q: What is the project area or boundary?

A: The project area covers the corridor from the intersection of NE 138th Avenue and NE 28th Street going north to the roundabout at the intersection of NE 137th Avenue and NE 49th Street.

Q: How much will it cost and does the City of Vancouver already have the funding?

A: The project construction and right-of-way cost is estimated at \$12.5 million. Using a combination of city, state, and federal funds, the City of Vancouver has funding to pay for the design process.

Q: What is the timeline for the project and construction?

A: The traffic studies, concept design, and initial public outreach on the project began in Fall 2007. More public input, technical studies, and preliminary design work occurred throughout the Summer and Fall of 2008. The completed preliminary design and plans (90% stage) are anticipated to be complete in Fall 2009. Pending funding, initial right of way acquisition will likely start Spring 2009. The team will continue to work on design plans and pending funding, final right of way acquisition is anticipated to be completed Spring 2010. Following the final public outreach event, construction is likely to begin Fall of 2010, pending funding.

Q: Who is the contact person for this project?

A: Jeff Schmidt is the City of Vancouver project manager for this project. His contact number is 360-487-7709 or jeff.schmidt@ci.vancouver.wa.us.

ACCESS

Q: If the project blocks the current access or driveway to the property, how will the property owner access the property?

A: The City of Vancouver will work with individual property owners to reconfigure the access or driveway so that the property owner does not lose access to the property.

Q: If a property currently has two driveways, will it be able to maintain both driveways after the project is completed?

A: In order to provide the safest free-flowing traffic along the street, and provide the greatest necessary street capacity the City wants to limit one driveway per each parcel. The City of Vancouver will work with individual property owners to configure access that meets the property owner's needs with the use of one driveway.

Q: What kinds of trees will be planted in the planting strips?

A: The City of Vancouver Urban Forestry Department will recommend trees and other plantings that are native to the area and can survive area climate conditions.

PROPERTY

Q: Will property owners be given information about what is being planned to be built and installed before or after the decisions are made?

A: Yes, this will occur through the public outreach and right-of-way acquisition processes.

Q: How long after construction of the project are property owners able to subdivide the property without paying impact fees?

A: Impact fees in association with development projects such as subdivisions are not waived before or after construction.

Q: Do residential property owners and commercial property owners have the same project contact person at the City of Vancouver?

A: Yes, Jeff Schmidt is the City of Vancouver project manager for this project. His contact number is 360-487-7709 or jeff.schmidt@ci.vancouver.wa.us.

Q: What will happen to the mailboxes on the street during and after construction?

A: The City of Vancouver will work with the United States Postal Service to ensure that mail will be delivered to property owners, residents, and businesses during and after construction. The United States Postal Service will provide direction on the configuration and location of mailboxes during and after construction.

Q: Will landscaping be included up to the soundwalls?

A: Landscaping will be included as part of the project.

Q: Can more property be acquired from the electrical substation rather than individual properties?

A: No, the electrical substation must maintain a perimeter around it in order to comply with federal, state, and local regulations and ensure public safety.

RIGHT OF WAY

Q: Can the City of Vancouver take private property for this project?

A: The City of Vancouver will use a process to acquire right of way for the project and negotiate with each individual property owner. However, the City of Vancouver cannot take property without compensating the property owner.

Q: How is the value of property determined?

A: A company will be contracted to work with the City of Vancouver to appraise each property and determine the value based on numerous criteria set by State and Federal requirements.

Q: Are commercial properties valued differently than residential properties?

A: The value of a property is based on numerous criteria which includes the current and potential uses of the property. The process used to determine value is the same although the resulting value amount could be different.

Q: What if the property owner does not agree with the property value determined by the appraiser for the City of Vancouver?

A: The City of Vancouver notifies the property owner of the availability of a "statutory evaluation allowance" not to exceed \$750 to help defray the owners expenses actually incurred in evaluating the City's offer.

Q: Can realtors or other commercial interests weigh in on the potential highest and best uses for properties along the corridor?

A: Public involvement is important to shaping this project and anyone is welcome to attend the project open house meetings to provide input on this project to the City of Vancouver.

Q: How soon will the appraisal and right of way negotiation start?

A: Pending funding, initial right of way acquisition will likely start in the Spring 2009.

Q: Is the dollar amount paid by the City of Vancouver for right of way acquisitions public knowledge?

A: Negotiations are conducted between the City of Vancouver and the individual property owners on a case by case basis. The City of Vancouver will be expending public funds to purchase right of way. The accounting of how the public funds were spent on this project is available for public viewing upon request.

ROUNDBABOUTS

Q: Will there be appropriate signage so use of the roundabout is safe?

A: Yes, there will be additional signage along the corridor and for directing traffic safely through the roundabouts.

Q: Will the roundabout at NE 39th Street be the same size as the roundabout at NE 49th Street?

A: The two-lane roundabout at NE 39th will be approximately the same size as the existing one at NE 49th. The two roundabouts (NE 32nd Circle & 44th Street) will be smaller and only one-lane roundabouts.

SEPTIC AND SEWER ISSUES

Q: What if the project impedes the use of septic tanks?

A: If the project will block access to a property owner's septic tank or interfere with the use of drainage fields, the City of Vancouver will make arrangements with the property owner to hook up to the City's sewer system.

Q: Will the City of Vancouver pay for sewer hook ups?

A: The City of Vancouver will be responsible for the costs of hooking up to the sewer system only if the project impedes the use of a property owner's septic system.

Q: Can property owners along the corridor hook up to the sewer system even if the septic system on the property will not be impeded by the project?

A: The City of Vancouver will install pipes and stubs to each property line along the corridor and property owners may choose to hook up to the system if they desire. However, the individual property owner will be responsible for the sewer hookup costs (both fees and private property sewer pipe construction).

Q: How much does it cost to hook up to the sewer system?

A: This is dependent on the development proposed and layout of the lateral piping. For a single family resident, the "Sewer Connections Fees", which includes recording fee, sewer connection permit fee, system development charge, main fee, and plumbing permit fee, is estimated at approximately \$11,100. This can vary based on construction of the public sewer main at time of construction. This does not include abandonment of septic systems or private sewer lateral construction costs and will vary based on the specific layout to the house and construction variables. (Refer to Exhibit "A" for "Estimated 2010 Sewer Connection Costs (single family residence)").

Q: Is it cheaper to hook up to the sewer system as part of this project or wait and hook up to the sewer system later?

A: The hook-up or sewer impact fees are the same, however the construction costs can be less during construction since a property owner is able to negotiate with the project contractor at time of the roadway construction.

Q: Will commercial properties get a larger pipe than residential properties?

A: Commercial properties typically receive a 6-inch lateral pipe and residential properties typically receive 4-inch lateral pipe.

SOUNDWALLS

Q: Will the City of Vancouver compensate property owners for increased noise impacts?

A: Soundwalls will be installed, where effective and reasonable by state guidelines, to reduce the noise levels for properties that meet or exceed State and Federal regulations.

Q: How tall will the soundwalls be?

A: The height of the soundwalls are proposed at 8 feet tall.

Q: What will the soundwalls be made of?

A: The material used will likely be a concrete blocks similar to other projects throughout the City of Vancouver.

Q: How does the City of Vancouver decide where the soundwalls should be built?

A: A noise study is performed using regulations from the Washington State Department of Transportation. Locations that are identified with noise levels meeting or exceeding the state traffic noise criteria are considered for noise mitigation. Mitigation that is found to be reasonable and feasible by state standards are normally included with the project.

Q: Will soundwalls be along the entire road?

A: No, soundwalls will be built only in certain areas, and not the full length of the corridor. Some locations, such as those with driveways, will not have sound walls because the opening for the access allows in too much noise, and the walls do not meet the state standards for noise reduction or cost

Q: Who will maintain the soundwalls if there is damage or graffiti?

A: The soundwalls will be built with materials that are durable and graffiti resistant, however the City of Vancouver will be responsible for maintenance of the soundwalls.

Q: What happens to the removed trees?

A: They typically become property of the contractor, however the City will allow the property owner to remove or relocate trees on their private property.

Q: Will fences be replaced by a soundwall?

A: Typical not, however some fencing may be removed or relocated as discussed with the property owners as required for project construction, unless that section of fencing is in an area designated for a soundwall.

TRAFFIC

Q: Will the speed limit along the corridor change as a result of this project?

A: No, currently the speed limit on the corridor is 35 mph.

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PROJECT: 137th/138th Avenue Improvements

ESTIMATED 2010 SEWER CONNECTION COSTS

(SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE)

Sewer Connection Fees:

Recording Fee.....	\$50.00
Sewer Connection Permit.....	\$25.00
System Development Charge (SDC).....	\$2,740.00

Guaranteed Maximum Main Fee.....\$8,248.00

Plumbing Permit (min. cost).....\$60.00

Subtotal: \$11,123.00

Onsite Plumbing Costs:

Average cost to abandon existing septic and complete onsite plumbing for connection of a single family residence is approximately \$3,600.00.

- The guaranteed maximum main fee covers the homeowner’s fair share of the cost of constructing the new sewer main in the street. If after construction, costs come in lower than the guaranteed maximum the lower amount will apply. If costs come in higher, the guaranteed maximum will apply for two years. After two years the connection fee will be the lesser of either the actual cost or the guaranteed maximum fee that is in effect for SCIP projects the year in which connection occurs.
- The current SDC is \$2,500.00 and scheduled to increase to \$2,740.00 in January of 2010. (VMC 14.04.235) The latter number is used above for 2010 construction.
- The minimum plumbing permit cost and the fees listed above are subject to increase.
- The average onsite plumbing cost listed above is based on information provided to us and is only as good as the information we receive. Actual costs may be more or less. These costs will vary with each connection.
- This estimate is for the connection of a single family residence only. Estimates for commercial, multi-family, or developable properties will be handled on a case by case basis. The guaranteed maximum main fee only applies to single family residences.
- Sewer Connection Incentive Fund (SCIP): Financing will be available at an interest rate of 1% over the 20 year bond rate to single family homeowners who would like to connect to the new sewer. The low interest loan may be used to cover the above estimated costs except for permit fees and recording fees. There is a \$25.00 application fee also.
- If the project is delayed to beyond 2010, this cost estimate will no longer apply.

Please contact Michelle Henry at 360-487-7155 with any further questions.