Transportation Commission
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November 19, 2009

City of Bothell™
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Washington State Transportation Commission
PO Box 47308
Olympia, WA 98504-7308

Re: Request Route Jurisdiction Transfer of State Route 527 from WSDOT to the City of Bothell

To Whom It May Concern:

The City of Bothell is requesting the jurisdiction transfer of SR 527, between SR 522 and the I-405 limited access (Milepost 0.00-2.51), from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to the City of Bothell.

The City of Bothell is making this request for the following reasons:

- A desire to transform the roadway to a pedestrian-oriented multi-modal boulevard consistent with the revitalization plan for the downtown Bothell area. This community-supported plan will encourage the continued economic growth of the City of Bothell. Ownership of SR 527 is pivotal to the success of the downtown Bothell redevelopment plan.
- A cost savings for both WSDOT and the City from no longer designing, reviewing and approving the multiple design deviations necessary for each project on this portion of SR 527.
- WSDOT will be able to reduce its maintenance budget. The City will assume responsibility for future overlay projects and has the resources to maintain SR 527 as an arterial facility in compliance with safety standards.
- The City is already financially responsible for the majority of roadway elements on this portion of SR 527.
- The City will accept SR 527 without reservation.

The attached report verifies the requested transfer complies with all the criteria established by RCW 47.17.001. The City of Bothell requests your consideration for endorsement of the SR 527 transfer request.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (425) 486-2768.

Sincerely,

Douglas Jacobson, P.E.
Public Works Director

Enclosures

cc: Eddie Low, P.E., Deputy Public Works Director
Robert S. Stowe, City Manager

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SR 527 Route Jurisdiction Transfer from WSDOT to City of Bothell Justification Report

This report proposes the transfer of right-of-way and responsibilities for a portion of State Route (SR) 527 from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to the City of Bothell. The proposed transfer area is SR 527 from SR 522 to the I-405 limited access (Milepost 0-2.51) in King and Snohomish counties. This transfer is being requested by the City of Bothell and is supported by WSDOT. The reasons for this request and the responsibilities, characteristics and conditions of SR 527 are outlined below.

Why is this Route Jurisdiction Transfer being requested?
The City of Bothell Downtown Revitalization Plan and Comprehensive Plan envision the SR 527 (Bothell Way) as it meets SR 522 as a crucial element to the redevelopment of downtown Bothell. Past and current City planning efforts have developed this vision through an ongoing public process with the citizens of Bothell. SR 527 also provides the primary access for existing and future developments in the north area of downtown Bothell.

SR 527 within the downtown are is being redefined by the City as a multiway boulevard design, which enables the higher speed arterial traffic to be flanked by slower side street traffic containing travel lanes with curbside parking, pedestrian-intensive promenade sidewalks, and ground floor shop frontages at the back of sidewalks are provided. Tree-lined medians are also provided to subdivide the width of Bothell Way/SR 527 for enabling pedestrians to cross with greater safety and comfort. Side streets will be signalized to provide better access to and from the businesses. The addition of these improvements has the added benefit of slowing traffic to a safer/pedestrian- paced level through downtown Bothell.

The redevelopment of SR 527 as described above is generally inconsistent with the current WSDOT design standards and goal in promoting the movement of through traffic, while the City design focuses on a walkable, accessible downtown. As undeveloped parcels in the SR 527 corridor within the downtown area develop, it has become increasingly more difficult for the City to obtain the necessary design approvals from WSDOT. Every set of plans prepared for the SR 527 corridor requires approval of several deviations from WSDOT design standards. Some of the WSDOT design standards the City has desired to deviate from include:

- Traffic signal spacing;
- Intersection spacing;
- Driveway spacing;
- Location and type of pedestrian crossings;
- Right turn radii;
- Lane widths;
- Provision for frontage (side) streets; and
- Allowable intersection turning movement.

These are crucial elements to a viable downtown commercial area. The extra costs for design work and justifying studies solely to address these deviations can be as much as an additional $200,000 to $300,000 per project. This transfer will result in cost savings for WSDOT due to no longer needing to review and approve the multiple design deviations necessary for each project on this portion of SR 527.

Jurisdictional transfer of SR 527 from the state to the City would allow the placement of traffic signals as necessary to meet the needs for local traffic circulation. The new signals will provide a protected crossing for pedestrians and allow easier ingress and egress to businesses along SR 527.

The City sees the jurisdictional transfer as necessary and important for the City's continued economic growth,

while maintaining the overall function of the SR 527 as a primary regional arterial corridor.

What are the limits of the transfer request?
The City is requesting the transfer of SR 527 from SR 522 to the I-405 limited access (MP 0-2.51) covering a distance of nearly 2.5 miles, as shown in *Exhibit 1*. This section of SR 527 is entirely within the incorporated limits of the City of Bothell.

What are the characteristics of the roadway within those limits?
In 2007, SR 527 averaged approximately 15,000 vehicles per day (vpd) between SR 522 and 240th Street SE, 21,000 vpd between 240th Street SE and 228th Street SE, and 40,000 vpd between 228th Street SE and I-405 interchange. SR 527 varies in width, but is primarily a two- or three-lane facility with a two-way center left-turn lane and turn lanes at intersections. The speed limit is 30mph between SR 522 and NE 195th Circle, 40mph between NE 195th Circle and 228th Street SE, and 45mph between 228th Street SE and I-405. There are no bridge structures within the proposed turnback area. Roadway width varies between 11-12 feet. Shoulder width varies between four to eight feet in the sections without curb and gutter.

The functional classification of SR 527 from SR 522 to I-405 is an urban principal arterial. Since this segment of SR 527 parallels I-405 with access to and from I-405 near the northern and southern limits of the SR 527 route segment, it is neither essential for regional connectivity nor primarily used by regionally-oriented through traffic. This portion of SR 527 no longer serves a statewide function as a through-route. As shown on *Exhibit 2* the amount of through traffic significantly drops by 2030. Additionally, the travel times (under normal circumstances) for using SR527 to access I-405 versus accessing I-405 directly from SR522 are virtually the same.

There are currently six traffic signals located within the proposed turnback area of SR 527, one of which is a fire station signal. The signals are located at the following intersections with SR 527:

- SR 522
- NE 183rd Street
- NE 185th Street (fire station signal)
- NE 190th Street / NE 191st Street
- 240th Street SE
- 228th Street SE

The addition of wide sidewalks, on-street parking and median islands will narrow the roadway and have a traffic calming effect, thereby slowing traffic and increasing safety for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists. This is ideal for the City of Bothell, where a walkable downtown is a goal of the City's redevelopment plan. The planned addition of a few new signals will serve to further slow future traffic through downtown Bothell.

What are the current responsibilities?
Like many state highways, portions of SR 527 are within incorporated cities, including Bothell, Mill Creek, and Everett. State law assigning financial responsibility for such highways is fairly detailed and well documented. These responsibilities were the result of discussions between WSDOT and the Association of Washington Cities. Also, practical coordination between WSDOT, the City, and other cities and towns is generally congenial and well established.

All of the traffic signals in the proposed turnback area are the responsibility of the City for operations and maintenance. The City has an agreement with Snohomish County for this service.

There is some difference in responsibility for cities over or under 25,000. With a current population estimate of over 32,000, the City of Bothell is clearly in the *over 25,000* category. For cities over 25,000, financial responsibility for state highways is shared as listed below. This sharing applies to SR 527 within the City of Bothell.

Current City Responsibility

- stability of cut and fill slopes
- sidewalks
- parallel roadside ditches
- road approach culverts
- cross culverts
- snow plowing
- snow removal
- sanding and de-icing
- channelization
- crosswalks
- striping
- parking signs
- regulatory signs
- stop signs (on intersecting streets)
- signals
- illumination
- street cleaning
- street sweeping
- vegetation
- noxious weeds
- right-of-way encroachments
- right-of-way cleanup
- utility franchises
- underground facilities
- traffic barriers (guardrail, concrete barrier, attenuators, etc.) if a curb exists
- driveway and access approval to abutting properties

Current State Responsibility

- roadway surface (pavement)
- roadway shoulders
- curbs
- directional signs / route markers
- traffic barriers (guardrail, concrete barrier, attenuators, etc.) if needed

As can be seen from the above lists, the City of Bothell already has financial responsibility for most roadway elements on this portion of SR 527.

What will be the result of the change in responsibilities?
Jurisdictional transfer of a portion of SR 527 from the state to the City would in turn transfer all listed state responsibilities to the City. The single most significant financial responsibility to change would be future repaving of the roadway as needed.

What are the costs and risks to this change in responsibilities?
State maintenance records indicate an average annual maintenance cost for this portion of SR 527 of just over $1,100. Although this annual average includes known costs (for roadway surface repair, drainage problems, third party damage, and snow plowing) the records may not be complete. There are likely additional costs not identified in records but nonetheless covered in some manner by state funds. Annual maintenance costs can vary widely and may exceed the State's recorded average as listed above.

While snow removal on this segment of SR 527 at state expense is allowed by law, they seldom if ever perform snow and ice removal. Like any other roadway, there is always risk that unusual weather conditions in any given year could greatly increase needed maintenance costs.

A larger cost to accepting jurisdiction for this portion of SR 527 is the need to periodically repave the roadway surface. Currently the pavement is in good condition. For planning purposes it can be assumed there will be need to repave every seventeen years. Repaving this entire portion of SR 527 would cost about $1.5 million[1] in 2009 dollars. Most of this segment (from NE 186th Street N to 228th Street SE) was milled and paved with 0.15 feet of hot mix asphalt in 2003. The state has a project scheduled to pave the segment from SR 522 to NE 186th Street in 2010. Other portions of the highway segment within the proposed turnback area will be widened or paved in the next five years as a product of City and developer projects. The responsibility to maintain and periodically repave this portion of SR 527 would add to the City's overall transportation grant and funding needs.

Liability costs are by nature often highly variable. Given the relatively high traffic volumes and vehicle speeds on this roadway, the potential for increased liability exposure from the proposed jurisdiction transfer is not small. State financial records regarding paid claims filed between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2006 were obtained from the Office of Financial Management (OFM) Risk Management Division. While these records may not be complete, OFM tried to identify all such claims associated with SR 527 through the City of Bothell, not including the I-405 interchange area. These records indicate two related claims totaling $2,700 that were paid regarding one single accident.

Does this transfer request meet criteria for a change to the system?

RCW 47.17.001 designates criteria that must be met in order to make a change to the state highway system. The following list shows the criteria for an urban highway route and whether or not SR 527 from SR 522 to the I-405 limited access meets those criteria.

(3) An urban highway route that meets any of the following criteria should be designated as part of the state highway system:

a. Is designated as part of the interstate system
No

b. Is designated as part of the system of numbered United States routes
No

c. Is an urban extension of a rural state highway into or through an urban area and is necessary to form an integrated system of state highways
No. With the proximity of a parallel interstate route in I-405 with full interchanges near the northern and southern limits of the turnback area, SR 527 is not a necessary link for through traffic in the state highway system.

d. Is a principal arterial that is a connecting link between two state highways and serves regionally oriented through traffic in urbanized areas with a population of fifty thousand or greater, or is a spur that serves regionally oriented traffic in urbanized areas
No. The current population of the City of Bothell is approximately 34,000 and SR 527 is not a spur.

Based on the above criteria of RCW 47.17.001(3), SR 527 between SR 522 and the I-405 limited access does not meet the criteria for a state highway.

Summary

The redevelopment of the SR 527 urban corridor is crucial to the City of Bothell's continued economic growth and the revitalization of the downtown area. However, the City's plans for SR 527 are not congruous with WSDOT's design criteria for state routes. This presents a challenge for the City and state to cooperatively manage the future of the SR 527 corridor. Since this portion of SR 527 does not serve a

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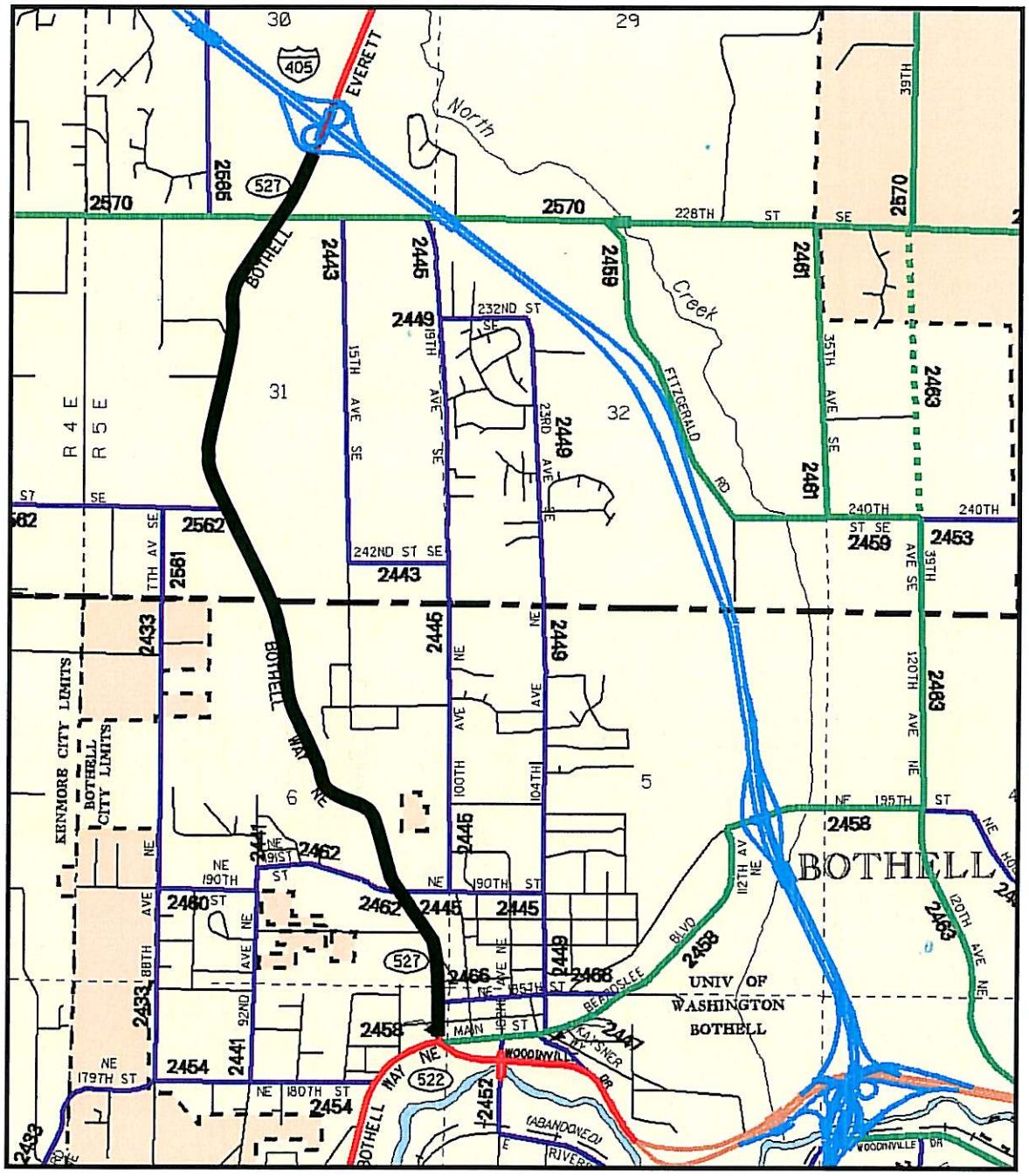
[1] This planning level estimate assumes an asphalt overlay depth of 0.15 feet, and includes mobilization, signing, striping, minor items, sales tax, engineering, and some traffic control. Extensive digouts or pavement repair, actual traffic control costs and price escalation could significantly increase this estimate.

statewide function as a through-route and the City has a clear and practical need to continue addressing and emphasizing local circulation, it is only logical to transfer jurisdiction of SR 527 to the City.

The costs and risks of this transfer are usual and known (or commonly estimated). The City is currently responsible for the majority of roadway elements on this portion of SR 527 already. Future repaving costs are the most noteworthy change in fiscal responsibility the City will undertake with this transfer.

There is informal but consistent evidence from senior managers in WSDOT's regional office that they would support such a proposed transfer. The City is formally initiating this Route Jurisdiction Transfer process so that WSDOT can provide a recommendation to the Commission.



State Route 527

(Bothell Way NE/Bothell Everett Highway)

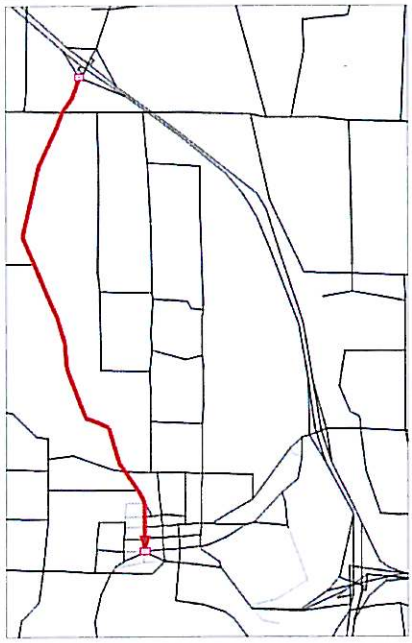
Section to be Transferred

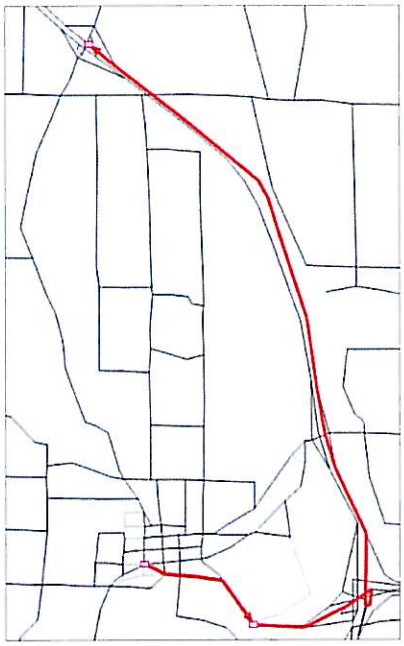
Exhibit 1

City of Bothell (SR527 Multiway Blvd)

VISUM Model Data

527 ↔ 405	522 ↔ 405





	2000			
Route	**527 ↔ 405**		**522 ↔ 405**	
Direction	**NB**	**SB**	**NB**	**SB**
Through traffic	184	83		
Total traffic	579	471		
% Through Traffic	32%	18%		
Travel Time	6min 15s	5min 42s	7min 23s	5min 58s
	2030			
Through traffic	186	66		
Total traffic	1503	1068		
% Through Traffic	12%	6%		
Travel Time	10min 49s	10min 24s	10min 39s	11min 52s

Exhibit 2