

# Bakerview Road / Interstate 5 (I-5) Interchange Justification Report (IJR) Process (10/16)

## Why is this study needed?

The area surrounding the I-5 / Bakerview Interchange is currently experiencing significant development and traffic congestion. The City and WSDOT are studying transportation improvements that will be necessary to support future growth and development in this fast growing area of northwest Bellingham



I-5/Bakerview Road Interchange

## Interchange Justification Report Process:

WSDOT is facilitating a coordinated process in partnership with the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, Port of Bellingham, Whatcom Transportation Authority, the City of Ferndale, Lummi Nation and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to develop and evaluate improvement strategies in and around the I-5/Bakerview Road interchange. These partners make up our Support Team, and have met 12 times over the last 18 months to better understand the existing and future multimodal transportation system in the area. They reviewed and identified the best options for improving multimodal mobility, circulation and safety across the I-5 overpass that will support regional transportation needs and planned economic development policy goals. This work will document how proposed improvements will be consistent with state and federal requirements for I-5 and for improved intersection operations on Bakerview Road. The first step toward approval in the Interchange Justification Report (IJR) process is a “finding of engineering and operational acceptability” by WSDOT and FHWA. The final IJR step in the process will be to complete the environmental documentation and approval by FHWA.

*(For more IJR details please look on back of this page.)*

What has been accomplished	Where we are	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IJR Process initiated</li> <li>• Support Team engaged</li> <li>• Problem statement developed</li> <li>• Traffic study completed</li> <li>• Safety analysis completed</li> <li>• Alternatives developed</li> <li>• Alternatives evaluated</li> <li>• Alternatives screened</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefings of progress made</li> <li>• Open House October 25th</li> <li>• Receiving input on alternatives</li> <li>• Begin drafting sections of the IJR document</li> <li>• WSDOT “Access and Hearing Section review”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FHWA approval</li> <li>• Implement Connecting Washington Project for preferred alternative</li> <li>• Project Design start June 2017</li> <li>• Project Construction 2020</li> </ul>



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## **What is an Interchange Justification Report?**

*An IJR is the document used to justify a new access, or revise an existing access on existing limited access freeways and highways in Washington State.*

## **What is the Purpose of an IJR?**

- *Document that a new or revised access does not adversely impact the safety and operations of the limited access freeway or highway.*
- *Evaluate whether there are improvements that can be reasonably made to the local roadway network that would preclude the need for the new or revised access.*
- *Ensure coordination of local land use, transportation planning, and access control.*

## **What are some Key Deliverables for this project?**

- **Methods and Assumptions Document.** *This document is developed to record assumption used in the IJR, along with analysis methodologies, criteria, and support team decisions.*
- **Feasibility Analysis.** *This study identifies the segments of both the local and regional network that are currently experiencing congestion or safety deficiencies, or where planned land use changes will prompt the need to evaluate the demands on the capacity of the transportation system.*
- **Interchange Justification Report (IJR).** *An IJR is a stand-alone document that includes the necessary supporting information needed to request a new access or revise an existing access to an Interstate or other limited access highway.*

## **Who should be represented on the Support Team?**

- *WSDOT Access and Hearings Manager, Assistant State Design Engineer, State Traffic Engineers*
- *WSDOT Region Traffic Engineer, Planning, Design, PDE*
- *FHWA Region and Area Engineers*
- *Local agency representatives from transit, cities, county, Port, Tribes*