

Puget Sound Gateway

Position

The NWSA supports the on-time completion of the Puget Sound Gateway project.



Background

The Puget Sound Gateway Program is comprised of two unique projects, State Route 509 and State Route 167, which together make major improvements to relieve traffic congestion and improve freight mobility.

The SR 167 Completion Project in Pierce County will build the remaining four miles of SR 167 between its current terminus at SR 161 (Meridian Avenue) and I-5, and a new two-mile connection (SR 509 Spur) from I-5 to SR 509 within the Port of Tacoma.

The SR 509 Completion project in King County will extend SR 509 south approximately two miles, providing two new lanes in each direction from S 188th Street to I-5 as well as four miles of improvements on I-5.

The Legislature authorized \$1.875 billion for the program in the *Connecting Washington* statewide transportation package, and an additional \$433 million in *Move Ahead WA*. The appropriation of funding for Phase 2 of the program by the Legislature is expected in the 2023-25 biennial transportation budget.

Mobility improvements

- The Puget Sound Gateway would provide a direct link to Kent and Puyallup River valleys, the second largest distribution center on the West Coast; 44% of regional truck trips by the NWSA are destined for this area.
- Delay on Puget Sound freeways causes a 60% loss of productivity for truckers.
- Travel time between Puyallup and Tacoma would improve by 15%, saving 13,915 person-hours of travel time per year, with the completion of SR 167 while SR 509 will provide congestion relief for the more than 9,000 trucks.
- SR-167 provides the “last mile” connection for agriculture products grown in eastern Washington to get to the docks at the Port of Tacoma for export.

Economic vitality and jobs

- A completed Puget Sound Gateway could fuel job growth to the tune of \$10.1 billion—the new payroll expected to be generated by the expansion of the

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NWSA's marine cargo operations—an expansion contingent on good transportation connections to and from the docks.

- The economic benefit of saved travel time will be \$93 million/year.

Safety improvements

- The current gap in SR-509 and SR-167 consists of surface streets with multiple turns, intersections and driveways.
- These features result in accident ratios that are 20 to 70 percent higher than statewide averages for similar highways.

Environmental improvements

- The projects will improve air quality by reducing congestion, improve truck mobility, and smooth traffic flow levels. CO emissions, for example, are projected to be reduced by an estimated 26% under the build alternative compared to the no-build alternative.
- The proposed project mitigation for SR 167 links multiple fragmented habitats together, providing over 1,000 acres of contiguous habitat and resulting in a cumulative 70 percent increase in ecological services in the area. This is also predicted to reduce flooding along the creek from 246 acres to 187 acres—a 25 percent reduction.

