



NE 3rd - 4th Corridor Improvements

(Sunset Blvd – East City Limits)

NE 3RD ST **NE 4TH ST**

City of Renton

Planning/Building/Public Works
Transportation Systems Division

May 2005





NE 3rd–4th Corridor Improvements

(Sunset Blvd – East City Limits)

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Contents

Table of Contents

1	Executive Summary	1
1.1	Purpose	1
1.2	Corridor Conditions.....	1
1.3	Recommendations / Plan Elements	1
1.3.1	Traffic Flow and Property Access	1
1.3.2	Transit.....	1
1.3.3	Pedestrian/Bicycle	1
1.3.4	Landscaping and Streetscaping	1
1.4	Conceptual Layout Plan.....	1
1.5	Implementation and Next Steps.....	1
1.6	Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	2
2	Introduction.....	3
2.1	Purpose	3
2.2	Project Justification	3
2.3	Project Objectives.....	3
2.4	Issues Addressed.....	3
2.5	Corridor Conditions Report	9
3	Alternatives Considered.....	13
3.1	Corridor Access Management and Traffic Control Concepts	13
3.2	Intersection and Location-Specific Improvement Alternatives.....	13
3.3	New Roadways	13
3.4	Transit Facilities	13
3.5	Pedestrian Facilities.....	13
3.6	Bicycle Facilities	13
4	Community Involvement.....	15
5	Recommendations	17
5.1	NE 3 rd -4 th Improvements	17
5.2	Plan Elements: Traffic Flow and Property Access.....	17
5.3	Plan Elements: Transit	17
5.4	Plan Elements: Pedestrian/Bicycle.....	17
5.5	Plan Elements: Landscaping and Streetscape	17
5.6	Concept Plan.....	18
5.7	Conceptual Layout Plan.....	26
5.8	Coordination with Other Projects	52
6	Implementation	53
6.1	Construction / Issues.....	53
6.2	Impacts / Mitigation.....	53
6.3	Utilities.....	53
6.4	Landscape / Streetscape	53
6.5	Costs and Staging	55
6.6	Next Steps	55
7	Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	56

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Study Area.....	5
Figure 2: Study Corridor.....	7
Figure 3: NE 3 rd -4 th Concept Plan Elements (2 Sheets)	19
Figure 4: Typical Cross-Section, Sunset-Jefferson	22
Figure 5: Typical Cross-Section, Monroe Ave – Union Ave	23
Figure 6: Typical Cross-Section, Union Ave – City Limit.....	24
Figure 7: NE 3 rd -4 th Conceptual Layout Plan (13 sheets)	25
Figure 8: Implementation	53

List of Appendices

Appendix A.....	Public Comments (Open House #1, November 14, 2002)
Appendix B.....	Public Comments (Open House #2, March 4, 2003)
Appendix C.....	Public Comments (Open House #3, June 18, 2003)
Appendix D	Open House Materials
Appendix E	Construction Cost Estimate Worksheets
Appendix F	Corridor Conditions Report (March 2003)
Appendix G	Intersection Operations
Appendix H	Property Access

NE 3rd~4th Street Corridor – Aerial Photo (2002)



1 Executive Summary

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the NE 3rd-4th Corridor Project is to develop a comprehensive set of street, traffic control, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements and actions that will address the existing and future access and circulation needs of the project corridor.

The NE 3rd-4th Corridor extends east from the Sunset Blvd/NE 3rd Street intersection, immediately west of I-405, to Renton's East City Limit.

An initial set of issues/needs for the NE 3rd-4th Corridor project to address were identified by city staff:

- Accommodate demands of increasing traffic volumes
- Evaluate current speed limits
- Facilitate transit flow and reduce delays
- Identify streetscape improvements that enhance appearance
- Improve pedestrian crossing safety and convenience
- Assess the need for park-and-ride lots
- Identify/evaluate sidestreet locations
- Identify/evaluate driveway locations
- Improve safety for turning vehicles
- Improve and complete sidewalk system
- Improve Transit Stops
- Assess provisions for bicycles

1.2 Corridor Conditions

The initial phase of this project prepared a Corridor Conditions Report. This report inventoried the existing corridor facilities, analyzed the corridor functions, and assessed future demands. The existing conditions are characterized by:

- Traffic congestion and operational and safety problems (especially those involving left turns) have been increasing along the entire corridor. Future traffic will overwhelm key intersections.
- An incomplete sidewalk system, deficient width and buffering on some existing sidewalks, a lack of crosswalks, and the absence of roadway shoulders and bike lanes inhibits or precludes comfortable convenient pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the corridor.
- The existing streetscape throughout the corridor is a mixture of design schemes, lacking a consistent and aesthetically pleasing atmosphere important to creating a livable community.

1.3 Recommendations / Plan Elements

The primary element of the NE 3rd-4th Corridor Improvements is to construct and install physical improvements along the corridor that maintain and improve traffic flow, property access, transit operations, pedestrian and bicycle safety and convenience, and corridor aesthetics; in a word – a “Boulevard” concept:

1.3.1 Traffic Flow and Property Access

Maintain and improve traffic flow and property access with intersection improvements, a center median with identified breaks, alternate access for properties with limited left turn access, coordinated traffic signals, bus pullouts, and encouraged driveway consolidation.

1.3.2 Transit

Improve transit access and operations with cross-walks, sidewalks, bus pullouts, and bus queue jumps.

1.3.3 Pedestrian/Bicycle

Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and convenience with continuous sidewalks, improved cross-walks, sidewalk buffering, and continuous bicycle facilities (which also provide sidewalk buffering).

1.3.4 Landscaping and Streetscaping

Improve corridor aesthetics with roadside and median landscaping.

1.4 Conceptual Layout Plan

A NE 3rd-4th Corridor Improvements Conceptual Layout Plan was developed and is presented in the main body of this report. The Conceptual Layout Plan, through a CADD level of graphic presentation, shows location specific improvements on essentially 5% level design drawings.

1.5 Implementation and Next Steps

Complete implementation of the NE 3rd-4th Corridor Improvements will involve significant construction/reconstruction for roughly 2.5 miles of a principal arterial within the City of Renton. Implementation and construction issues include steep slopes, need to acquire additional right-of-way, existing transmission power poles, existing corner developments at key intersections, and reliance on a state I-405 improvement project

Due to the length and cost for complete implementation of the Corridor Improvements, a phased prioritized implementation approach should be pursued. High priority improvement projects should be furthered into pre-design as funding is pursued and becomes available.

(Executive Summary Continued)

1.6 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

a. How do the recommended improvements help traffic when no new lanes are being added?

- Several key signalized intersections will be improved by adding new turning lanes.
- Access management (with a boulevard median) increases roadway capacity and reduces crashes.
- Widening the entire corridor by 2 additional lanes was not considered feasible.

b. Will the proposed additional traffic signals slow traffic down?

- Proposed traffic signals manage access to NE 4th Street while providing smoother, more efficient traffic flow.
- Regularly spaced traffic signals can be efficiently coordinated.
- Average speed along the corridor may be reduced by 3 mph.
- Traffic signal at Queen Ave is necessary for a safe pedestrian environment.

c. Do the recommended improvements (median) eliminate access to fronting businesses?

- Access to businesses is not eliminated; rather it will be managed through better-defined, safer locations.
- No property will lose access, although the specific route may change.

d. Are bus pullouts necessary and will they be used?

- Bus pullouts are needed to maintain smooth traffic by allowing stops without blocking traffic.
- Bus pullouts provide additional lane width needed to allow U-turns at traffic signals.

e. Are bicycle lanes necessary?

- Bicycle lanes enhance the non-motorized mobility, aesthetics, and community livability of the corridor.
- Bicycle lanes buffer pedestrians on the sidewalks from the traffic lanes, and provide additional mobility for emergency vehicle response.



Photo 1 – NE 3rd Street as it climbs “Cemetery Hill”.



Photo 2 – NE 4th Street, looking east in front of the Renton Technical College