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SAFETY FUNDAMENTAL CONCERN IN SOUTH END PROJECT

County Presses Forward on Five-Year Effort to Improve Pedestrian Safety

Port Orchard, Wash. (February 4, 2005) — Kitsap County Commissioner Jan Angel announced today that the County Public Works Department has resolved the funding issues necessary to proceed with the pedestrian and bicyclist safety improvements along a key south end county roadway, and is moving forward on this project. Angel has been advocating for this effort for nearly four years since a car/ pedestrian incident on Southworth Drive increased citizen requests for safety improvements and elevated the project to a significant concern.

“The project upgrades the only remaining section of substandard road from Port Orchard to Southworth,” said Public Works Director Randy Casteel. “This is a road improvement project that addresses safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists. This project also completes a critical segment of the Mosquito Fleet Trail Master Plan approved by the Board of Commissioners.”

The safety improvements include 11-foot traffic lanes and four foot paved shoulders. Public Works is working with local property owners to acquire the additional rights-of-way needed to complete the improvements. Construction is planned for 2006.

The County’s project received Federal Enhancement Funding in January, which was awarded to the project based upon a recommendation from the Puget Sound Regional Council after a competitive process landed it near the top of the regional priority list.

The County project is not related to two ferry proposals unfolding in the South Kitsap area in recent weeks. These include Kitsap Transit’s new concept for passenger-only ferry service at Harper Dock and this week’s Washington State Department of Transportation announcement about a renewed possibility of passenger-only ferries at Southworth.

“This is a basic and necessary road safety improvement and has been needed for quite some time,” according to Casteel. “Regardless of which ferry proposal may move forward, these basic road safety improvements are needed.”

Citizens with questions about the County’s Southworth Road Improvement Project should call the Public Works’ Open Line at 360-337-5777.

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