

MEMORANDUM
For Meeting of December 9, 2008

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers
 THROUGH: Steve Worthington
 FROM: Russ Blount
 SUBJECT: **Resolution 1273** – Expressing Opposition to I-5 Sound Wall and Requesting Alternatives

REPORT IN BRIEF: Request that the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) mitigate noise impacts of the addition of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane construction on I-5 by installation of “quiet pavement”, “veil” diffusion panels, or other means substantially less visually intrusive than the sound walls currently under consideration.

BACKGROUND: The 2005 Legislature raised the gasoline tax, by 9.5 cents per gallon to fund a number of projects including completion of HOV lanes on State Route 16 and I-5. The taxes required to generate these funds withstood an initiative challenge, and design of HOV lanes through Fife is underway. WSDOT has conducted a survey and is seeking public comment regarding the potential installation of sound walls adjacent to the Chateau Rainier, Willow Green and Mountain View apartment complexes; these sound walls would be approximately 24 feet tall and would extend hundreds of feet beyond the apartment complexes, obstructing sight lines between I-5 and Fife’s regional commercial zoned properties.

The owners and operators of many of the properties and businesses potentially affected by reduced visibility from I-5 have petitioned the Fife Council to oppose the proposed walls.

ATTACHMENTS: Resolution 1273.

DISCUSSION: Sound walls effectively attenuate noise from only nearby sources to nearby receptors. Though the three apartment complexes studied by WSDOT are nearby receptors, most of Fife’s population is more distant from I-5, but that population is also affected by noise from I-5. Sound attenuation measures that would reduce the initial generation of the noise, such as quiet pavements, or diffuse rather than reflect the sounds, such as the proprietary “veil” system tested elsewhere by WSDOT, would provide benefit to Fife’s population further from I-5. These options would have no impact, or far less impact, on the visibility of Fife’s Regional Commercial Zone from I-5.

FISCAL IMPACT: WSDOT has currently budgeted \$2 million for sound wall construction. Sales tax from new car dealers and similar business reliant on high visibility from I-5 totals \$7 million per year.

ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF ACTION:

1. Defer action on Resolution 1273.
2. Approve Resolution 1273 as written.
3. Amend Resolution 1273 and then approve as amended.
4. Decline to approve Resolution 1273.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Approve Resolution 1273 as written.

SUGGESTED MOTION: Motion to Approve Resolution 1273.



Russ Blount
 Public Works Director

Approved for Agenda



Steve Worthington
 City Manager

RESOLUTION NO. 1273

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FIFE, PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO THE INSTALLATION OF SOUND WALLS ADJACENT TO INTERSTATE ROUTE 5 AND REQUESTING THAT THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION MITIGATE NOISE IMPACTS OF PROPOSED HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE LANE CONSTRUCTION BY OTHER MEANS

WHEREAS, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has received an appropriation of funds for design and construction of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes along Interstate Route 5 (I-5) through Fife; and

WHEREAS, WSDOT has published schematic designs that include 24-foot-tall concrete walls to mitigate noise impacts of the proposed HOV lanes on adjacent residents; and

WHEREAS, the proposed concrete walls would not substantially reduce the noise reaching other Fife residents, would eliminate the visibility of several Fife businesses from I-5 and substantially impair the visibility of many other businesses from I-5; and

WHEREAS, WSDOT has tested “quiet pavements” and “veil” sound diffraction panels elsewhere within the state highway system and such alternatives have demonstrated an ability to reduce sound impacts not only to immediately adjacent properties but those more remote from the highway, with zero to minimal impact on sight lines from the highway to adjacent properties; now, therefore:

BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council hereby states its opposition to the installation of sound walls and requests that WSDOT install quiet pavement, sound diffraction measures, or other measures with zero to minimal impact on sight lines from the highway to adjacent properties.

ADOPTED by the City Council at an open public meeting held on the 9th day of December, 2008.

Barry D. Johnson, Mayor

Attest:

Steve Marcotte, City Clerk