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Snohomish County Awarded \$1.3 Million Grant to Improve Safety on Rural Roads

Washington State Department of Transportation grant will fund an innovative technology to reduce crashes on 15 sections of road

EVERETT, Wash., January 17, 2017 – In an effort to improve safety on rural arterials, Snohomish County will be installing an innovative technology to enhance road surface traction. High friction surface treatments (HFST) are a thin layer of specially engineered, high friction aggregates that produce long lasting skid resistance. Washington State Department of Transportation’s (WSDOT) 2016 Innovative Safety Program recently awarded Snohomish County \$1.3 million to apply HFST to 15 sections of rural roads throughout the unincorporated areas of the county.

From 2011 to 2015, a total of 9,597 automobile collisions were reported within Snohomish County. Of these crashes, 33 percent involved injuries or fatalities. Snohomish County Public Works performed an in-depth review of the data and identified a list of locations where the use of HFST might reduce the number of crashes. HFST may help in reducing collisions by enhancing the ability of the road surface to provide pavement friction to vehicles while braking or performing cornering maneuvers. The 15 areas selected for HFST include sections of Marine Drive, Pioneer Highway, 100 Street NE, Storm Lake Road, 171 Avenue SE, Marsh Road, and Jordan Road.

“The safety of motorists traveling throughout Snohomish County is a top priority,” said Steve Thomsen, Public Works Director. “Statistics from the City of Bellevue indicate that they have had success with HSFT at an intersection that is often affected by icy weather conditions. Similarly, this grant will enable us to improve safety for our motorists.”

According to the Federal Highway Administration’s Office of Safety, the City of Bellevue installed HFST on Forest Drive at the intersection of Cole Creek Parkway in October 2004. Afterwards, accidents at the intersection dropped 78 percent and costs associated with accidents declined by 83 percent.

Snohomish County's application of HFST is scheduled to begin in July 2017 which assures all costs associated with the project will be covered by the WSDOT grant.

In 2016, Snohomish County Public Works submitted grant applications for a total of 22 transportation-related projects. The county was successful in 48 percent of the applications submitted, resulting in up to \$27 million in funding. This grant award maximizes Public Works' ability to utilize the County Road Fund for other priority road projects.

About Snohomish County Public Works

The Snohomish County Public Works Department employs approximately 600 staff members that develop and maintain county roads; control and manage surface water quantity, quality, and fish habitats; and oversee the recycling and disposal of solid waste. The department's main office is located at 3000 Rockefeller Ave., Everett, WA 98201. For more information about Snohomish County Public Works, visit www.snohomishcountywa.gov/PublicWorks.

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