

OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL  
Olympia, Washington  
October 6, 2009

West Olympia Access Study - Preliminary Findings

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CITY MANAGER'S  
RECOMMENDATION:

Proceed with analysis of a hybrid alternative. Prepare for the decisions associated with the Interchange Justification Report and which alternative to pursue and how to fund it.

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STAFF CONTACT:

Lead:

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Assigned Staff:

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ORIGINATED BY:

Public Works Department

PRESENTERS AND  
OTHERS NOTIFIED:

Presenter:

- Randy Wesselman

Others Notified:

- George Kovich, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Thera Black, Thurston Regional Planning Council
- Rich Hoey, Director of Water Resources, Public Works

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [Map of the Study Area](#)
2. [Project Overview](#)
3. [Public Input Phase I](#) and [Stakeholder Interview Report](#)
4. [Design Visualization of Alternatives](#)
5. [Public Input from August 6, 2009, Open House](#)
6. [Draft August 17, 2009, Land Use and Environment Committee Minutes](#)
7. [Map of Alternatives and Hybrid with Allison Springs Drinking Water Protection Areas shown](#)
8. [Alternatives Comparison Table](#)
9. [Typical IJR Outline](#)

BUDGET IMPACT/  
SOURCE OF FUNDS:

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) received funding in the amount of \$500,000 through the 2005 Transportation Partnership Package to participate with the City of Olympia in the West Olympia Access Study (WOAS).

The City of Olympia is also funding the study using Transportation Impact Fees in the amount of \$460,410. These funds were appropriated as part of the 2006-2011 *Capital Facilities Plan* (CFP).

**PRIOR COUNCIL/  
COMMITTEE REVIEW:**

The total project budget is \$960,410.

- Land Use and Environment Committee, August 17, 2009. Briefing on Alternatives.
- City Council, March 10, 2009. Amendment to Interlocal Agreement for the West Olympia Access Study.
- City Council, October 17, 2008. Status Report on West Olympia Access Study.
- City Council, May 13, 2008. Status Report and Next Steps on West Olympia Access Study.
- City Council, February 13, 2007. Briefing on West Olympia Access Study.
- City Council Meeting, October 17, 2006. Approval of Contract/Interlocal Agreement with WSDOT.

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**BACKGROUND:**

**Issue**

The 2025 *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) indicates major traffic congestion will occur at the Cooper Point Road and Black Lake Boulevard intersection within the 20-year planning horizon, even with a package of efficiency measures—including extended peak periods, urban transit service, multimodal facilities, and increased local street connectivity in the future. The City’s annual concurrency analysis indicates that unacceptable traffic congestion and travel delays will be evident in the near term, based on criteria and guidance in the *Olympia Comprehensive Plan* (Comp Plan). This deficiency in access and circulation opportunities hampers the ability to meet Olympia’s growing land use and transportation needs on the Westside.

**Purpose of Study**

The primary purpose of the WOAS is to evaluate current and future mobility concerns on Olympia’s west side and to identify a strategy for improving access and circulation. Attachment 1 is a map of the study area.

The analysis includes an evaluation of the need for an additional West Olympia access to US 101 to accommodate expected growth, and if the need is determined, identify where the access will be provided to US 101.

The West Olympia Access Study will:

- Result in a package of local and state investments to improve access and circulation; and
- Ensure that Olympia can accommodate future growth while meeting mobility and safety objectives.
- Conduct an analysis of environmental impacts. This project lies within the City’s Allison Springs Drinking Water (Wellhead) Protection Area.

The study is broken into two phases. Phase 1 will determine the need for new or modified access to US 101, and Phase 2 will address local

street network issues. Please see Attachment 2 for an overview of the project and a description of Phases 1 and 2.

A review of the steps taken and accomplishments thus far in Phase 1 is also included in Attachment 2. Comments and input from the public that were gathered in Phase 1 are included in Attachment 3 (follow link).

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**ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS:**

**Two Alternatives Pursued**

The decision on how to modify access to US 101 rests with WSDOT. In September 2008, the project team met with WSDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) staff. There was agreement that the analysis has demonstrated that local street improvements are not enough to resolve access and LOS issues, and that modified access to US 101 is needed.

There was agreement from WSDOT and FHWA that two interchange modification scenarios be moved forward for further evaluation:

1. Black Lake Interchange Scenario: Includes the extension of Yauger Way to the Black Lake Boulevard/US 101 Interchange and some local improvements. This is the Yauger Extension project described in the Comp Plan.
2. Evergreen Interchange Scenario: Includes modifications to the Evergreen Parkway interchange to incorporate connections to Kaiser Road, as well as associated local street system improvements.

Extensive modeling and analysis has been conducted on the two alternatives. These two alternatives have been evaluated, in order to attempt to narrow the number of alternatives down to one. Conceptual layout and design for the two alternatives was completed, as well as estimated construction costs.

Attachment 4 also shows design visualization of the two alternatives.

**Open House**

A public open house was held on August 6, 2009, to share the two options. Approximately 20 people attended the Open House. Comments from the open house are included in Attachment 5 (follow link). There was no clear indication of a preferred alternative from the public's input.

**Land Use and Environment Committee (LUEC)**

On August 17, 2009, City staff presented the two alternatives to the LUEC and sought preliminary input. LUEC was asked if the public involvement to this point was adequate, and if further information was needed to help the Council arrive at a preferred alternative. The Draft LUEC minutes are Attachment 6 (follow link). LUEC direction to staff in preparing for the full Council discussion was:

1. Evaluate how the two alternatives affect future land use and urban form on the Westside.
2. Present public input from early stages of the Study. (Attachment 3 is a report on public input.)
3. Clarify funding of future improvements.

#### Responses to Questions Raised by LUEC

1. What are the land-use implications of the two alternatives? The LUEC asked about how the two alternatives differ in their impacts and influences to land use on the Westside. City current planning staff indicate that very little vacant land within the study area is without a current proposal, except for areas near Kaiser Road south of 101 that are not annexed.

The Black Lake -Yauger alternative will allow the existing commercial area near Black Lake, Cooper Point and Harrison to grow and intensify by relieving congestion. It may be advantageous to focus any additional growth in this existing commercial area because the infrastructure is in place.

The Evergreen Parkway-Kaiser alternative will serve currently underdeveloped areas, nearly all of which have current development proposals in place, primarily housing and office. A new access to US 101 may create pressure to up-zone these areas: high densities and/or a different mix of uses.

2. How will the final project be funded? Funding for the final improvements is anticipated to come from the City, including impact fees, along with state and federal funds in the form of grants or special appropriations. Other potential funding could come from developer contributions or a Local Improvement District.

#### Introduction to the Hybrid

Since the LUEC meeting August 17, 2009, staff has arrived at the conclusion that a hybrid of both alternatives may best resolve access, relieve congestion and serve existing and future land uses with the least amount of ramps and structures. Attachment 7 is a map of the alternative relative to the previous two alternatives. The hybrid uses the best features of both alternatives.

Staff is recommending bringing the hybrid up to an equal level of analysis as the two previous alternatives. This analysis will require some additional traffic modeling work, but a majority of the background data and analysis from the first two alternatives will be used in the analysis of the third hybrid.

The project team believes the hybrid has merit and in discussions with WSDOT, there is support for examining this hybrid alternative further.

#### Comparing the Three Alternatives

Attachment 8 is a table which compares the two initial alternatives along with the hybrid. While this does not capture the extensive traffic analysis, it is a high-level summary of the differences between the three alternatives.

### **Next Step: Intersection Justification Report (IJR) Process**

The next step in the process is to indicate a preferred alternative to WSDOT and prepare to conduct an IJR on the preferred alternative. An IJR is required by state and federal policy and documents the need to revise access to US 101. Attachment 9 is an outline of a typical IJR.

Cost: The IJR process is a thorough analysis of the recommended modification. Much of the previous traffic analysis and modeling work will be used in the IJR. An estimate and scope of work will be developed for the IJR once an alternative is chosen. It is anticipated that an IJR will cost in the range of \$1.4 to \$1.8 million. The City will need to identify funds for an IJR. A combination of funding from local, state, and federal sources will likely be pursued for the IJR.

Scope of Work: A draft formal scope of work for the IJR will be completed to conclude Phase I of this study. It is expected that the IJR process will take approximately one year to complete. Once completed, the IJR will be viable for a five year period; a construction project must begin within 5 years for the IJR to be applicable. Should 5 years lapse, the IJR will need to be updated.

Additional Environmental Consideration: The IJR process includes an extensive environmental evaluation, which will be NEPA compliant.

One known issue that will be addressed is the Allison Springs Drinking Water (Wellhead) Protection Area. All the interchange options lie within the Drinking Water (Wellhead) Protection Area of Allison Springs, and will have impacts on one of the City's major drinking water sources. Impacts that will be addressed as part of the IJR environmental review process include stormwater discharge and treatment, transportation spills, and increase in impervious surfaces.

### **Council Direction Sought**

Conduct analysis of hybrid (October to January): Staff is recommending bringing the hybrid up to an equal level of analysis as the two previous alternatives. This work is expected to cost approximately \$70,000, which can come from the remaining study budget. Staff seeks Council support for this work.

Council indicates preference on alternative to take to the IJR Process: Once the analysis is complete, staff will recommend Alternative 1, 2 or the hybrid for the IJR process. Council will consider staff's recommendation and forward a preference to WSDOT.

### **Future Steps**

Consider funding plan for IJR: WSDOT, whose authority it is to make decisions on interchange modifications, will make the ultimate decision

on which interchange modification to pursue. Once a decision by WSDOT is made on the modification, the City will pursue funding to complete a formal IJR. Much of the WOAS work will be relevant in completing the IJR, but it is likely to cost in the range of \$1.4 to \$1.8 million.

Funding: Funding will need to be identified for the design, right-of-way and construction phases. As mentioned above, this will be a City project and a combination of funding sources (local, state, federal and private) will likely be pursued.

Phase II: Phase 2 completion has always been contingent on remaining available funds after Phase 1 is finished. Based on budget projections for Phase 1, there are not sufficient funds to complete Phase 2 at this time. This will delay any decisions associated with Phase 2 work.

**Option 1:**

**Proceed with analysis of a hybrid alternative. Prepare for the decisions associated with the Interchange Justification Report and which alternative to pursue and how to fund it**

Implications:

1. There will be more cost in evaluating the hybrid, but ultimately a better solution can be developed, one in which less construction is needed for a more effective access solution.
2. A hybrid may provide greatest re-distribution of the traffic associated with Black Lake Boulevard and Copper Point Road intersection, the largest current and future traffic problem.
3. A hybrid has the potential to better distribute traffic on the street system.
4. A hybrid can provide some of the access benefits of the Black Lake-Yauger Alternative without the impacts to the Ken Lake residential area.
5. A hybrid can reduce the urban form impacts of a larger interchange at Black Lake-Yauger while providing some of the benefits of that alternative for westbound traffic.

**Option 2:**

**Indicate a preference to WSDOT to proceed with an IJR on the Evergreen-Kaiser Alternative.**

Implications:

1. While this is slightly less beneficial, when compared to the Black Lake -Yauger Alternative, this alternative provides significant access improvements for approximately half the cost of the other alternative (\$43 million).
2. This alternative could facilitate the planned development near Kaiser Road.
3. This alternative could contribute to a spreading of commercial activity away from the current hub near Black Lake and Cooper Point.

**Option 3:**

**Indicate a preference to WSDOT to proceed with an IJR on the Black Lake-Yauger Alternative.**

Implications:

1. This alternative functions slightly better than the Evergreen-Kaiser alternative.
2. This option is twice the cost of the other alternative, approximately \$86 million.
3. This option could impact residents of the Ken Lake residential area.
4. This option intensifies the use of commercial land near Black Lake Boulevard and Cooper Point Road.

**Option 4:**

**Other direction as identified by the Council.**