West Olympia Access Study

Background Report #1
Significant Transportation and Land Use Events

City of Olympia
Washington State Department of Transportation

Prepared by
Thurston Regional Planning Council
The West Olympia Access Study is a partnership project between the City of Olympia and the Washington State Department of Transportation. It is funded by City of Olympia funds and a WSDOT Transportation Partnership Project earmark.

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Table of Contents

WEST OLYMPIA ACCESS STUDY BACKGROUND REPORTS
Introduction ............................................................................................................................. iii

BACKGROUND REPORT #1 – SIGNIFICANT TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE EVENTS
Overview ................................................................................................................................... 1

Significant Events that Shaped the Study Area ....................................................................... 4
Construction of Interstate 5 and US Highway 101 ................................................................. 4
Interstate 5 ............................................................................................................................... 4
US Highway 101 ..................................................................................................................... 8
Extension of Cooper Point Road .............................................................................................. 10
Establishment of The Evergreen State College ................................................................. 11
Construction of Evergreen Parkway ....................................................................................... 12
Development of Evergreen Park ............................................................................................ 14
Development of Capital Mall ................................................................................................. 15
Relocation of South Puget Sound Community College .................................................... 16
Development of Olympia Auto Mall ....................................................................................... 17
Construction of Percival Creek Bridge .............................................................................. 18
Development of Capital Medical Center ............................................................................. 19

History of the Gateway Intersections ................................................................................... 20
Harrison Avenue at 4th Avenue ............................................................................................. 20
Cooper Point Road at Black Lake Boulevard ........................................................................ 22
Evergreen Parkway at Mud Bay Road .................................................................................... 24

List of Figures:
Figure 1 – Study Area Boundary – West Olympia Access Study ........................................ iv
Figure 2 – Aerial Photo of West Olympia (1944) ............................................................... 1
Figure 3 – Aerial Photo of West Olympia, Budd Inlet and Downtown Olympia (1937) .... 2
Figure 4 – Preferred I-5 and US 101 Alignment (Scan of 1952 document) ......................... 5
Figure 5 – Construction of Capitol Lake Interchange of I-5 and US 101 (1956-57) ............... 6
Figure 6 – Construction of I-5 and US 101 Interchange at Capitol Lake (1956-57) .......... 6
Figure 7 – I-5 and US 101 Interchange at Capitol Lake (1958) ........................................... 7
Figure 8 – Construction of the I-5 at Plum Street Interchange (1958-60) ......................... 7
Figure 9 – I-5 East of Plum Street Interchange (1967) ...................................................... 8
Figure 10 – US 101 Construction Near Olympia (1956-58) ............................................. 9
Figure 11 – US 101 at the Decatur Street Overpass (1984) ................................................. 9
Figure 12 – Relocation of Cooper Point Road (1978) .......................................................... 10
Figure 13 – The Evergreen State College Campus (1974) ................................................ 11
Figure 14 – Construction of Evergreen Parkway (1973) ................................................... 12
Figure 15 – Thurston County Courthouse (2000) .............................................................. 14
Figure 16 – Westfield Capital Mall and Surrounding Neighborhoods (2005) ..................... 15
Figure 17 – South Puget Sound Community College (2000) ............................................ 16
Figure 18 – Olympia Auto Mall (1990) ......................................................................... 17
Figure 19 – Decatur Street Overpass at US 101 (1978) ................................................................. 18
Figure 20 – Construction of the Percival Creek Bridge (1985) ................................................. 18
Figure 21 – Capital Medical Center (2000) .................................................................................. 19
Figure 22 – Harrison Avenue at 4th Avenue (early 1950s) ............................................................ 21
Figure 23 – Harrison Avenue at 4th Avenue (1977) ..................................................................... 21
Figure 24 – Harrison Avenue at 4th Avenue (2004) .................................................................... 22
Figure 25 – Intersection of Black Lake Boulevard and Cooper Point Rd at 9th Avenue (1968) .. 23
Figure 26 – Intersection of Cooper Point Road and Black Lake Boulevard (1978) ..................... 23
Figure 27 – Construction of the Evergreen Parkway Interchange at US 101 (1973) ............... 24
West Olympia Access Study Background Reports

Introduction

The West Olympia Access Study (WOAS) is a joint project between the Washington State Department of Transportation Olympic Region (WSDOT) and the City of Olympia. The State and the City contracted with Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) to facilitate the public involvement process and provide other project support.

The purpose of the West Olympia Access Study is to evaluate current and future mobility concerns on Olympia’s west side and to identify a strategy to maintain safe and acceptable access and circulation. The study will consist of outreach activities, conducting and documenting transportation needs and options analyses, and recommending improvements and strategies.

The West Olympia Access Study is needed because:

- There is growing concern about congestion on both local and state roads. Mounting congestion raises questions about the best ways to accommodate growth while maintaining safe and acceptable levels of mobility.

- The 2025 Regional Transportation Plan indicates that even with efficiency measures, the Cooper Point Road/Black Lake Boulevard intersection will fail within the next 20 years. This would cause undesirable delays and would also adversely impact nearby roads and intersections, including US 101 interchange operations.

- The current street and highway network hampers the ability to meet West Olympia’s needs for emergency services, efficient transit service, better pedestrian and bicycle access, and more even distribution of local traffic.

The WOAS study area boundaries are shown on Figure 1. The study area includes 5.6 square miles within the cities of Olympia, Tumwater, and Thurston County, Washington. Within this area are 4.6 miles of the US Highway 101 corridor and approximately one mile of Interstate 5.

The study area boundaries of the West Olympia Access Study generally extend east from Eld Inlet to Budd Inlet and Capitol Lake. The northern boundary of the WOAS study area is about 0.1 mile north of Harrison Avenue and Mud Bay Road. The southern boundary generally parallels US Highway 101, but varies in distance from 0.1 mile south of the highway corridor near Eld Inlet and Capitol Lake to about 0.7 mile south along Black Lake Boulevard, encompassing the Ken Lake neighborhood.
The WOAS study area also extends both east and west to include the interchanges of US US 101 at Mud Bay Road (2nd Avenue) and Interstate 5 at Henderson Boulevard. In these areas the boundary parallels the corridor being about 0.1 mile north and south of the roadways.

West Olympia can generally be described as that portion of Olympia west of Capitol Lake and Budd Inlet. This area is currently home to almost 24,000 people and 17,000 jobs. Comprehensive Plans adopted by the cities of Olympia, Tumwater, and Thurston County call for increases in commercial and residential development in this area in accordance with the Washington State Growth Management Act.

A series of background reports have been developed regarding general characteristics of the study area. These reports are:

Report #1 – Significant Transportation and Land Use Events
Report #2 – Transportation Characteristics
Report #3 – Land Use and Environment Characteristics
Report #4 – Social and Economic Characteristics

Taken together, these four background reports provide an overview of baseline conditions within the West Olympia Access Study area.
Background Report # 1:  
Study Area History

Overview

Issues and opportunities that the West Olympia Access Study will evaluate did not emerge overnight or even in the last few years. They are the product of many different transportation and land use decisions that occurred over many decades. It is important to look forward and apply strategic thinking when developing plans and investment strategies for a study such as this one. But that look forward is enhanced by an objective look back to identify and understand various factors that shaped current and future conditions.

Figure 2 is an aerial photograph from 1944 of west Olympia. The WOAS study area boundary has been superimposed on it for reference.

**Figure 2 - Aerial Photo of West Olympia (1944)**

This photo predates construction of Interstate 5 and US 101. Cooper Point did not extend south of Harrison Avenue. South Puget Sound Community College, The Evergreen State College, Capital Mall, Capital Auto Mall, and a host of other familiar features today did not yet exist. The seat of county government was in downtown Olympia, not on “courthouse hill.” Decatur Street skirted the Percival Creek Canyon before connecting to Mottman Road. Capitol Lake was not a lake and Deschutes Parkway was a rail corridor.
Prior to the opening of US Highway 101 in 1958, West Olympia was primarily a residential area with commercial land uses restricted to Harrison Avenue. St. Peter Hospital, originally located at 4th and Sherman Street just west of the old 4th Avenue Bridge, and small neighborhood grocery stores were the exceptions. Figure 3 is the earliest known aerial photograph of the west side. Old “Olympic Highway” (Mud Bay Road, Harrison Avenue, and 4th Avenue) crosses the image from upper right to lower left. The estuary that became Capitol Lake is in the lower right corner.

**Figure 3 – Aerial Photo of West Olympia, Budd Inlet and Downtown Olympia (1937)**

Over the last 60 years West Olympia has evolved and grown and is now home to almost 24,000 people and 17,000 jobs.

A myriad of decisions and events over the last 60 years helped make west Olympia what it is today. Good or bad, the westside’s past is part of its present and influences future issues and opportunities. This background report provides insights into significant events that made the westside what it is today. The events chosen for this report include:
Construction of Interstate 5 & US Highway 101 1958
Extension of Cooper Point Road 1962
Establishment of The Evergreen State College 1967
Construction of Evergreen Parkway 1974
Development of Evergreen Park (Courthouse Hill) 1969
Development of Capitol Mall 1978
Relocation of South Puget Sound Community College 1978
Creation of Capital Medical Center 1985
Development of Auto Mall 1985
Construction of Percival Creek Bridge 1986

Each of these events changed the landscape of West Olympia and shaped the conditions which the WOAS study will address.

This report also provides historical insights into the three “gateway intersections” of the WOAS study area: Harrison Avenue at 4th Avenue; Cooper Point Road at Black Lake Boulevard; and Evergreen Parkway at Mud Bay Road. These three intersections evolved over time as a result of key transportation and land use decisions over the last several decades. They will continue to evolve over the next several decades as a result of important transportation and land use decisions being made today.
Significant Events that Shaped the Study Area

Construction of Interstate 5 & US Highway 101

There is probably no more significant influence on the way that the westside of Olympia has grown over the decades than the decision to locate and construct I-5 and US 101 where they are today. Highway access is a powerful influence in economic development, it opens otherwise inaccessible areas to residential development, and makes possible regional medical, educational and retail centers that provide community benefit exceeding a community’s means. It’s a double-edged sword though and without progressive land use policies highway access can undermine economic vitality in other parts of a community and lead to rampant sprawl. It is no coincidence that this overview begins with the construction of I-5 and US 101.

Interstate 5

Interstate 5 (I-5) is part of the federal interstate highway system and was previously known as Primary State Highway-1. By 1948 plans were underway to relieve traffic congestion on what was then US Highway 99. Highway 99 passed through downtown Olympia before turning south to Tumwater along Capitol Way.

By 1951 a route for the future I-5 was selected which would have separated the state Capitol from downtown Olympia via an underground viaduct along Tenth Avenue. It would have crossed Capitol Lake near the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad trestle and traveled up the Percival Creek canyon into West Olympia. A spur road to the west was to be located near the head of the creek, and would have provided access to Shelton and Aberdeen.

However, in 1954 cost estimates for the Tenth Avenue route caused highway engineers to seek an alternative alignment. The Tumwater Canyon, with its basalt bedrock, was proposed as an alternative. The Tumwater Canyon alternative would virtually wipe out the original central business district of Tumwater, cross Capitol Lake in a wide curve, and cut under Capitol Way at 27th Avenue. Another alternative route, called the Dunham bypass, would have by-passed both downtown Olympia and Tumwater to cross near Ward Lake. Figure 4 is a scan of the final alignment and engineer estimates of 1958 traffic volumes on local streets with and without the freeway.

In April 1954, after much discussion, both the Olympia and Tumwater city councils signed onto the Tumwater Canyon alternative. Funds for the Aberdeen-Shelton link were included in the 1954-56 state highway budget. The formal opening for the freeway (I-5) occurred on December 12, 1958.¹ Figures 5 – 9 are historical images from the Washington State Department of Transportation archives of the construction project.

Figure 4 - Preferred I-5 and US 101 Alignment (Scan of 1952 document)
Figure 5 - Construction of Capitol Lake Interchange of I-5 and US 101 (1956-57)

Note: This photo is looking east with Capitol Way Bridge in the background.

Figure 6 - Construction of I-5 and US 101 Interchange at Capitol Lake (1956-57)

Note: This photo is looking west toward Tumwater Hill.
Figure 7 - I-5 and US 101 Interchange at Capitol Lake (1958)

*Note: Looking north toward the State Capitol, downtown Olympia, and Budd Inlet.*

Figure 8 - Construction of the I-5 at Plum Street Interchange (1958-60)

*Note: Looking northeast*
Interstate 5 was widened through Olympia and Tumwater from two lanes each direction to its current three-to-four lane cross-section. Plans for this widening began in the mid-1970s when an Environmental Impact Statement was prepared. Construction began in 1982 and continued in phases for a decade. The widening project required relocating Indian Creek near the eastern end of the WOAS study area, reconstructing the supports for the Capitol Way Bridge, and rebuilding much of the I-5 / US 101 interchange.

**US Highway 101**

In Washington State, US 101 is part of the original US Highway System of 1926. The highway crosses the Columbia River near Astoria, Oregon and extends 366 miles around the Olympic Peninsula terminating at the Capitol Lake Interchange with Interstate 5. The portion of US 101 within the WOAS study area was constructed during 1957 and 1958.

As noted above, the plans for this limited access freeway began in the early 1950’s. The original route was modified to tie into Interstate 5 after the Tumwater Canyon alignment was selected. Black Lake Boulevard was selected as the primary intersection for West Olympia.

Early plans indicated three overpasses would provide access across US 101. East to west the three overpasses were Decatur Street, Kaiser Road and Delphi Road. The western end of the new US 101 alignment included a new crossing of Mud Bay and an interchange with old Olympic Highway at Mud Bay Road. This is the western extent of the WOAS study area. Figure 10 is a WSDOT archive photo of US 101 construction during the late 1950s.
Once complete, improvements were initiated to what was then the Decatur Street overpass (Figure 11). This is now the “Crosby Boulevard, Cooper Point Road, Auto Mall Drive” interchange, also referred to locally as the Mottman Road interchange due to the access it provides to the Mottman Industrial Complex. The overpass was completed in 1985 and subsequently widened in 2000.

During the early-to-mid 1990s US 101 was widened between I-5 and the Black Lake Boulevard interchange. In this area a third lane and a truck climbing lane were added.

In 1995 the US 101 / Black Lake Boulevard interchange was expanded to a “single point urban interchange” or SPUI. This maximized interchange capacity by allowing for multiple turning movements.
Extension of Cooper Point Road

For many years Division Street served as the sole access point from west Olympia to the Cooper Point peninsula. In 1962 an extension to Cooper Point Road was made south of 28th Avenue NW to connect with Black Lake Boulevard. Initially this intersection was at 9th Avenue SW.

Cooper Point Road was realigned starting in 1974 to its current location as part of the Capital Mall development. 9th Avenue SW serves as the southern boundary of the mall. Figure 12 is an aerial photo taken during that time period and includes early construction of Capital Mall.

In 1986 it made a direct connection with US 101 with construction of the Percival Creek Bridge.

Cooper Point Road between Harrison Avenue and Black Lake Boulevard was expanded in 1995 to a five lane cross section with medians. Its intersection with Black Lake Boulevard currently is the busiest intersection in Olympia, with an average of over 6,000 vehicles per hour during the evening peak.

Figure 12 – Relocation of Cooper Point Road (1978)
Establishment of The Evergreen State College

Planning for a fourth state-supported college in Washington State began in the mid-1960’s. In 1967 Thurston County was selected as the site of the new campus with its name being The Evergreen State College (TESC). A planning process for the campus master plan began shortly thereafter with site selection and land acquisition beginning in 1968. A site on the Cooper Point Peninsula was selected. It contains 1,040 acres of land with about 3,000 feet of water frontage on Puget Sound’s Eld Inlet. The original campus master plan was adopted with a target enrollment of 12,000 students.

Construction of the basic campus and Evergreen Parkway was complete in 1974. Over the following years student housing and other educational facilities were added. Today about 310 acres of the site is developed with the rest retained in a natural state.

Figure 13 – The Evergreen State College Campus (1974)

In 2005 the student population was approximately 4,600 with about 900 of those living on-campus. The College’s current master plan is to accommodate about 5,000 students. It is expected that this target population will be reached by 2014.
Construction of Evergreen Parkway

Evergreen Parkway was developed as a part of The Evergreen State College campus. The planning and design team developed a list of principal planning conclusions, of which two related to access to the campus. Conclusion #2 called for the construction of Evergreen Parkway and conclusion #3 noted the need for campus entrances to orient towards both US 101 and Olympia.

In 1969, the State Legislature allocated funds for WSDOT to locate and acquire right-of-way for a parkway connection from US 101 to the southern boundary of The Evergreen State College. Land acquisition began in 1969 with the parkway opening in 1974.

Figure 14 - Construction of Evergreen Parkway (1973)

The primary function of Evergreen Parkway was to provide access to the college to and from US 101. Although the parkway was not part of the Washington State highway system it was designed in accordance with WSDOT standards. The recommended plan allowed access to the parkway at two places: US 101 and Mud Bay Road. It did not include an intersection between US 101 and Mud Bay Road because it was never intended to be a highway access point for area residents. The addition of the Evergreen Parkway interchange resulted in five interchanges within a 5.2 mile section of US 101. The interchange at Mud Bay Road was designed as a half diamond with parkway access from the north side of Mud Bay Road.
Thurston County commissioners, the fire district and others requested that a full range of movements be allowed between Mud Bay Road and US 101 at the parkway interchange. However, the added ramps needed to accommodate this would not contribute to the primary function of the parkway – to provide access to the college – and would add materially to the total cost of the project. Notes from the 1971 access hearing noted drawbacks to a full diamond interchange at Mud Bay Road and Evergreen Parkway. Key was the concern that full directional access to the parkway from Mud Bay Road would make the parkway and US 101 attractive to local residents for short local trips instead of using the local street system as intended. It was noted that local roads must accommodate their share of the traffic load as I-5 through Olympia was facing considerable congestion as far back as the early 1970s.

An agreement between WSDOT and Thurston County in 1971 stipulated that Thurston County agreed to the access control as established by the Highway Commission and agreed to maintain the limited access. However, in 1992 the County proposed a project that would make the half diamond interchange at the Evergreen Parkway and Mud Bay Road into a full diamond by adding exit ramps on the south side of Mud Bay Road from US 101. The County position was that this project was needed to support safety and capacity needs of the roadway network and to help provide for future growth.2

The County proposed new on- and off-ramps connecting US 101 with Mud Bay Road in the early 1990s. The new ramps would be offset from the existing ramps in order to avoid bisecting an adjacent wetland. Notes from that time indicate that WSDOT supported the new on- and off-ramps after making some adjustments to the plan, with the stipulation that if an operational problem occurred at the existing ramp terminal due to its offset from the new ramp that Thurston County would relocate WSDOT’s existing ramp terminal to provide better alignment. The additional ramps were added in 1994

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2 Details on the discussion and decision about access to Evergreen Parkway, Mud Bay Road, and US 101 are from archived correspondence and hearing examiner records archived by the Washington State Department of Transportation, Olympic Region.
Development of Evergreen Park

Evergreen Park was once considered as a potential site for Olympia’s regional mall. The mall located elsewhere and today Evergreen Park, a planned development, is the site of a mix of office and high density residential uses. The most significant Evergreen Park office development is the Thurston County Courthouse (Figure 15) although there are many other offices including a large concentration of local and state government activities. Evergreen Park includes one of the largest concentrations of employment in the Thurston region. The most significant commercial development is the Red Lion Hotel.

Figure 15 – Thurston County Courthouse (2000)

The Thurston County Courthouse relocated here in 1978, moving from its former site on Capitol Way. It includes most county administrative offices and the county jail. There are almost 900 County employees in this and other leased offices nearby. Because the courthouse is such a strong presence this area is commonly referred to as “Courthouse Hill” more so than Evergreen Park.

The Red Lion Hotel is the most recent name for the large and secluded hotel in this area. Previously known as the Greenwood Inn and the Westwater Inn, among other names, the hotel was the first commercial establishment in Evergreen Park. It was constructed in 1969.

Evergreen Park is located on a flat bench above Capitol Lake. It has a characteristic suburban road pattern including a looped ring road called Evergreen Park Drive. Evergreen Park is an access point to other parts of the community. It connects to downtown Olympia via Lakeridge Drive and Deschutes Parkway. It also connects Evergreen Park to the rest of West Olympia via Cooper Point Road.
Development of Capital Mall

Development of West Olympia’s Capital Mall began in the early 1970’s. At that time, the City of Olympia authorized a regional mall on one of two sites in West Olympia. These sites were Evergreen Park and the current mall site between Cooper Point Road and Black Lake Boulevard. Once the present Capital Mall site obtained commitments from two anchor tenants willing to relocate their businesses from downtown Olympia, construction was authorized.

Construction of the Capital Mall began in 1977 with the first stores opened in the summer of 1978. Construction of the mall included changes to the surrounding road system. Prior to construction of the mall Cooper Point Road bisected the mall site to intersect with Black Lake Boulevard at 9th Ave. As described elsewhere, Cooper Point Road was relocated to its current alignment as a part of the mall’s construction.

The main mall is about 600,000 square feet in size and has four anchor stores and four restaurant pads. Original anchor tenants Macy’s (formerly the Bon Marche) and JC Penney still remain. In 2000 the mall was purchased by the Westfield Corporation and the name was changed to “Westfield Capital Mall” although locally it is still referred to simply as Capital Mall. An additional 13.4 acre parcel was added north of the mall in 2006. Called “The Promenade,” it added an additional 145,000 square feet and included a 50,000 square foot multiplex cinema which opened in 2007.

Figure 16 - Westfield Capital Mall and Surrounding Neighborhoods (2005)
Relocation of South Puget Sound Community College

South Puget Sound Community College is located south of US 101 just off the Crosby Boulevard / Cooper Point Road / Auto Mall Drive interchange. It is technically within the Olympia city limits although many people in the community think of it as part of Tumwater.

The college relocated from downtown Olympia to its present campus in 1976. Originally named Olympia Vocational Technical Institute, the college was renamed in 1976 to Olympia Technical Community College, and again in 1984 to its present name. The site has expanded during that time and includes 101 acres today. The most recent addition was the Kenneth J. Minnaert Center for the Arts which opened in 2006 and houses educational facilities as well as a start of the art performance center and exhibition hall. SPSCC currently serves almost 6,000 students at its main campus with over 750 full and part time employees.

South Puget Sound Community College can be accessed from Mottman Road, Crosby Boulevard, and R W Johnson Road. While this was intended to minimize impacts on US 101 its close proximity to the Crosby Boulevard interchange creates special “peak” demands before and after popular morning and afternoon class periods.

Figure 17 - South Puget Sound Community College (2000)
Development of Olympia Auto Mall

The Auto Mall site is located north of US 101 between the Crosby Boulevard/Cooper Point Road and Black Lake Boulevard interchanges. The property was annexed to Olympia in the early 1980’s. Two regional transportation improvements facilitated its construction. First was construction of the Percival Creek Bridge in 1986. Second was the extension of Cooper Point Road (now called Auto Mall Drive in this vicinity) with Evergreen Park Drive and the Decatur Street Interchange (now called Crosby Boulevard/Cooper Point Road Interchange) to US 101. The Percival Creek Bridge, the Decatur Street interchange, and the auto mall plat were completed in the mid-1980s and are described elsewhere in this report.

Originally called the “Capital Auto Mall” the “Olympia Auto Mall” is home to twelve auto dealerships. Although each property owner owns and develops their own site, the dealers work together for marketing and mutual support.

While the mainstay of the customer base is in Thurston County and accounts for about two-thirds of all business, the Auto Mall draws a significant amount of business from south Pierce, Grays Harbor, Lewis and Mason counties.

The first dealership, Capitol Coachman, opened in 1984. Dealerships continued to relocate to the West Olympia location from downtown Olympia and by 1988, most had done so. The employee base has grown from 380 full time employees in 1992 to over 675 employees in 2006. Although auto, boat and motorcycle dealerships are the primary land use on the 73 acre site, about 12 acres have been developed into offices.

Figure 18 - Olympia Auto Mall (1990)
Construction of the Percival Creek Bridge

The Percival Creek Bridge is an example of how a transportation facility can connect previously separate and isolated parts of the community. Prior to the bridge, the Decatur Street overpass (Figure 19) connected Evergreen Park with Tumwater Hill. Cooper Point Road did not yet extend this far south. Access to and from US 101 was provided with slip ramps.

Approval for the bridge occurred in 1983 and provided the impetus for WSDOT to develop a diamond interchange on US 101 at what was then the Decatur Street overpass. Approval of the bridge occurred in conjunction with approval of the new US 101 interchange, the auto mall plat, and extension of Cooper Point Road. Cooper Point Road was to connect to the new interchange via the new Percival Creek Bridge and Decatur Street was to connect to the auto mall via Caton Way. Construction of the bridge proceeded shortly thereafter (Figure 20), funded in part by a bond issued by the City.

The Percival Creek Bridge opened in May 1986. It provided a critical link between Evergreen Park and Tumwater Hill with the newly emerging commercial center in West Olympia. The new interchange at US 101 was also completed in 1986.
Development of Capital Medical Center

Capital Medical Center is a 119-bed hospital with one general family practice clinic. It serves Thurston County as well as Grays Harbor, Mason, and other southwest Washington counties.

The hospital was opened in 1985 as the Black Hills Community Hospital. In 1991 the name was changed to Capital Medical Center. In 2007 it employed 470 staff and served 238 physicians.

Figure 21 - Capital Medical Center (2000)
History of the Gateway Intersections

Built and environmental constraints helped define the WOAS study area. Within that study area there are three logical “points of entry” from the local network. For purposes of this report they’re referred to as “Gateway Intersections” since most access to and from the majority of the study area must go through one of these intersections:

- Harrison Avenue at 4th Avenue
- Cooper Point Road at Black Lake Boulevard
- Evergreen Parkway at Mud Bay Road (Harrison Avenue)

This section provides a brief historical context for each Gateway Intersection and its connection to the West Olympia transportation system.

Harrison Avenue at 4th Avenue

Development of “West Olympia” began in earnest with construction of the first bridge to cross Budd Inlet in 1869. While this original 4th Avenue bridge increased access between the westside and downtown, significant development did not take place until after 1880 when the steep, muddy track up Harrison Hill was re-graded into a passable road. Early development occurred near the west end of the bridge. St. Peter’s Hospital was constructed in 1924 at the top of the 4th Avenue hill.

After construction of the 4th Avenue bridge in 1921, Olympic Avenue was constructed to lessen the grade by connecting with Harrison Avenue. This made Harrison Avenue - Mud Bay Road the major east-west arterial west of Budd Inlet. In 1923 the Harrison Avenue - Mud Bay Road corridor was designated as Primary State Highway-9 Olympia to Port Angeles. This route was called the “Olympic Highway” and was designated as part of US 101 in 1970.

"The street railway system was built in 1890. The rolling stock consisted of two horse-cars, and the line extended from Puget Street west to Main Street and south to Maple Park. In 1892, the franchise and equipment were sold to the Olympia Light & Power Company and an electric line was projected.

A March 4, 1892 newspaper boasted ‘...The car, as soon as the current was turned on, moved like a thing of life, smoothly and without friction, and responded steadily to the will of its master as if endowed with reason.’

The electric line was extended to the West Side and to Tumwater on the south, with five cars in operation — three closed and two open. They were advertised as running to Tumwater every hour and giving seven-minute service within the city.”

Excerpted from So Fair A Dwelling Place by Gordon Newell.

From the early 1890s until 1933, trolleys ran along Harrison Avenue. They traveled west up the hill, turned south on Percival Street, then went around the block on 5th Avenue before turning north on Rogers Street and going all the way to the Westside Grocery at Bowman Avenue. This inspired the building of houses away from downtown Olympia, in close proximity to the trolley line. The rise of the personal automobile in the 1920s and 1930s signaled the end of city streetcars and spurred a new wave of development further west.
Figures 22, 23, and 24 provide insights into the change in development patterns at the intersection of Harrison Avenue and 4th Avenue over the years. All are aerial views looking west over the 4th Avenue bridge to the intersection where 4th Avenue continues straight up the hill and Harrison Avenue veers to the right before heading up the hill.

The principal link between downtown Olympia and Harrison Avenue was eliminated unexpectedly in 2001. The 4th Avenue Bridge sustained structural damage in the February 2001 Nisqually earthquake and was immediately closed. This, coupled with the loss of Deschutes Parkway during the same earthquake, strained the one remaining link between westside and downtown (5th Avenue bridge) and disrupted the entire west Olympia transportation system for over two years until both the bridge and parkway could be replaced. The 4th Avenue bridge was replaced in 2003 as part of what was called the “Gateway Corridor” project. This included the construction of two modern roundabouts at the intersections of 4th Avenue at Olympic Way, and at Harrison Avenue at Olympic Way at West Bay Drive (Figure 24).
Cooper Point Road at Black Lake Boulevard

For many years Division Street provided West Olympia’s only access north of Harrison Avenue to the Cooper Point peninsula. Cooper Point Road was constructed in the early 1960’s. In 1962 an extension to Cooper Point Road was made south of 28th Avenue NW (near the Olympia Country Club) to connect with Black Lake Boulevard. The original intersection at 9th Avenue SW can be seen in Figure 25, which dates from 1968.

The intersection of Cooper Point Road and Black Lake Boulevard was moved south to its current location, approximately ¼ mile north of US 101, in 1973-74. Figure 26 shows the close proximity of the Cooper Point Road - Black Lake Boulevard intersection to the US 101 interchange. The only development around the US 101 interchange at that time was a single gas station in the southwest quadrant. This was later removed during the widening of the US 101 - Black Lake Boulevard interchange in the mid-1990s.
Figure 25 - Intersection of Black Lake Boulevard and Cooper Point Road at 9th Avenue (1968)

Figure 26 - Intersection of Cooper Point Road and Black Lake Boulevard (1978)

Note: Looking northeast. Black Lake / Cooper Point intersection is above the US 101 overpass.
Evergreen Parkway at Mud Bay Road

Mud Bay Road/Harrison Avenue was the primary east-west corridor within the WOAS study area until the opening of US 101 in 1958. Original plans for US 101 did not include a provision for local access at this location since they predated plans for a college. Evergreen Parkway was included as an element of The Evergreen State College development plan. Access to and from US 101 was provided by a half-diamond interchange which opened in 1974. Figure 27 is a construction photo of the Parkway interchange dating from 1973.

While the new interchange provided access between the Parkway and US 101, no direct access from Mud Bay Road to US 101 was provided. Over time pressure grew to provide direct access between Mud Bay Road and US 101 by expanding the original half-diamond interchange to a full diamond. Increasing safety concerns arose due to unofficial short-cuts drivers created to access US 101 from Mud Bay Road via illegal U-turns. New on- and off-ramps were approved in 1993 although they were offset from the original ramps somewhat.

Figure 27 - Construction of the Evergreen Parkway Interchange at US 101 (1973)
This is one of four background reports for the West Olympia Access Study:

Report #1 – Significant Transportation and Land Use Events
Report #2 – Transportation Characteristics
Report #3 – Land Use and Environment Characteristics
Report #4 – Social and Economic Characteristics

Additional information on the study area can be found in the report, *Synopsis of Previous Plans and Studies Associated with the Study Area*.

These reports and maps were prepared for the City of Olympia and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) by Thurston Regional Planning Council with the generous assistance of staff from the Olympia, WSDOT and various stakeholders in the West Olympia Access Study.

Information on the West Olympia Access Study can be found on-line at

[www.wsdot.wa.gov](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov)
and
[www.trpc.org/westolympia](http://www.trpc.org/westolympia)

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