

# West Olympia Access

## Project Comments Summary

On June 24, 2015, the City of Olympia hosted an Open House to present information on the US 101/West Olympia Access Project and to obtain feedback from the public. Another purpose of the Open House was to use public input to begin scoping the environmental issues related to this project for the review we will be conducting under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The evening kicked off with a PowerPoint presentation on this project which included an overview of the problem to be addressed and the analysis which led to the preferred alternative. Everyone who attended the Open House was given a combined questionnaire and comment form to fill out. Going forward, we will use the responses we received to focus our efforts on areas that we know are of concern to neighbors of this project and other stakeholders.

The June 24 Open House had approximately 50 people in attendance. In addition, we have received comments through the project website and via e-mails sent directly to project staff.

Following is a summary of all the comments we have received to date:

### Environmental Issues and Concerns

#### Noise

Based on the number of commenters who have listed this issue, noise is the primary concern of nearby residents. Several residents of the Lakemoor subdivision have properties that are near Highway 101, and there is a concern that the on-ramp and additional lane that is proposed for Kaiser Road will add noise from additional traffic. Five commenters stated they would like to see a “cement noise barrier,” or a “noise wall,” to mitigate the sound impacts. One commenter stated that he/she already does not use the backyard of his/her property because the existing noise levels from Highway 101 are already so loud they have to “shout to be heard.”

#### Air Pollution

Several commenters have expressed concerns about the existing traffic congestion levels and how stalled traffic results in air pollution from burning fossil fuels.

A “vigorous vegetative buffer” between the project and surrounding areas will improve air quality.

#### Stormwater Drainage/Flooding

Several commenters expressed concerns about the potential of the project to increase stormwater runoff in the Ken Lake Basin. Concerns regarding the project’s impact to water levels within the lake have also been expressed. One person noted that the area by the Kaiser Road/HW 101 overpass has flooded in the past, so any future work in that area should consider this.

### Water Quality

Concerns regarding both the water quality and quantity of Ken Lake have been expressed. Several commenters noted that stormwater runoff associated with the project could contain pollutants that would adversely affect Ken Lake. One commenter also noted that, because this corridor conveys a high volume of truck traffic, a spill prevention plan should be developed to contain any fuel or hazardous chemicals spills that could occur in the event of an accident.

### Plants and Animals

Some commenters expressed concerns that the project could impact or displace wildlife. In particular, a commenter stated that she has seen amphibians crossing Kaiser Road during fall and spring migrations, and also requests that potential impacts to the Oregon Spotted Frog be evaluated.

A commenter noted that there are “large wetland complexes that adjoin and are crossed by Kaiser Road.”

## Traffic-related Concerns

### Proposed “Through Lane” across Black Lake Boulevard

Some commenters expressed concern that the through lane will result in increased wait times and “traffic headaches” for drivers heading north on Black Lake Boulevard. One commenter believes that without a bridge there will be longer stopping times for “traffic going west on the south 101 off-ramp.” One commenter noted that the through lane will provide for more green lights for the crossing of Black Lake Boulevard, but “will create more reds on Black Lake Blvd.”

### Road Improvements

Some commenters would like to see road improvements on Kaiser Road and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It was noted that 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue is “good to past the hospital,” but then gets narrow. Two commenters noted that Kaiser Road is a “narrow road” and would like to see plans for improvements to handle additional traffic. One commenter stated that bike lanes should be developed on both sides of Kaiser Road.

### Bike and Pedestrian Use

The intersection is not friendly to pedestrians and bicycles.

### Miscellaneous

Construction of the on-ramp would increase use of Kaiser Road between 101 and Evergreen Parkway.

## Safety

Two commenters stated that the intersection of Yauger Way and Capital Mall Drive is dangerous, with high speed traffic and lots of car accidents. One commenter stated that this intersection needs a traffic light “or revision.” One commenter expressed a concern for crosswalk lights and traffic lights for the project as a whole.

One commenter stated that a traffic light needs to be installed to regulate traffic exiting the Trader Joes complex onto Cooper Point Road. Also, turning right onto Black Lake Boulevard get a “free right turn,” and this is a safety issue for drivers making the left turn from the other direction – the commenter has experienced several close calls when turning left on green from people continuing to make the free right turn.

One commenter stated that the on-ramp to Evergreen Parkway should be eliminated because it is “difficult and hazardous.” The commenter stated “...there would need to be a stoplight at the intersection of Mud Bay Road and Overhulse to allow left turns from Overhulse to access the new Kaiser Road on-ramp.”

## Design

The project should be designed to make this interchange a gateway to West Olympia by integrating attractive landscaping, public art in the pedestrian islands, and attractive hardscaping, for example.

Unlike I-5, HW 101 lacks any attractive landscaping: “Let’s make it look inviting like the I-5 corridor, minus the ivy, and make it more aesthetically pleasing than Scotch broom and let’s maintain it.”

Decatur should be opened to Cooper Point (2 commenters).

The left turn onto Black Lake Boulevard from Cooper Point is too short – usually only long enough for 4 vehicles to get through.

The proposal could be improved if the vegetative buffer between HW 101 and Ken Lake was increased rather than decreased. Would it be possible to add an additional lane in the “green strip” that currently separates the lanes rather than build a new lane adjacent to Ken Lake?

Consider adding a turn lane onto Yauger Way.

Add an extra off-ramp lane to serve southbound Black Lake without interference from northbound traffic.

Lengthen queuing lanes on the Black Lake off-ramp (westbound) to allow for the volume of traffic both north/south on Black Lake.

Consider an eastbound on-ramp from Yauger back to Highway 101.

Can the through lane option be converted to a bridge at a later date?

A functional and well-maintained barrier should be included between this corridor and private property to prevent crime and trespass.

## Other Comments

The new preferred alternative is a very good solution maximizing current resources and infrastructure and is important to the economic and environmental viability of West Olympia.

Don't like the preferred alternative because it won't solve the congestion and Black Lake Boulevard and Highway 101.

Not supportive of the project if it is intended to fuel additional growth in West Olympia.

Supportive of transportation solutions that will create economic opportunities on the West side.

Public transportation is the best solution to congestion.

Concerned about the type of development the Kaiser interchange will service – have heard that zoning will be changed to allow big box stores.

The project isn't necessary.

How will the "water rights of Ken Lake" be protected?

Need to follow existing environmental regulations.

Consider purchasing additional right-of-way on the north side of the corridor for future use – if the north side of the corridor develops up to the highway there will be limited opportunities to add future lanes without right-of-way.