



## **Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee – 23 April 2008 Briefing**

**Olympia and WSDOT are partnering on a study to evaluate future mobility needs for Olympia's west side.**

- *Growing traffic congestion on local and state facilities raise concerns about how to best accommodate future growth while maintaining safe and acceptable mobility*
- *Study will evaluate both local and state systems to determine future access and circulation needs*
- *There is no predetermined outcome that this study is trying to support*
- *Study will result in package of strategies and corresponding responsibilities to meet future mobility needs on Olympia's west side*

**Olympia's west side is a regionally significant commercial and medical hub, and home to a growing population base.**

- *Currently home to 24,000 people and 17,000 jobs*
- *Projected to increase to 36,000 people and 25,000 jobs by 2030*
- *West Olympia accounts for 49% of Olympia's retail sales tax*
- *Medical and retail businesses serve residents throughout Olympia and Thurston County, as well as residents from Mason, Grays Harbor, and Lewis Counties*
- *Transportation and land use must work together to maintain appropriate levels of mobility and safety for all modes of transport, including cars and trucks, transit, bikes, and pedestrians.*

**The current transportation system cannot meet current and future mobility needs of Olympia's west side.**

- *The state and local transportation networks are two parts of a single, integrated transportation system that must work together and balance mobility and access needs.*
- *Lack of transportation system connectivity impedes access and traffic circulation on the west side and overburdens existing facilities.*
- *Optimizing the performance of the existing transportation system and making it as efficient as possible is a local and state priority.*

**There are constraints on the study assumptions and outcomes.**

- *Land use is based on adopted land use plans. Alternative land use scenarios will not be considered.*
- *The study does not presume that modification of access to the state highway system is warranted.*
- *The study will adhere to design and spacing constraints that govern highway and interchange access.*

**Summary of Phase 1 Public Comments  
Regarding Bike / Pedestrian Travel  
West Olympia Access Study**

*Prepared for the April 23, 2008 briefing to  
Olympia's Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee*

Many comments about bicycle and pedestrian travel were generated by the community during Phase 1 discussions for the West Olympia Access Study. Detailed comments generated during preliminary interviews, Phase 1 workshops, and via email are attached.

A review of comments reveals some recurring themes.

- **Walk-ability, in general**

Many comments were received regarding the importance of sidewalks and the need to encourage more people to drive less by providing sidewalks. The following comments are indicative of many that were received:

*"Consider importance of a good sidewalk network to promote walkability."*

*"Would like to be able to walk more."*

*"Westside not pedestrian friendly."*

- **Bike-ability, in general**

As with walking, many comments were in favor of improving the bike-ability of the westside without providing specific locations needing improvement. The following are representative of those comments:

*"Lack of bike lanes in general is a problem."*

*"Separated bike lanes on major streets would be helpful."*

*"Bicycle friendlier streets continue out further. Connect the bicycle network inside and outside of City."*

While general support for improving biking and walking facilities was widespread, comments were also received that cautioned against too much priority for non-motorized facilities.

*"Accommodate bikes and pedestrians where they want to and will go, not where they won't go. Just not cost efficient to have for no purpose if not used."*

*"If you can relieve the heavy auto traffic you automatically provide easier access – more road space – for buses, bicyclists, pedestrians. So do not highlight the latter first. Take care of the autos first. There is no time here for political correctness! No rose-colored glasses, please. Take care of the autos first."*

- **Crossing arterials**

The ability to cross arterials was mentioned several times. Harrison Avenue, Black Lake Boulevard, and Cooper Point Road were all cited multiple times as being difficult to cross.

- Mid-block crossings

- Comments were received regarding the need for flashing crosswalks at key mid-block locations. Central Park Apartments on Cooper Point Road (large transit-dependent population) and Harrison Avenue in vicinity of Garfield Elementary were specifically noted.
- Major intersections
  - Lack of sufficient crossing time was cited as a problem at major intersections. Harrison Avenue at Division and Black Lake at Cooper Point were noted more than once.
    - It was also noted that sometimes crossing signals are too long and interfere with efficient arterial movement. The Cooper Point Road / Evergreen Park intersection was cited as a specific problem.
  - Lack of accessibility for people with disabilities was also cited as a problem at intersection crosswalks. Audible signals and better accessibility to the crosswalk button for people in wheelchairs were noted as deficiencies.
- “Right on red” conflicts
  - Lack of driver awareness when turning “right on red” was identified by several people as a problem. Black Lake / Cooper Point intersection and the Top Foods driveway were cited as specific problems.

- **Trails**

Trails were specifically noted as a means of increasing bicycle and pedestrian access. General statements such as the following were common:

*“Improve trail network so people have the option to leave their cars at home.”*

By far the most frequent reference to a specific trail alignment was the Percival Creek canyon.

*“Percival Canyon would make a great bike route. Provide access to downtown and SPSCC.”*

*“Trails are needed to provide more access to the downtown. For example, Percival / Vine Avenue area (ravine).”*

- **Specific bike**

In addition to general comments about the need for bike facilities comments were received about specific problem locations. Several of those were mentioned repeatedly.

- Disappearing bike lanes between Percival Creek Bridge and Caton Way

*“Cooper Point Road bike lane disappears 15 feet too soon in the vicinity of the Auto Mall just before Caton Way. Forces bicyclist into road. No easy way to get on the sidewalk there.”*

- Bike lanes on Harrison Avenue, Cooper Point, Black Lake Boulevard

*“No bike lanes, especially uphill, on Black Lake Boulevard. Using road or sidewalk not good options.”*

- Black Lake / Cooper Point intersection unsafe for cyclists

*"I bought a house on NW side to be in walking distance to downtown. I bike a lot too. The only big problem is at Cooper Point / Black Lake / 101."*

- Access to and from the colleges, especially South Puget Sound Community College, was cited several times as a problem for cyclists.
- **Specific pedestrian**  
Specific locations and ideas were received regarding pedestrian facilities and connections, too.

*"Formalize path from apartments behind IHOP / Walgreens to allow pedestrian connection to these destinations."*

As with bike facilities, pedestrian-oriented comments were received about specific locations. Several comments were received about a few locations, including Top Foods, South Puget Sound Community College, and Capital Mall. The Capital Mall parking lots in general and new Promenade specifically were mentioned by several people as not being conducive to walking between stores, or between the adjacent neighborhoods and the Mall.

### **How will these comments be factored into the West Olympia Access Study (WOAS) preferred alternative?**

The study's scenario development and evaluation processes and design requirements for a preferred alternative are informed by the City's commitment to a complete and integrated multi-modal transportation system. With the possible exception of significant new alignments though, comments specific to bicycle and pedestrian needs will be addressed through current street standards and funding programs. The scale of the study itself precludes most opportunities to pursue project-specific or design-specific issues. The City may identify one or more issues for follow-up upon conclusion of the WOAS study.

### **How do these comments compare to the rest of the comments received during Phase 1?**

There appears to be a high awareness and appreciation of the need for safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access among a wide cross-section of people who participated during Phase 1 of the study. The study team did not frame issues in a way that encouraged people to choose or rank non-motorized facilities in priority over motorized facilities – that is not the purpose of the study. However, the need for non-motorized transportation to be a part of any long-range strategy surfaced repeatedly during small group discussions, stakeholder interviews, and in email comments submitted directly to the project team.

A compilation of all comments received during the Phase 1 workshops is available on line at [www.trpc.org/westolympia](http://www.trpc.org/westolympia). There you can also see comments sorted by discussion group – sometimes this can provide valuable context by seeing the other comments generated in association with those specific to bike or pedestrian issues. A synthesis of stakeholder interviews is not on-line due to its size but it is available by request ([westolympia@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:westolympia@wsdot.wa.gov)).

## Public Comments Specific to Bike or Pedestrian Travel

### West Olympia Access Study – Phase 1 Outreach

Throughout community discussions during Phase 1 of the West Olympia Access Study, comments specific to bicycle and pedestrian travel were received. These comments have not been consolidated to remove duplicate ideas or issues. Comments include general statements about cycling or walking as well as location-specific or problem-specific suggestions.

- Only allow bike, pedestrians, and transit service on Decatur if it opens. No private vehicles.
- Need to improve Percival Canyon Trail so people can walk to West Olympia from Capitol Lake area.
- Improve trail network so people have the option to leave their cars at home.
- We need more sidewalks if you want us to use transit or walk to shopping. We don't currently feel safe walking to shopping on roads that are missing sidewalks.
- We need flashing crosswalks along major arterials
- IF they are opened – open Decatur and 16<sup>th</sup> together and they would need sidewalks.
- Need improved pedestrian/ bicycle access throughout the study area. Need safer places for bikes, bike lanes, dedicated bike corridor, safe places for pedestrians.
- Pedestrian safety on 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a concern today. How walkable will areas like this be in the future?
- Preserve the ability to walk to work (in downtown Olympia) from the West Olympia neighborhood – keep it that way.
- Need bike lane/path for Harrison to downtown.
- There are no bike lanes along Cooper Point Road (in the area of the Auto Mall). Disconnected bike facilities hurt access to SPSCC.
- Mud puddles on Black Lake Boulevard affect use of sidewalks during heavy rains
- Emphasis on walking, biking to alleviate traffic problem.
- Need more sidewalks.
- Sidewalks. Consider importance of a good sidewalk network to promote walkability.
- Concern about lack of walkability in Mall area. Large parking lots are not safe for walkers.
- The new design requirements that require buildings to face the street with parking in the rear impedes walkability (example new addition to Capital Mall). That new strip is not walkable. You still have to cross a large parking area on foot to get to some of the businesses.
- There aren't enough bike paths, the network is not finished.
- Division and Harrison/Cooper Point/ on all big streets, bikes must be on sidewalk as there are no bike lanes.
- Lack of bikes lanes in general is a problem
- Trail near Mud Bay Rd at overpass is not connected North and South.
- I am concerned about Decatur. I like to walk to work. We need sidewalks and bike lanes.
- Don't waste space on bike lanes where no one uses them; e.g. on Black Lake Blvd. at Highway 101, where it is dangerous anyway.
- Bike lanes and sidewalks are needed in areas like Black Lake Boulevard at Highway 101, especially south of that interchange.
- We need the traffic lights to allow more time to cross at intersections in West Olympia – especially on Harrison. Currently, it is difficult to make it all the way across the intersections within the time allotted.
- Add more crosswalks to make it easier for children to get to Garfield.
- Drivers don't see walkers at intersections. They often fail to yield to pedestrians on right.
- At Cooper Point and Black Lake, vehicles making a right turn on red must wait for pedestrians.
- At Top Foods, it is difficult to cross the street as a pedestrian because of vehicles turning right on red.
- Cooper Point and Black Lake is an unsafe intersection for bicycles.
- Division and Harrison – checking for pedestrians – same issues about waiting for pedestrians, but less because there is a turn arrow.
- Deschutes is underutilized – but great for biking and walking.
- Black Lake corridor has too few crossings for pedestrians. Also Cooper Point at Central Park Apartments. Could narrow lanes at crosswalks.
- Pedestrian crossing needs “tweeter” sound for blind people.
- Improve Percival Bridge on Cooper Point to accommodate bikes and pedestrians.
- Need pedestrian access to Decatur Westside Park.
- Need continuous bike lanes across 101 at Cooper Point.

- Need a bike route/trail to run parallel along Highway 101
- 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue has no sidewalks. Only if Decatur Street is reopened, 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the surrounding area streets will need stop signs and sidewalks.
- Establish a walking trail from the Mottman industrial area to Capital Lake along the railroad.
- Need sidewalks both sides of Decatur.
- Could put bike route up Percival Canyon, or light rail to serve Lacey-Olympia-Tumwater, or shared use with both.
- Percival Canyon would make a great bike route. Provide access to downtown and SPSCC.
- Need to think about bike lanes and pedestrian facilities. Major problem to get pedestrians and bikes to the college (SPSCC) and Top Foods.
- The access to and from Top Foods is a serious issue and needs to be re-visited. It must impact their business. The sidewalk ends right at the street so people can't walk there.
- It is very dangerous to walk to the post office and grocery store.
- Sidewalks are really important.
- There is not enough bike and pedestrian access to SPSCC and Capital Mall from Westside neighborhoods. Other modes of transportation could relieve car traffic issues.
- Make West Olympia more pedestrian friendly. Currently not good walking conditions through the mall parking lot. It's easier for West Olympia residents to walk downtown to shop than to the west side.
- Because lots of people are biking and walking, we need more sidewalks, especially on 8<sup>th</sup> – there is so much speeding on 8<sup>th</sup> – it's like a freeway.
- There should be more focus on pedestrian facilities – including trails – rather than on cars.
- Trails are needed to provide more access to the downtown. For example: Percival/Vine Avenue area (Ravine).
- Encourage biking/walking/trails.
- Trails need to be maintained at same level of other facilities
- Connections between Capital Mall and other commercial centers are either non-existent or not pedestrian friendly – disappointed that the new construction on the north side of the mall did not improve pedestrian mobility/access between the core mall and the promenade – one needs to get in their car to drive across the parking lot to reach their other destination safely – this increases vehicle traffic around the mall.
- Need more greenways (trails) with landscaping
- 5-lane corridors not pedestrian friendly.
- Many accidents at skateboard park crossing. Not everyone stops for pedestrians.
- Not pedestrian friendly to walk on arterials.
- But it's not really dangerous.
- Need safer way to walk through 101 interchange, and cross Cooper Point Road.
- Hard to get to Ken Lake by bike. Have to work hard to avoid getting run over.
- Pedestrian light at Cooper Point and Evergreen Park Drive is long.
- Pedestrian crossing at Black Lake and Cooper Point intersection is not long enough. Participant witnessed a little old lady trying to cross at this intersection. The little old lady was walking so slow that when the pedestrian light changed, she was stranded out in the middle of traffic with cars zooming around her. Thankfully, a good Samaritan ran out into the intersection and guided her to safety.
- Black Lake Boulevard and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave W. by the Dept. Of Licensing building pedestrian crossing isn't safe. The cross walk is close to a blind corner and motorist tend to travel over the posted 25 mph
- No convenient way to walk. Perhaps walk on Percival Canyon along railroad. Problem with homeless/sex offenders living in surrounding wooded areas.
- Concern about foot traffic accidents. Lots of pedestrians from east of Black Lake Blvd crossing Black Lake Blvd. Need overhead foot bridges. Dark clothing makes pedestrians not visible at night. No pedestrian access from Capital Mall Blvd to Cooper Point or Black Lake.
- No bike lanes, especially uphill, on Black Lake Blvd. Using road or sidewalk not good options.
- Cooper Point Rd bike lane disappears 15 feet too soon in the vicinity of the Auto Mall just before Caton Way. Forces bicyclist into road. No easy way to get on the sidewalk there.
- Live in Ken Lake and want to walk to Top Food – smelly – yucky, too much cement – so feel have to drive.
- Westside not pedestrian friendly.
- No bike trails.
- Pedestrian access – short trips impossible – because unpleasant 101 and Black Lake – also difficult

to ride a bike there.

- Would like to be able to walk more.
- Concern about street connection by Ken Lake as there are no sidewalks, same with Decatur
- If having more lanes – need to establish other routes for bike/pedestrians – other than main through fares (neighborhood street).
- Complaint at 9<sup>th</sup> – improvements- sidewalk only on one side – not on bus stop side – bike lanes are on both sides.
- Bike lanes – on major roads – speed limit is 35 – but commonly going faster – having lanes for bikes make it safer for both bikes and cars.
- Widen sidewalks.
- Bicycle friendlier streets continue out further. Connect the bicycle network inside and outside of City.
- I bought a house on NW side to be in walking distance to downtown. I bike a lot too. The only big problem is at Cooper Point/Black Lake/101. Can take Exit 103 to Deschutes Parkway.
- Dedicated non-arterial bike lanes would be useful (ex. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, east and west; Decatur Street, north and south).
- No facility (except shoulder of road or at some intersections (Kaiser and Mud Bay) for pedestrians on Cooper Point Road north of Harrison and on Mud Bay west of Yauger.
- Unless you solve the problem of traffic flow, it will never be safe for cyclists – you should probably put them on a designated lane on a side street.
- No one walks on Harrison – put sidewalk only on one side.
- New strategies needed for ensuring pedestrian safety at high volume intersections (4 way stop lights – pedestrian bridges, etc.)
- Separate corridors for bikes/pedestrians, also short-cuts for bikes/pedestrians to avoid high traffic areas.
- Provide sidewalks and dedicated bike lanes without taking away from driving lanes.
- Sidewalks are needed to increase pedestrian safety and the feeling of safety.
- Cars (and large trucks) don't always respect bike lanes – and they are frequently interrupted by right turns for cars. Physically separate bike lanes and complete sidewalks.
- Bike lanes at a minimum are critical to safety of bicycles and provide necessary alternative.
- Make bicycle commuters obey vehicle traffic laws when using vehicle lanes. (stop sign running).
- More pedestrian crossing. Some foot bridges.
- Narrow lanes of vehicle travel and wide sidewalks calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety.
- There is an illusion of access, but bike lanes disappear.
- We need to not just accommodate, but also promote and encourage alternate forms of transportation in how we plan and design roads.
- Priorities should be stated in this order here and throughout the study: [Streets need to accommodate] pedestrians, bikes, buses, cars and trucks.
- Make streets wide enough to accommodate traffic and bikes.
- Accessibility for wheel chairs, etc. not just the lip service that is paid to it now. 1) poor accessibility to crosswalk light controls, 2) new yellow round bump ramps worse than old concrete ones with grill pressed in it for texture.
- Change lanes for bikes so that they ride facing traffic. This will do the following: 1) bike and car will be past each other in moments, 2) bike will see oncoming car and know if the driver is paying attention to the roadway. People are going to drive – make it easy for them.
- Provide sidewalks for pedestrians – don't expect them to use the streets!
- Separated bike lanes on major streets would be helpful.
- [...accommodate...bikes and pedestrians] where they want to go and will go, not where they won't go. Just not cost efficient to have for no purpose if not used.
- Unless the bike plan is comprehensive, it doesn't work – need a network.
- Need to make sure it is safe for pedestrians especially crossing.
- Very important. Connectivity of bike lanes is a problem. There are a lot of bike lanes, but they don't connect well at all. Bike lanes exist, and then disappear just before a major hazard. Gone when they are needed most!
- Please do not leave pedestrians or cyclist out of the equation. New trails for both, especially if separated from streets would encourage lower vehicle traffic.
- Very important – as the area expands with more housing and business it is essential that we emphasize alternative modes of transportation. Safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists can make an impact in quality of the area over all environmentally, and in general quality of life on the west side.

- Pedestrian sidewalks needed more than bicycles lanes (example-9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW between Decatur and Black Lake Boulevard).
- Preserve Ralph Monroe's pedestrian/bike corridor through McLane Elementary up Evergreen Parkway.
- Cars make for isolated people. Let's support bike paths and people paths so people connect more, not less.
- I'd love to see a safe bike/pedestrian trail along Percival Creek, with side paths to SPSCC, Cooper Point Road
- Connectivity of pedestrian and bike routes. Major auto traffic often isolates areas.
- Pedestrian crossing improvements/ideas
  - At Rogers and Harrison (important because of access to Food Co-Op and Harrison Street intersections east of Division)
  - Harrison – most of its length
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Ave @ Fern Street
  - Evergreen Park Drive near subsidized housing and condos
  - Capital Mall Dr. at Courtside Apartments (senior housing in the area and seniors need to get to Capital Medical Center area for services or volunteer activities)
  - Assure enough crossing time at signals (consider elderly)
- Bike trail additions
  - Parallel to US 101 to Urban Growth Boundary
  - Deschutes Parkway to SW Neighborhood (up Percival canyon)
- Do bicycle/pedestrian education
- Roundabout education for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Formalize path from apartments behind IHOP/Walgreens to allow pedestrian connection to these destinations
- Make bike friendly improvements to encourage biking – add bike routes to and from SPSCC
- Add requirements that improve pedestrian/bike access to the front of stores
- Safe bike access important for mobility of Westside homeless population
- Add flashing yellow lights at Conger crosswalks
- Complete sidewalks on Conger between Cooper Pt. and Division
- Add pedestrian crossing at Cooper Pt. Rd. and 12<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- Footbridge over ravine at Farwell to improve access in neighborhoods north and east of Division
- Bike and pedestrian networks that encourage biking and walking to TESC
- Please prioritize bikes, transit and pedestrians in your re-design of the Cooper Point-Black Lake intersection and surrounding area. We must do everything we can to make it easier for people to use these forms of transportation. The energy, environmental, economic and health benefits to our community are substantial and will be even more valuable over time. I use these alternatives but find the major intersections on the Westside very difficult – nearly impossible – to navigate on foot or bike.
- If you can relieve the heavy auto traffic, you automatically provide easier access -- more road space - for buses, bicyclists, pedestrians. So do not highlight the latter first. Take care of the autos first. There is no time here for political correctness! No rose colored glasses, please. Time is of essence.
- Observe the “utilitarian” model, e.g, what options provide the greatest good for the greatest number? Avoid the temptation to engage in social engineering or wishful thinking. Don't assume significant growth in transit ridership or bicycle use because you (or someone) would like it to happen. Base your conclusions on fact.
- Be cognizant of pedestrian and cyclist safety and the need to respect restricted speeds in, or abutting, residential areas. Currently, some of the more heavily traveled connectors lack sidewalks and/or bike lanes.

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