

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Olympia, Washington
May 13, 2008

West Olympia Access Study Status Report and Next Steps

CITY MANAGER'S
RECOMMENDATION:

No action is requested by the City Council. This briefing is an opportunity for the City Council to hear what the project team has learned to date and to provide feedback for consideration prior to moving forward with future public outreach.

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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

ATTACHMENTS:

In preparation for the West Olympia Access Study (WOAS), a synthesis of previous studies was compiled. Baseline characteristics were described in a series of background reports that serve as a study reference. Taken together, these reports provide relevant background on important considerations this study will address. They are:

- 1a. [Synopsis of Previous Plans and Studies Associated With the Study Area - June 2007](#)
- 1b. [Significant Transportation and Land Use Events](#)
- 1c. [Transportation Characteristics](#)
- 1d. [Land Use and Environment Characteristics](#)
- 1e. [Social and Economic Characteristics](#)
2. [Fact Sheet for West Olympia Access Study](#)
3. [Study Area Map](#)
4. [Record of Public Comment](#)
5. [Screening Process Graphic](#)

**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 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).

The total project budget is \$960,410.

**PRIOR COUNCIL/
COMMITTEE REVIEW:**

City Council Study Session, February 13, 2007. Briefing on West Olympia Access Study.

City Council Meeting, October 17, 2006. Approval of Contract/Interlocal Agreement with WSDOT regarding work to be completed by WSDOT and cost sharing.

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, multi-modal 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). A deficiency of access and circulation opportunities hampers the ability to meet Olympia's growing 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.

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.

Project Overview

The WOAS is a joint project between the WSDOT Olympic Region and the City of Olympia. WSDOT and the City are co-lead for this project, partnering with the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC). The study consists of outreach activities, conducting and documenting transportation needs and options analysis, and recommending improvements and strategies. Changing access to the state highway system entails a thorough and systematic review of issues. WSDOT must document and justify the need for new access points or access point revisions on limited access freeways.

Attachments 1A to 1E provide relevant background information on important considerations this study is addressing.

Attachment 2 is a Fact Sheet summarizing parameters of the West Olympia Access Study.

Attachment 3 is a map of the Study area.

The Study is planned in two phases.

Phase 1 - Determine Need for New or Modified Access to US 101

Phase 1 will complete analysis to determine measures for improving access and circulation to include whether additional or modified access to US 101 is needed, and if it is determined to be needed where the access will be provided.

The current contract/interlocal agreement with WSDOT is for Phase 1 of the study. The budget for Phase 1 is approximately \$842,000. Staff set aside approximately \$118,000 of the total budget (\$960,000) for contingency, should the need arise to cover any unexpected study requirements such as more extensive environmental review and/or changes agreed to by the WSDOT and City. Use of the contingency funds will impact our ability to complete Phase 2.

Phase 2 - Local Street Network Issues

Local access and circulation issues that are unresolved or emerge from the public involvement process during Phase I will be addressed in Phase 2. This includes analysis of connections such as Decatur Street and 16th Avenue in the South Westside Neighborhood, as well as other local street network connections and improvements that will enhance access and circulation for all transportation system users.

Thurston Regional Planning Council staff will complete this work under a separate contract.

ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS:

Scenario Development and Screening

The project team received over 200 ideas and concerns from public outreach. Outreach work included interviews with local jurisdictions and agencies, meetings with stakeholder and neighborhood groups and two public meetings. Attachment 4 includes all public comments received during the Phase 1 outreach efforts of the Study.

Since July 2007, the Project Team worked through these issues and ideas using a series of evaluation screening meetings. This process assessed the ability of the ideas to address study goals and to determine which items should move forward for further consideration. Some ideas were set aside for consideration as part of a more detailed assessment of Olympia-specific needs in Phase 2 and others were discarded as being inconsistent with City or State policy or unrelated to the study purpose.

Individual ideas and project concepts were evaluated and assembled into preliminary concepts. When planning for the future, we develop scenario's to help us understand how one potential set of investments might compare to another set and how these compare to a "No-Build" scenario that results if we do nothing to improve the transportation system. The team developed 22 options which were grouped into 5 categories:

- City Network Connections
- Corridor Improvements
- Improve Existing (local system improvements)
- Access Management and Operation Improvements
- Interchange Modifications

Options within these five categories were screened further using an array of evaluation criteria which included:

- Safety
- Natural Environment Impacts
- Community Impacts
- Feasibility
- Travel Options
- Mobility

The project team took the results of this screening and developed three "Build" scenarios to compare to the "No-Build" scenario and evaluate them further. These include:

- Local System Only Improvements - Includes improvements to the local street system necessary to meet future mobility needs and no State freeway system improvements;
- 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; and
- Evergreen Interchange Scenario - Includes modifications to the Evergreen Parkway interchange to incorporate connections to Kaiser Road, as well as associated local street system improvements.

Attachment 5 illustrates the screening process used.

Technical Memorandums

A series of technical memorandums have been developed or are in the process of being developed to document the study process and findings to date. They include:

- West Olympia Access Study Traffic Analysis Assumptions Document. This memo documents the traffic model and analysis assumptions used for the West Olympia Access Study.

This document has been endorsed by the project participants.

- Technical Memorandum #1 - Evaluation Methods and Screening. The purpose of this memo is to outline the evaluation approach used for the West Olympia Access and Circulation Study. It addresses the process to develop and screen improvement options.

This document is currently under review.

- Technical Memorandum #2 - Existing 2007 and Year 2030 No-Build. The purpose of this technical memo is to document the US 101, I-5 and local traffic analysis process and results for the West Olympia Access Study. This documentation includes a discussion on existing local and freeway road characteristics, data collection and methodology, micro-simulation model calibration and validation, and existing 2007 and future year 2030 No-build traffic conditions.

Preliminary findings indicate that critical intersections such as Black Lake Boulevard and Cooper Point Road, Harrison Avenue and Division Street and Cooper Point Road and Harrison Avenue will not meet LOS standards in 2030. Even with planned intersection and street widening improvements and street connections identified in the Comp Plan, these intersections, along with others, would require other major improvements to meet LOS standards.

A "Local Only" scenario of improvements does not adequately address future LOS needs. Further evaluation of how modified access to US 101 could improve LOS and traffic operations is needed. This was not addressed in Technical Memorandum #2, but will be in #3.

This memorandum is currently under review.

- Technical Memo #3. This memorandum is currently in the development stage. The intent of this memorandum is to present the traffic analysis and to:
 - Document that a "Local Only" option does not fulfill the study objectives;
 - Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Black Lake Interchange and Evergreen Interchange Scenarios;
 - Resolve if new or modified access to US 101 will be allowed; and

- If a new or modified access is allowed, where it should occur based on the result of travel pattern changes and traffic operations.

These memorandums will document the technical work performed during the study and be used as a method to gain agreement and acceptance of various elements of the Study from project participants.

If it is determined that a revision in access to US 101 is recommended and agreed upon by WSDOT, these memorandums can serve as the basis for developing and Interchange Justification Report (IJR). Both Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and WSDOT policy require the formal submission of a request to add or modify limited access on limited access freeways like US 101. The IJR is used to document the planning process, the evaluation of the alternatives considered, the design of the preferred alternative, and the coordination that supports and justifies the request for an access revision to US 101.

Next Steps

This briefing is an opportunity for the City Council to hear what the project team has learned to date, and provides an opportunity to provide feedback for consideration prior to moving forward with our next public outreach efforts.

The project team is currently developing an open house type format for our next public outreach. The same informational open house will occur on two different nights in early June 2008. The open house will provide an opportunity for the public to review details of the scenario development process, technical analyses, and study findings to date.

The Project Team will then proceed with refining the scenario concepts to arrive at a preferred scenario (Technical Memorandum #3 discussed above).

If it is determined that a revision in access to US 101 is recommended and agreed upon by WSDOT, the project team will complete those elements of the IJR that can be completed at this time.

Options:

No options are presented, as this is an informational item only.