

Summary of Phase 1 Public Comments Regarding Interchanges and Highways West Olympia Access Study

Many comments about interchanges and to a lesser degree, the state highways were generated by the community during Phase 1 discussions for the West Olympia Access Study. Detailed comments generated during Phase 1 follow the summary.

A review of comments reveals some recurring themes.

- **Interchanges and highways, in general**

Most comments about interchanges were specific to a particular location although several offered general observations.

“The freeway should be for long trips, not local ones. Local travelers drive slower than long-distance travelers and don’t need same speed; their added trips plug up the freeway.”

“There is too much traffic at 101 access points.”

“Adding US 101 highway interchange access will alleviate traffic congestion.”

A few comments were received on the impacts of interchange traffic on bicycle and pedestrian travel. Following is representative.

“Interchange areas are not pedestrian friendly.”

- **I-5 / US 101 interchange**

The study is evaluating impacts of potential projects on the operation of this interchange but resolving its existing issues is not part of the study; WOAS improvement strategies are focused on US 101. The interchange still generated comments and suggestions such as the following:

“Problem – US 101 merge to I-5 (NB) – It’s a mess. Additional lanes?”

“Suggest looking at a “thru traffic middle lane” signing on the US 101 hill that comes up to the Mottman interchange. Keep right lane for exiting traffic only.”

- **Crosby / Mottman / Cooper Point interchange**

This interchange is known by several names within the community. It elicited several criticisms about current conditions but no suggestions for improvements:

“Getting on freeway at Cooper Point / 101 is scary and traffic is very fast – must merge fast. The weave will get more difficult with more traffic.”

“Mottman interchange is horrible.”

“Weaving at Mottman interchange to south-bound 101 is a problem. Many lanes merge into one.”

“US 101 Crosby Boulevard exit turning onto Cooper Point is difficult.”

- **Black Lake interchange**

Although the Black Lake interchange is central to the study, it did not generate as many comments in Phase 1 as did other locations. Most of these comments were specific to the Yaeger Way Extension concept.

“Like Yaeger Way extension idea to help alleviate Black Lake and Cooper Point, especially for new developments and medical needs.”

“Don’t repeat Black Lake/Cooper Point intersection mess. Do a new Highway 101 interchange design: e.g. a fly-over ramp to Yaeger.”

A few comments offered suggestions about how to retrofit the existing interchange.

“South on Black Lake Boulevard to east on 101 should have been a continuous flow overpass. That would match the continuous flow west on 101 to north on Black Lake Boulevard....There is great pressure on this intersection (Black Lake at Cooper Point) and improvements there would overburden the current Black Lake Boulevard / 101 interchange.”

“Consider converting 101 Black Lake interchange to a clover leaf design to be more efficient.”

- **Evergreen Parkway interchange**

This interchange and the need to provide different access in this vicinity elicited more comments and suggestions than any other location on the state highway system. Following are some representative comments about the existing interchange:

“Evergreen Parkway interchange is underutilized, could carry more traffic.”

“Evergreen Parkway / Mud Bay intersection – improve to handle increased volumes from Mud Bay to US 101.”

The concept of somehow increasing access from Evergreen Parkway interchange to other streets, especially Kaiser Road, was frequently suggested:

“Extend the Evergreen Parkway exit to connect to 7th Avenue.”

“Pressure with new homes on Evergreen Parkway to US 101 – need a long on-ramp like at College Street / Sleater Kinney.”

- **New US 101 access**

Comments suggesting a new access point to the highway were abundant and the single location identified most often was Kaiser Road.

“WSDOT should return Kaiser to an interchange with 101 as it was in the past.”

“Develop interchange at Kaiser Road and US 101.”

“Make new Kaiser interchange like Lacey interchange. Driver has choice of College or Sleater Kinney from one interchange. Offers parallel access options.”

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

Many of the comments and concerns about interchange operations were consistent with findings of the traffic and data analyses although not all the proposed solutions would provide the assumed benefits. Extensive work was done over the last twelve months to evaluate highway traffic flows and the interaction between highway, interchange, and surface streets. Some of the suggested ideas generated during Phase 1 were substantiated by engineering analysis and incorporated into scenarios.

Although several suggestions concerned a new interchange at Kaiser Road, state and federal design standards prohibits that due to the proximity of Kaiser Road to Evergreen Parkway. However those concepts of additional access to US 101 in that vicinity are reflected in the Evergreen Parkway modifications that extend the on and off ramps to Kaiser Road.

A compilation of all comments received during the Phase 1 workshops is available on line at www.trpc.org/westolympia.

Public Comments Specific to Interchanges and Highways West Olympia Access Study – Phase 1 Outreach in Early 2007

- WSDOT should return Kaiser to an interchange with 101 as it was in the past.
- Evergreen Parkway interchange needs to merge into a new interchange east or west of it.
- Develop interchange at Kaiser Rd and US 101.
- Make Highway 101 interchange a cloverleaf and get rid of the lights to make it free flow.
- What is the plan for High speed transit in West Olympia? Need a plan now for areas along I-5 and US 101 – Light Rail.
- Problem with accessing SPSCC campus is limited by the freeway location.
- Problem - US 101 merge to I-5 (NB) – “It’s a mess” - Additional lanes(?)
- Study area lacks of North-South traffic connections. Only has Evergreen Parkway and Cooper Point Road access from Freeway. Is Kaiser Road a possible alternative?
- Black Lake / 101 Interchange is a problem. There is no place to cross or walk and also poor visibility.
- Interchange areas are not pedestrian friendly.
- Mud Bay and 101 is not a functional interchange.
- Yauger Way – New connection from US 101 would help get some traffic out of Black Lake/Cooper Point interchange.
- Crosby Boulevard – US 101 exit – Access to Cooper Point from SPSCC is terrible.
- Need better Mud Bay access.
- Need better connection from US 101 to Mud Bay Rd.
- Evergreen Parkway I/C is underutilized, could carry more traffic.
- Mottman Interchange horrible – wait time for cars to long. There is a bottle neck with SPSCC traffic – limited to noon and end of day. – back up into college
- Straight thru traffic Black Lake and 101 is ok
- Getting on freeway at Cooper Point / 101 is scary and traffic is very fast – must merge fast. The weave will get more difficult with more traffic.
- Need another off ramp west of Cooper Point and Black Lake and before Evergreen.
- People coming in on Black Lake Boulevard turning west is a problem – instead of using Evergreen exit.
- There are two ways from Harrison/Division intersection to Highway 101. Black Lake Boulevard is too hard, so usually go out Mud Bay. Cooper Point Road is just as bad. There is a bottleneck at Top Foods all the time, even on the weekends.
- Don’t repeat Black Lake/Cooper Point intersection mess. Do a new Highway 101 interchange design; e.g. a fly-over ramp to Yauger.
- Many people like/prefer to drive through town instead of use 101- it’s a nicer experience, more interesting.
- The freeway should be for long trips, not local ones. Local travelers drive slower than long-distance travelers, and don’t need same speed; their added trips plug up the freeway.
- Evergreen Parkway/Mud Bay intersection – improve to handle increased volumes from Mud Bay to US 101.
- Improve Mud Bay at Evergreen Parkway.
- Interchange problem with the outside collector/distributor lane from Plum Street on I-5 to US 101. Always slow with lots of fender benders. Suggest looking at a “thru traffic middle lane” signing on the US 101 hill that comes up to the Mottman Interchange. Keep right lane for exiting traffic only. Lots more accidents exiting US 101 to I-5 in PM.
- Extend the Evergreen Parkway exit to connect to 7th.
- Yauger Way Interchange should be located between Black Lake and Evergreen Parkway.
- Is there an option for US 101 on-ramp at Kaiser?
- Add a 101 interchange between Black Lake and Kaiser to relieve the Black Lake interchange.
- Should add a slip ramp at Mud Bay/101 exit to provide access to new development at College Station.
- Connect Kaiser Road to US 101.
- Kaiser Road overpass (on/off) – expand it.
- US 101 interchange at Kaiser?
- Evergreen Parkway interchange needs southbound 101 access.
- Consider converting 101 Black Lake interchange to a clover leaf design to be more efficient.
- Pressure with new homes on Evergreen Parkway to US 101 – need a long on-ramp like at College Street/Slater Kinney. Would provide congestion relief on Harrison and Black Lake/Cooper Point

interchange.

- Make new Kaiser interchange like Lacey interchange. Driver has choice of College or Sleater Kinney from one interchange - offers parallel access options
- Interest in looking at directional volumes – maybe reversible lanes on 101.
- Need safer way to walk through 101 interchange, and cross Cooper Point Road.
- Starting at 3 o'clock I-5 interchanges are blocked. Ramps cause awful merge problem – weave is an issue.
- There is too much traffic at 101 access points.
- Yauger Way 101 intersection: with an additional 1,000 homes may not work.
- I-5/101 weave is big issue.
- Weaving at Mottman interchange to south-bound 101 is a problem. Many lanes merge into one.
- 101 interchange itself handles traffic well.
- US 101 Crosby Blvd exit turning onto Cooper Point is difficult.
- Adding US 101 highway interchange access will alleviate traffic congestion.
- Need an additional interchange to handle the traffic.
- Like Yauger Way extension idea to help alleviate Black Lake and Cooper Point, especially for new developments and medical needs
- Interchange behind Top Foods could be helpful.
- Weaving at 101/I-5, don't want duplicate on US 101 North of Black Lake.
- Where does the traffic at Mottman interchange come from? How much is from the Mottman Industrial area and how much from other areas?
- Would ring roads or bypass system work for West Olympia so freeways work as major highways and not shortcuts to get around town?
- The state says there must be a one-mile distance between interchanges? Any exceptions? I think there are places in Seattle area with less distance between. What does this requirement mean for the area between Mud Bay and Kaiser? NOTE: WSDOT staff indicated that eliminating an existing interchange to allow a new one in a better location might be part of the solution
- When are you putting in Yauger Way Interchange access to US 101?
- I want to minimize the need for left turns. Right in, right out corresponds as it relates to a parcel. I want to convey this as a philosophy in overall traffic management. For instance, as I recall there was an exit from 101 westbound at Kaiser Road, which enabled right turns onto Mud Bay Road and thence another right turn into the west side medical complex. Removing the Kaiser Road exit was a mistake, in my mind. If that exit were still there, I think right in, right out could have applied to the whole of the parcel between Mud Bay Road and 101 bounded by Kaiser Road and Black Lake Blvd.
- The state made a mistake on the Black Lake Blvd intersection with US 101. South on BL Blvd to east on 101 should have been a continuous flow overpass. That would match the continuous flow west on 101 to north on BL Blvd. I wrote the state on this, before the current intersection was installed. The reply was that their design would handle all the BL Blvd/CP Road could feed to it. I thought that reasoning weak inasmuch as who was to say that the BL Blvd/CP Road intersection would stay the same. Sure enough there is great pressure on this intersection and improvements there likely would overburden the current BL Blvd/101 intersection.
- Consider upgrading Capital Mall Parkway to a major arterial feeding a connection to US 101 and reducing the funneling of traffic to Mud Bay Road.
- Come up with a practical solution to the need for increased access to US 101 between Black Lake Boulevard and the Evergreen Parkway.