

## Summary of Phase 1 Public Comments Regarding Transit and Park-and-Ride West Olympia Access Study

Many comments about transit and park-and-ride lots 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.

- **Transit service, in general**

Community interest in transit ran high and generated many comments citing the importance of transit and the need for more of it. Frequency of service and locations served were the two most common themes. The following are typical of the comments received:

*“Need longer IT bus service hours, and more service on weekends.”*

*“More bus service for Westside neighborhoods to access west side shopping. If the local residents have frequent bus service available, they can use transit and reduce traffic.”*

*“We need more public transit in neighborhood.”*

While several locations were identified as needing more transit service, South Puget Sound Community College and Capitol Mall were noted most often. The following is representative.

*“You cannot take the bus from Harrison / Mud Bay in vicinity of Kaiser and get to the SPSCC campus. You have to go downtown first, then transfer to come back to SPSCC. It takes 1 ½ hours to make a 15 minute trip. Need more local bus service.”*

- **Alternative forms of transit**

People did not limit their comments to the existing form of fixed-route bus service. Suggestions about more urbanized types of transit service were common, such as these:

*“Consider building a trolley line up 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the Capital Mall to accommodate easy travel between downtown and the mall.”*

*“Consider building a gondola to shopping areas from a parking facility. Similar to the one that operates in Portland.”*

Intercity Transit’s Dash service, currently available downtown, was also mentioned as a service that could support west side mobility needs.

*“If there was something like IT Dash I would use it.”*

- **Operational advantages for transit**

Several comments identified elements that would help improve the operational efficiency of transit, including measures like these to keep transit moving through congested corridors:

*“Consider dedicated lanes for transit.”*

*“Congestion on Cooper Point and Black Lake makes it hard for buses. Maybe let transit extend the green (transit priority).”*

- **Park-and-ride lots**

Comments about transit frequently included suggestions about park-and-ride lots.

*“Need park and ride facility on West Side.”*

*“Establish mini park & rides.”*

*“Have bus service originate from a park and ride. This would give more route options.”*

*“Martin Way Park and Ride (PNR) is operated and maintained by WSDOT – will there be one on the Westside? Needed! Multi-story PNR.”*

There was even a suggestion to link park-and-rides with a dedicated transit network.

*“Build park and rides that would feed a transit network of roads that accommodate transit only – similar to the airport tram systems.”*

- **Regional connections**

While most comments focused on the need for better transit access around the west side or between west side and downtown, a few comments spoke to the need for more regional connections.

*“Good to have bus service to Tacoma – connect to Sound Transit.”*

*“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.”*

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

The study’s scenario development and evaluation process reflect existing types of transit service with projected increases in service levels. The study parameters and budget do not allow for the kind of comprehensive evaluation of land use alternatives and regional travel patterns required for the analysis of different forms of transit service, such as commuter rail or trolleys. Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) is aware of this need and has conducted some preliminary analysis of the demand for high capacity passenger rail. Those findings prompted the agency to look for additional funding and resources for a more in-depth assessment. Additionally, TRPC is supporting Intercity Transit efforts to develop a regional park-and-ride implementation strategy which is underway at this time (May 2008). Staff will share comments with Intercity Transit so they can use them for future planning.

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

Transit appears to be a highly valued – though often criticized – component of the west side transportation system. It seems that many of the Phase 1 participants anticipate that transit will play an ever greater role in meeting the area’s mobility needs.

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 transit. A synthesis of stakeholder interviews is not on line but is available by request ([westolympia@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:westolympia@wsdot.wa.gov)).

## Public Comments Specific to Transit and Park-and-Ride West Olympia Access Study – Phase 1 Outreach in Early 2007

- Add Dash bus service to mall from hospital, neighborhoods, park-n-ride etc, so frequent, free transit is available.
- Need longer IT bus service hours, and more service on weekends.
- Increase frequency of IT service by using smaller buses, where they can, to cut costs.
- IF Decatur opens require bus service.
- Need to run smaller buses at non-peak hours more frequently.
- Increase bus access to and from SPSCC. Also need service from SPSCC to The Evergreen State College.
- More Transit options that go further down Mud Bay for folks to access downtown.
- Need a Park and Ride lot near the Capitol Mall.
- Consider building a trolley line up 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. to the Capital Mall to accommodate easy travel between downtown and the mall.
- Consider building a gondola to shopping areas from a parking facility. Similar to the one that operates in Portland.
- 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.
- Need public transportation instead of more roads – i.e. park n ride and bus service.
- Provide frequent shuttle buses from Park n Rides to retail.
- If there were something like IT Dash I would use it.
- Better transit will solve some of the problems.
- Shuttle buses or short route buses could help relieve congestion by providing alternative to using cars.
- We need smaller buses that don't pollute as much. Light weight/small/frequent.
- Need increased transit frequency.
- Overall need to Increase transit efficiency on West Side – need more coverage and increase headways.
- Bus access to Mud Bay Rd. – No stops now.
- Dash-like service to Mall – park and take transit.
- Good to have bus service to Tacoma – connect to Sound Transit.
- Biodiesel transit that runs regularly would help. Frequency is HUGE issue to encourage riders. Air quality would improve.
- South Puget Sound Community College is always working to reduce cars by increasing Transit service. The free bus pass is widely used, but buses don't have enough routes or park-and-ride. Need a park-and-ride lot or transit facility at Capitol Mall.
- Public transit transfer point at Mall, rt. 44 commonly has a lengthy wait - ½ hour or more – bus is consistently late. Possible solutions could include changing routes 43 and 44 and increasing headways. Current construction and parking lot design at Westfield Shopping Center does not look like it will improve timeliness for transit services at and around the mall.
- Need park and ride facility on West Side
- No provisions now for Park and Ride for express services except small old lot at Mud Bay. Maybe add one at US Forest Service office (next door).
- Need pullouts for Transit buses.
- Consider adding bus pull-outs on major arterials to get the buses out of the lane of traffic.
- Congestion on Cooper Point and on Black Lake makes it hard for buses. Maybe let transit extend the green (“transit priority”).
- Build park and rides that would feed a transit network of roads that accommodate transit only. – Similar to the airport tram systems.
- Consider dedicated lanes for transit.
- Consider low impact connection up Percival Creek to SW neighborhood like trail or electric buses/trolley
- Could put bike route up Percival Canyon, or light rail to serve Lacey-Olympia-Tumwater, or shared use with both.
- A commuter train station on west side – interface with transit.
- Mass transit and emergency vehicles could have access to a separate network which would not allow general traffic.
- City of Olympia should work with SPSCC to improve and promote alternative modes of transportation.

i.e. more park-n-rides, more transit service.

- Intercity Transit does not have enough frequency of service in whole study area. Poor service to Capital Mall.
- Any solution needs to include beefing up Intercity Transit. Will assist many areas. Like bike racks, especially up steep hills. 1 ½ hour commute by bus: from 9<sup>th</sup> to Olympia transit center (½ hour wait) then to Capital Campus.
- What about Park and Rides – could use one – in combination with other things.
- Have bus service originate from a park and ride. This would give more route options.
- Martin Way Park and Ride (PNR) is operated and maintained by WSDOT – will there be one on the Westside? Needed! Multi-story PNR.
- Establish mini park & rides.
- You cannot take the bus from Harrison / Mud Bay in vicinity of Kaiser and get to the SPSCC campus. You have to go downtown first, then transfer to come back to SPSCC. It takes 1 ½ hours to make a 15 minute trip. Need more local bus service.
- Bus routes on the westside don't seem efficient. Buses circle the mall and make many stops at the mall. If the buses were speedier and made fewer stops more people might use transit.
- Use long range – sustainable design that includes public transportation – give public transportation priority over single occupancy vehicles.
- More bus service for Westside neighborhoods to access west side shopping. If the local residents have frequent bus service available, they can use transit and reduce traffic.
- We need more public transit in neighborhood.
- Don't want transit to use opticom (7 people opposed to this).
- Too few people using transit.
- Need bus service we can rely on. Sometimes bus not an option.
- Bus service seems too infrequent. Stops running early (for the SPSCC and Southwest neighborhood).
- The traffic circle at the east foot of Harrison hill and its meeting with Westbay Drive is a GRIDLOCK at both rush hours. The only solution is to get the car volume off Harrison St. and that hill. Alternatives: HOV lanes on all of Harrison St. and its hill, from Division down to the Westbay Drive circle, 2 hours in the a.m. and 3 hours in the p.m. (You will have to do the same with West 5th (hospital hill) to avoid a simple re-routing downhill by single passenger autos.) Do it now: make Harrison St., from Division St. eastward down hill to Westbay Drive, HOV-only, 5 hours each day!
- [Regarding need for a parking garage, despite the cost per space] I work in Tacoma and have taken the bus to my job since September of 1999. I first started parking in downtown Olympia by the bus barn, but then all the spaces were hit with parking meters. My next option was to park at the park-and-ride located at Martin Way. I can tell you that I have not had a legitimate spot in months. I have to park against the curb, and I know there are buses after mine, and I'm sure there are no spaces left for other bus riders to park in. Let me further tell you, there are some mornings that the lot is completely full and I have no choice but to drive to work. I don't think this is right. I have talked to some of my co-workers who commute from Olympia to Tacoma and they say that because of the problems with the bus (not enough routes and horrible parking), the bus is too inconvenient to take to work. I can't argue with them.  
I'm not asking that a palace be built for a parking garage; it doesn't even have to be an enclosed building, but please make the investment and get people out of their cars and onto the bus. The 101 interchange to I-5 north is getting more and more crowded in the a.m. How much will that cost to widen? I don't think we can build our way out of this. Please think of us bus people and offer a viable option. As an aside, my commute used to be three miles one way to park in downtown Olympia; now, it's eight miles one way. Please help.
- 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.