

## Summary of Phase 1 Public Comments Regarding Growth and Planning for the Future West Olympia Access Study

Comments about growth and the need to plan for the future were generated by the community during Phase 1 discussions for the West Olympia Access Study. These were typically not associated with a specific element of the study but with the overall need to plan on the west side and general observations about growth. Detailed comments generated during Phase 1 follow the summary.

A review of comments reveals some recurring themes.

- **Planning for the future**

Several comments offered suggestions on underlying factors and considerations the study should reflect.

*“Whatever model is used must be appropriate and real. Needs to be realistic for Olympia. Sensitive to the context of this community.”*

*“Observe the “utilitarian” model, e.g., what options provide the greatest good for the greatest number?”*

Specific communities were identified that could serve as a model for how West Olympia might accommodate future growth.

*“We should look to Portland for examples of ways to incorporate new transportation and land use designs into a mature city.”*

*“What other urban neighborhood outside of Olympia can we use as a model – a neighborhood that has high traffic volumes but still has livable streets? Queen Anne might be an example: high volume but livable streets.”*

- **Public role in planning**

The study revealed some contradictory perspectives about the role of the public in the planning process.

*“Comments are so important. We give our time to attend. Please take our input into account.”*

*“I feel pandered to. Rather than the “feel good” exercise of asking the public what they think, the City should have a clearer vision of what they want and use their staff expertise to design something that works.”*

A helpful suggestion was offered on how to help the public look at the issues and choices facing this study.

*“It may help to point out that what most benefits the community may not benefit you personally and vice versa, what benefits you personally may not benefit the community. I found that it was very hard to keep that in mind when offering my opinion.”*

- **Multi-modal considerations**

Several comments expressed concern that this study would focus exclusively on cars and ignore other modes of transport.

*“The priority should not be only focused on car traffic. There needs to be attention also paid to pedestrians, bikes, and buses with the goal of system sustainability.”*

*“The current focus is more on moving cars and not people.”*

*“We should be in ‘get out of the car’ stance when planning.”*

There was also caution against ignoring vehicular mobility needs.

*“Not everyone chooses or can bike / walk, so we need balance in the system so it works for cars, too.”*

*“This concentration of commercial activity in one zone greatly reduces the likelihood that added sidewalks and bike lanes will alleviate congestion. Also, unless some really innovative transit is developed...added bus routes will do relatively little to resolve the problems. The big problem is and will continue to be, automobile travel coming in to access the commercial core. It seems to me that this aspect needs to be given top, not secondary, priority.”*

- **Growth**

Not surprisingly, perspectives on growth during Phase 1 varied. Comments were divided on whether or not west side growth is desirable in terms of both commercial and residential development.

*“Traffic will always be an issue on West Side as long as vehicle dependent big box retail continues to be built.”*

*“We have to understand that big box stores help pay for essential services.”*

*“Future multi-family high density residential development in the UGA will create more traffic impacts.”*

*“Promote dense residential development to accommodate alternate modes of transportation.”*

There were also concerns that the City is not adequately planning for future needs.

*“The City Government of Olympia seems to rely on the freeways for vehicle traffic and little is being done to plan for growth other than to hope people will take the bus or ride bikes. What process is proposed to make any changes in the status quo?”*

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

The entire scenario development process has been sensitive to adopted City policies. This includes policies specific to multi-modal transportation as well as those regarding future residential and commercial land use, and public involvement.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the strategies considered are appropriate for the scale and character of this community. Looking to models such as those offered by Queen Anne, Portland, or other metropolitan neighborhoods is not an option for this study because its land use assumptions are based on adopted city plans.

Many of the transportation alternatives that work in those urbanized communities could not be supported by the low density, highly dispersed land uses found throughout west Olympia. In particular the high capacity transit options from more urban communities that people are drawn to simply cannot be supported by current or future land use on Olympia's west side as currently envisioned. Such systems would require a major rethinking of land use, including significantly higher residential and commercial densities and a more integrated proximity of those various uses.

In terms of public involvement, consistent with City policy the study will continue to look for opportunities for engagement and meaningful public input.

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).

## Public Comments Specific to Growth and Planning for the Future West Olympia Access Study – Phase 1 Outreach in Early 2007

- Make sure all modes of transportation (not just cars) are considered when developing any plan.
- The priority should not be only focused on car traffic. There needs to be attention also paid to pedestrians, bikes, and buses with the goal of system sustainability.
- There should not be a presumption that any local streets will be connected as a result of this study since staff stated there is no presumption that 101/access will be added.
- Traffic will always be an issue on West Side as long as vehicle dependent – big box retail continues to be built. Either find another revenue source, or require big boxes to provide funding for transportation fixes or provide public transportation.
- New housing is adding to congestion. Concerned about how the planned access routes from new developments impact system
- Taking global warming into consideration, are we seriously making an effort to get people out of their cars?
- Concerned about environmental impacts of intense development on watersheds/water and air quality.
- Congestion encourages bad driving behavior.
- Comments are so important. We give our time to attend. Please take our input into account.
- Concerned that WSDOT / City will protect their own turf – want them to work together.
- West side transportation focuses on thru traffic instead of people who live there.
- The current focus is more on moving cars and not people.
- What other urban neighborhood outside of Olympia can we use as a model –a neighborhood that has high traffic volumes but still has livable streets. Queen Anne might be an example: high volume but livable streets.
- We should look to Portland for examples of ways to incorporate new transportation and land use designs into a mature city.
- Single occupancy vehicles (SOV) should not trump all other modes.
- We should be in “get out of car” stance when planning.
- Not everyone chooses or can bike/walk, so we need balance in the system, so it works for cars too.
- Current construction and development is prohibiting future opportunities for increasing access and circulation.
- Traffic jams can lead to people choosing other modes. Congestion is good.
- Growth is the problem but growth is also the answer. The challenge is in how to make growth work for us.
- Promote dense residential development to accommodate alternate modes of transportation.
- The City is continuing to allow growth without planning for traffic solution. As the growth continues, the problem gets worse.
- There is a housing development planned for this area with 300 units and probably 500 cars. However, there seems to be inadequate planned access either to the major streets or within the development.
- I am concerned that the City is giving in to pressure from the development and business community. Originally the City said they shouldn't widen Harrison/Mud Bay and then with public pressure, suddenly they are widening it. Who's in charge?
- Economic development should not be primary driver in decision making.
- Elected officials are trying to get people to move here faster. Evidenced by:
  - Encouraging subdivisions
  - Funding the Economic Development Council
  - Funding tourism efforts
- We need a moratorium on development during this study – or until all the transportation issues – for all modes – are resolved.
- Future multi-family high density residential development in UGA will create more traffic impacts.
- Concerned about Kaiser Heights. Will affect water flows to Ken Lake. How will it affect traffic? Very steep, the developer will rip out all trees, blast a lot. Park Drive is too narrow for the proposed traffic.
- More residential coming West of Yauger Park. Senior housing, nursing home, etc.
- Concern about new roads/connections in the west area of the study. How can we serve existing development needs without encouraging more driving? Urban growth boundary's always expanding. Snowballing.
- We have to understand that big box stores help pay for essential services. Must consider how we grow.

- The decision makers must realize that all the malls are regional destinations – the bus and sidewalks are not the only solution. Local/Regional balance must be considered when developing the road system.
- Whatever model is used must be appropriate and real. Needs to be realistic for Olympia. Sensitive to the context of this community.
- Olympia City Council should focus more on West Olympia issues. West Olympia generates half of the City's sales tax and deserves as much attention as the down town receives.
- Congested traffic is not necessarily a problem. We can't build our way out of congestion.
- The City's planning process is fatally flawed. I feel pandered to. Rather than the "feel good" exercise of asking the public what they think, the City should have a clearer vision of what they want and use their staff expertise to design something that works.
- Developers run the process. This is wrong!
- This ain't Kansas – Olympia area is extremely constrained and we need to plan accordingly.
- The above comment (re: exemptions to 5-lane maximum) is the very philosophy that got us into the problem – it is sacrificing livability in an attempt to build our way out of traffic problems.
- City's priority should be safe – family oriented neighborhoods.
- Lane configurations – more than 5 lanes – doesn't get you through the intersection any faster. Less roadway = pedestrian/bike travel.
- Real feeder streets nice as they are the easiest way to go – Most direct so you don't weave thru neighborhoods
- New by-pass highway north around Olympia. Bridge over southern Budd Inlet, e.g., east-bound down Brawne, etc., or westbound down San Francisco from the east side. Genuine long-term planners like yourself must envision a TUNNEL under Budd Inlet. You cannot waste time by looking at a new east-west route in the south. That area is now overloaded and restricted by Capitol Lake, the State Capitol grounds, the crowded U.S. 101 and I-5 interchange at Tumwater. **THERE IS NO CHOICE BUT TO PLAN FOR A NEW EAST-WEST BY- PASS IN THE NORTH OVER BUDD INLET OR UNDER BUDD INLET. A TUNNEL IS ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY IF BORED DEEP IN BEDROCK.**
- 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.
- The area along Cooper Point Road SW extending from the freeway entrance to Black Lake Blvd. plus the entire "wedge" bounded by Black Lake Blvd., Cooper Point Road and the first block north of Harrison is almost 100% commercial. The rest of the area, other than "courthouse hill", is primarily residential. In the residential areas there are almost no stores, businesses, restaurants, etc. to serve the residential areas. This concentration of commercial activity in one zone greatly reduces the likelihood that added sidewalks and bike lanes will alleviate congestion. Also, unless some really innovative use of transit is developed, such as free, circling, off-on buses, added bus routes will do relatively little to resolve the problems. The big problem is and will continue to be, automobile travel coming in to access the commercial core. It seems to me that this aspect needs to be given top, not secondary, priority.
- I began raising this issue [westside mobility] with TRPC in the late 1980's. My efforts resulted in yawns. The County continued to approve virtually unlimited development in the urban growth areas on the west side. Little or no consideration was given to the effect on traffic. At this stage, I am not interested in solving problems resulting from such fatuity.
- When I first moved to this area Olympia was the center of the county and the center of business, the fact is all that planning has accomplished to date is to push growth and business to Lacey, Tumwater and Hawks Prairie. Olympia is now just a bedroom community to the other three.
- It may help to point out that what most benefits the community, may not benefit you personally and vice versa, what benefits you personally may not benefit the community. I found that it was very hard to keep that in mind when offering my opinion. I definitely have my opinions on what will "help" and I have no illusions about a "magic fix all".
- I am really concerned the way things are progressing on the West Side. I am a skeptic when it comes to the bureaucrats' motives and intentions. It is without doubt already decided what they are going to do and they are now only going through the mandatory steps of public meetings to make it legal. The City Government of Olympia seems to rely on the freeways for vehicle traffic, and little is being done to plan for growth other than to hope people will take the bus or ride bikes. What process is proposed to make any changes in the status quo?