



Viewshed Analysis & Public Process

In Olympia, important views are protected through public ownership of the shoreline, as well as through design and development regulations, including for the shoreline. The recently updated Comprehensive Plan shifted an emphasis from protecting certain views from public streets to protecting and enhancing views from public gathering places. The Plan guides the City to implement a public process to identify viewsheds (*line of sight between an observation point and important view,*) and doing so is part of the scope of work for the Downtown Strategy.

Land Use Chapter, Goal #8: Community views are protected, preserved, and enhanced.

PL8.1: Implement public processes, including the use of digital simulation software, to identify important **landmark views** and **observation points**.

PL8.2: Use visualization tools to identify view planes and sightline heights between the landmark view and observation point.

PL8.4: Avoid height bonuses and incentives that interfere with landmark views.

PL8.5: Set absolute maximum building heights to preserve publicly-identified observation points and landmark views.

The MAKERS team will analyze up to ten community-valued viewsheds and provide recommendations on view protection through the following steps:

1. Determine up to 10 viewsheds to be analyzed (expected completion March 2016);
2. Conduct viewshed analysis. *Using 3D graphics illustrate how views can be protected with different land use and urban form alternatives. Analyze the impacts of protecting these views to economic, housing and other goals.* (March-May 2016); and
3. Recommend updates to City view protection standards (June-August 2016).

MAKERS' scope of work calls for a digital analysis of up to ten viewsheds, however the City can and likely will continue to protect additional views. As described herein, our community has already taken steps to secure several important over the water views through public ownership of waterfront lands.

At strategic points in the process, community members will be asked to prioritize views and provide feedback at a workshop and online. This analysis and public feedback process is described below.



Determining views to be analyzed

The Downtown Strategy's process builds on past views planning efforts. Potential landmark views and observation points identified during the Comprehensive Plan and Shoreline Master Plan updates were used as a basis for identifying a proposed list of views to be analyzed.

A preliminary exercise from the Downtown Strategy (DTS) Workshop #1 (11/21/15) had participants prioritize certain viewsheds (*only those with observation points within the downtown*) that were most important to them (see results in **attachment 5.**) Participants also had an opportunity to provide write-in comments. The exercise confirmed:

- Views of the Olympic Mountains, Capitol Dome, Budd Inlet, and Capitol Lake are particularly valued.
- Many valued views are unlikely to be blocked by future development because the observation point is adjacent to the landmark or over the water.
- Views from the Capitol Campus Promontory to Budd Inlet is a priority viewshed, which should be analyzed.

Next steps have been completed, including: 1) identify viewsheds with an observation point outside of downtown and whether these could be affected by development; and 2) review prior work by Mithun consultants, which resulted in identification of an observation where two marine channels on Puget Sound converge, a point from which we can analyze impacts to certain views.

Following are three sets of viewsheds:

- A) Viewsheds unlikely to be blocked by new development, thus not recommended for further analysis by MAKERS as part of the DTS;
- B) Five viewsheds that could potentially be impacted and that come up repeatedly thus are being recommended for analysis by MAKERS at this time. (Staff is asking the Committee for a 'green light' to begin analysis of these viewsheds immediately (in March)); and
- C) Five viewsheds that probably should be looked at, but we will wait until end of March to confirm the remaining (up to 5) viewsheds for MAKERS to analyze.



A. Viewsheds not Recommended for Further Analysis					
Unlikely to Be Blocked Because ...			Viewshed is:		
Public Observation Point FROM		Landmark View TO	Over the water	Over or adjacent to public ROW/ park	NOTES:
1	4th Ave Bridge to	Capitol Lake	X	X	State controlled lands
2	"	Olympic Mountains	X		
3	"	Mt. Rainer	X	X	
4	"	Capitol Dome	X	X	State controlled lands
5	"	Budd Inlet	X		
6	Capitol Way & 11th	Budd Inlet (looking north)		X	Looking north over Capitol Way and the Farmers' Market
7	Capitol Way & Talcott Ave	Capitol Lake	X	X	State controlled lands
8	Capitol Way & Amanda Smith Way	Capitol Lake	X	X	
9	Chestnut & 4th	Budd Inlet (looking north)			
10	Deschutes Parkway	Budd Inlet	X	X	State controlled lands
	"	Capitol Lake	X	X	"
	"	Capitol Dome	X	X	"
11	East Bay Dr. Lookout (benches at appx. 400' from intersection of Olympic Way & East Bay Dr.)	Budd Inlet	X		
12	"	Olympic Mountains	X		thru Swantown Marina
13	Northpoint	Budd Inlet	X		Lookout ID'd by Port
14	"	Olympic Mountains	X		"
15	Percival Landing	Capitol Dome	X	X	
16	"	Olympic Mountains	X		Expansive views along this path
17	"	Budd Inlet	X		"
18	Simmons St	Capitol Dome	X	X	
19	"	Capitol Lake	X	X	
20	West Bay Park Lookout	Budd Inlet	X	X	
21	"	Capitol Dome	X	X	



A. Viewsheds not Recommended for Further Analysis

Not Recommended for Protection or Further Analysis because...

Public Observation Point FROM		Landmark View TO	REASON:
22	Water Tower	Capitol Dome	Although the water tower site is currently open to the public, potential fencing has as previously come up as an issue of homeland security. With that and because Madison Scenic Park (where similar viewsheds are being recommended for further analysis) is within one block, this site is not recommended as an observation point.
23	Capitol & 12th	Peek-a-book over dt	This view was suggested during the WKSP#1 exercise. But we don't see a landmark view from this observation point - view appears to be simply a view of downtown, thus not within the scope as prescribed by Comp Plan policy.

B. Viewsheds that Appear to Be Clear Priorities for Further Analysis, so get started now

Public Observation Point FROM		Landmark View TO	NOTES:
1	State Campus Promontory	Budd Inlet	View is across the Isthmus. Need to pick one observation point on Capitol Campus (Temple of Justice/Law Enforcement Memorial/North Campus Trail)
2	Effect of 1063 Building on views of the Capitol Dome	on Capitol Heights District and view from City Hall/Cherry St.	Specifically, what is the outcome for views from the Capitol Heights District and City Hall/Cherry St? What other observation points it might affect?
3	Madison Scenic Park	Capitol Dome, Black Hills	not sure how much could be blocked
4	Puget Sound Navigation Channel	Capitol Dome	Prior work by Mithun consultants identified observation point in the water where 2 navigation channels meet
5	West Bay Park Lookout	Mt. Rainier	view is thru dt



C. Viewsheds to Possibly Analyze - Pending further investigation choose up to 5

	Public Observation Point FROM	Landmark View TO	NOTES:
1	Capitol Way & Union Ave	Olympic Mountains	over Brown Derby sign
2	Marathon Park (on Deschutes Parkway)	Mt. Rainier	Preliminary analysis needed to see if view of Mt. Rainier could be blocked by development in downtown
3	Park of the Seven Oars	Mt. Rainier	Preliminary analysis needed to see if view of Mt. Rainier could be blocked by development in downtown
4	Priest Point Park	Capitol, Rainier	Not yet sure about the possibility of views (i.e., to Capitol Dome) possibly being blocked by development in downtown from the lookout within the park.
5	East Bay Waterfront Park Lookout (benches appx. 400' from intersection of Olympia Ave. & East Bay Dr.)	Capitol Dome	

March Online Survey to confirm viewsheds for analysis. An upcoming online survey (expected March 2016) will offer the community an opportunity to comment on viewsheds proposed for analysis. The survey will include photos of the view corridors proposed for analysis. Survey questions may include:

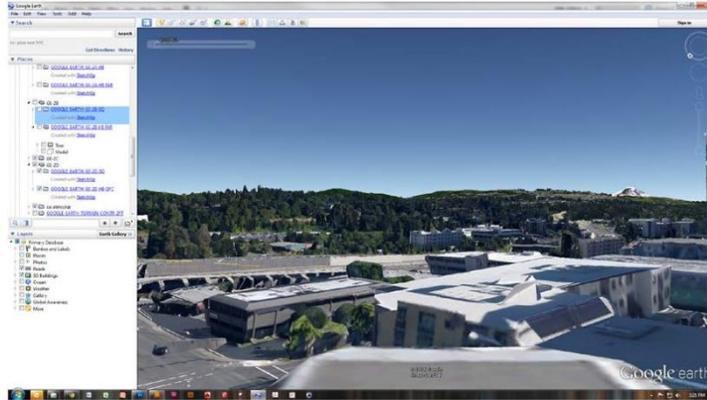
1. Please select the five views most important to you for analysis. One or two “other” options for people to write in additional view corridors would be included. Note that if writing in views, the observation points must be public spaces either in downtown or look through downtown to a landmark view.
2. If you have photo(s) of your favorite view(s), please email to DTS@ci.olympia.wa.us. Observation points must be public spaces in downtown or look through downtown to a landmark view.

These survey results will identify the most valued views for analysis; as well identify viewsheds the team may have missed.

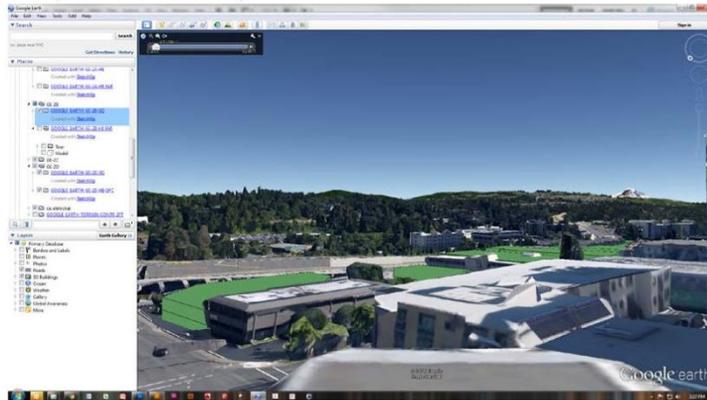


Downtown Bellevue Viewshed Analysis: City Hall to Mt Rainier

Existing view



Development under current zoning



Development with higher FAR



Digital 3D modeling. The MAKERS team will analyze up to 10 views during March and April 2016 to help tailor the guiding framework. The analysis will include digital 3D modeling of buildings and landscape for the selected views. The views will likely fall under two types of analysis:

- Views affected by zone-wide height standards (e.g., view from Marine Channel across downtown to Mt Rainier), and
- Views affected by redevelopment at a specific site (e.g., 1063 blocking view of Capitol).

Zone-wide height increases analysis. For the first type of analysis, the models will show each view: 1) as it exists now, 2) if redeveloped under current zoning, and 3) under any zoning options being explored. Because of the number of buildings involved, the 3D model is built with a minimal level of detail to simply illustrate massing. (See the sample at right.)

Site-specific analysis. For the second type of analysis, and in some cases to integrate this analysis with additional urban design and character analyses, graphics may be provided that overlay a photo of the view with potential redevelopment. For example, the images below shows a view the Edmonds community wanted to protect. Potential development on the site in question was overlaid on the photo to demonstrate the reality of the potential development. This type of analysis can be more palatable for community members not accustomed to viewing massing models and is effective for exploring design guideline techniques to protect views. However, because it requires more detailed site analysis and building design, it can take more resources than the massing model. The team will need to judiciously select the 10 views for modeling and the type of analysis to perform on each.



Model (new buildings in color)



View with new building massing



Existing view



View with architectural detail



Analyze effect on other priorities. Economic feasibility, housing diversity, urban design, and character can be affected by view protection. If the 3D model illustrates that a view could be blocked by development, the strategies for view protection must be shaped with these other priorities in mind. The team will use the site-specific analysis described above for a limited number of sites to explore this range of priorities simultaneously. For example, the team may develop sample site designs with multiple variations to show the effect of different view protection techniques (e.g., setbacks, step backs, and height limits) on the economic feasibility of a housing development. The designs would simultaneously show various approaches to character and the development's effect on the overall urban design of the area.

Public feedback at Workshop 3. Applicable portions of the viewshed analysis will be presented at Workshop #3 and integrated with the related topics of economic development, housing diversity, urban design and character. Depending on the results of the analysis, workshop activities may ask participants to weigh in on the extent of views protection, especially when affecting other priorities. The full analysis and results may be displayed on boards and/or the summary report (see below) may be provided for people interested in more information.

Viewshed analysis summary report. The viewshed analysis results will be available in a summary report. It will illustrate each view's 3D modeling results, highlight where protection strategies are needed, and show sample strategies that would protect these views.

Recommend protection standards. Based on public feedback at Workshop #3, the team will refine the view protection strategies. View protection standards will likely be in the form of design guidelines and potentially development regulations. As part of the implementation tools for the Downtown Strategy, the team will provide design guideline recommendations and graphics, as well as land use and development code recommendations as needed, to address views protection.