

Transportation



Bicyclists and an Intercity Transit bus share the road along Olympia's 4th Avenue Bridge.

What Olympia Values:

Olympians want a transportation system that can move people and goods through the community safely while conserving energy and with minimal environmental impacts. We want it to connect to our homes, businesses and gathering spaces and promote healthy neighborhoods.

Our Vision for the Future:

Complete streets that move people, not just cars.

Introduction

Olympia's future transportation system will focus on moving people, not just cars. Our ability to create vibrant urban areas, reduce our environmental impact, and conserve our financial and energy resources will depend on an increase in walking, biking and transit.

Our future streets will work for all modes of transportation - thanks to our investment in sidewalks, bike lanes, trees, and safe crossings. We will build streets that are human scale, for people, as well as cars. A more connected grid of smaller streets will shorten trips for people walking, biking and driving, and allow trucks, buses and emergency vehicles to have direct and efficient routes.

As Olympia grows, we are learning to use a range of tools that will help us to both respond to growth and provide people with more choices. It won't eliminate congestion, but with the help of involved citizenscommunity members, our future

System Capacity

One of the ways we gauge the quality of a community is how easily we get around. No one likes getting stuck in traffic. In Olympia, we are looking for new ways to ~~add capacity~~~~address congestion~~ - ways that retain the human-scale character of our streets - instead of adding more lanes.



Traffic and a cyclist move through downtown.

~~Transportation professionals use "level of service" ratings to describe vehicle congestion, ranging from A to F—"A" being no congestion and "F" being heavy congestion.~~ The concept of concurrency means that as our community grows, ~~the level of service (level of congestion) that we consider acceptable for a specific street is maintained. To achieve this requires that~~ we add "capacity" to the street.

The capacity of a transportation system is traditionally thought of as the space needed on our streets to move cars. In Olympia, we ~~want to~~ look at capacity more broadly and see it as our ability to move *people*.

The street system can move more people when more trips are made by walking, biking, or riding the bus. ~~On streets that have unacceptable levels of motor vehicle congestion, and where widening is not appropriate, w~~We will increase

capacity on our streets by building facilities to support walking, biking, and transit. In many cases, adding roundabouts will be a key part of this approach.

~~This is needed most in the oldest parts of our city, where roads cannot be widened further. Considered "strategy corridors," these streets are already at the maximum five-lane width, have environmental constraints, or are adjacent to areas that are fully built-out.~~

Efforts to reduce auto trips, such as adding bike lanes and sidewalks and improving transit services will ~~be used to relieve traffic congestion and~~ increase capacity on all major streets, but especially on strategy corridors (See Appendix H, the Corridor Map, for strategy corridors.)

The project list and maps in Appendix B include system capacity improvements for vehicles likely to be needed over the next 20 years.

Appendix I shows Traffic Forecast Maps of current and future traffic volumes.

Goals and Policies

GT8 Impacts of new development on the transportation system are addressed by establishing level-of-service network completeness standards that indicate when improvements are needed ensure that adequate transportation infrastructure is provided in concert with growth.

PT8.1 Implement a system completeness framework for transportation concurrency in which the supply of new transportation infrastructure that supports growth shall exceed the travel demand of new growth.

- Supply is defined by the transportation concurrency project list identified in the Capital Facilities Plan
- Demand is measured by PM peak hour person trip generation
- Supply and demand are equated using "mobility units" as defined in OMC 15.20.020
- Mobility units of supply are considered available to support new development when the transportation improvement is fully funded, as identified in the Capital Facilities Plan

~~Measure level-of-service using the average vehicle volumes that occur during the highest volume, consecutive, two-hour period. Use the two-hour level-of-service as a screening tool to determine capacity needs at intersections and along~~

~~streets. Consider location efficiency in this calculation to remove disincentives for development along urban corridors where increased density is desired.~~

~~**PT8.2** Determine the need for, and feasibility of, motor vehicle capacity improvements, particularly widening the street. Consider the types of streets and connectivity of the street network in the area, environmental impacts, the impacts on the walkability and character of the area, cost, and physical constraints.~~

PT8.3-2 Consider signal upgrades and signal timing as standard ways to reduce congestion.

PT8.4-3 No street will exceed the width of five general purpose auto lanes (such as two in each direction and a center turn lane) mid-block when adding capacity to the street system. Turn lanes may be added as appropriate, with careful consideration of pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

PT8.5-4 Consider roundabouts instead of signals at intersections to maintain traffic flow.

~~**PT8.6** Establish and maintain appropriate levels of service using the following guidelines (see street system maps in Appendix B and Corridor Map in Appendix H):~~

- ~~• Level of service E will be acceptable on arterials and major collectors in the City Center and along urban corridors~~
- ~~• Level of service D will be acceptable in the rest of the City and Urban Growth Area~~
- ~~• Higher levels of service may be maintained in parts of the City because of low traffic demand~~
- ~~• For some intersections, level of service is F is acceptable~~
- ~~• On strategy corridors, where widening is not an option, levels of service may fall below adopted standards~~

PT8.7-5 Exempt transportation facilities and services of statewide significance from concurrency requirements per RCW [36.70A.070](#) (6). Proposed improvements to state-owned facilities will be consistent with the [Thurston Regional Transportation Plan](#) and the State Highway System Plan within Washington's Transportation Plan.

GT9 The impacts of new land-use development on the transportation system are mitigated appropriately.

PT9.1 Require mitigation for new developments so that transportation level of service does not fall below adopted standards, except where policies allow.

PT9.2 Require new development to construct improvements or contribute funds towards measures that will improve the function and safety of the streets, such as installing bike and pedestrian improvements, turn pockets or special lanes for buses, or roundabouts, or modifying traffic signals.



A bus stops on Capitol Way.

PT9.3 Ensure a fair distribution of new transportation-related costs to new developments through imposition of impact fees.

PT9.4 Use the [State Environmental Policy Act](#)  to determine mitigation requirements for the impacts of new development on the transportation system.

PT9.5 Construct complete streets and maintain an urban form that is human scale, when widening is necessary.

GT10 On designated strategy corridors, ~~when road widening is not an option, increase capacity by providing walking, biking and transit facilities,~~ facilitate increased land use density, and eliminate transportation system inefficiencies.

PT10.1 Add bike lanes and sidewalks, improve transit services, and use demand management measures to ensure that transit, walking and biking are attractive and easy to use during peak travel periods on all streets, especially strategy corridors, ~~those which cannot be widened.~~

~~**PT10.2** Review and update concurrency ordinances as appropriate to implement multimodal and system efficiency strategies in strategy corridors. (See Concurrency Report explanation in Appendix A.)~~

PT10.3-2 Expand the City's network of street connections, pathways and trails to help relieve congestion.

~~**GT11** System capacity improvements focus on moving people and goods more efficiently, minimizing congestion by replacing car trips with walking, biking and transit trips, and by increasing system operational efficiency and reliability.~~

~~**PT11.1** Pursue a person trip concurrency program in order to allow construction of bicycle, pedestrian and transit system improvements as concurrency mitigation.~~

~~**PT11.2** Seek voluntary concurrency mitigation measures separate from other transportation mitigation measures required by either State Environmental Policy Act or the City's Transportation Impact Fee policies and programs.~~

Land Use

The land use and transportation goals and policies of this plan are interconnected. When attractive housing is close to jobs, services and stores, trips are short and easy to make without a car. Transit stops can be close by and convenient for longer trips outside the neighborhood. In compact, mixed-use areas, it is easier for people to walk, bike and ride the bus than it is to drive, reducing our dependency on our cars.

The dense, mixed areas we are trying to achieve are made more attractive, comfortable and functional when streets have wide sidewalks, safe pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, and the bus is convenient. We can optimize our investments in the transit system by locating a mixture of dense land uses along



Public dialogues like this one can draw on a range of perspectives to solve problems.

Southeast Transportation Issues

The street network in the southeast provides north-south routes, but few east-west routes. Mobility is poor for autos, buses, bicycling and walking. This creates overloading on the Yelm Highway and 18th Avenue corridors.

However, in 2012, a project to widen Yelm Highway and add roundabouts, bike lanes, sidewalks and crossing islands was completed. And, beginning in 2010, 18th Avenue from Fones Road to Boulevard Road was improved with bike lanes, sidewalks, streetlights, and two roundabouts.

These major reconstruction projects should increase capacity, reduce delay and accidents, and provide more safe and inviting streets for walking and biking. In order to relieve the further pressure on these existing streets, additional connectivity is planned through the extension of Log Cabin Road.

Log Cabin Road Extension: Boulevard Road to Wiggins Road

~~An extension of Log Cabin Road between Boulevard Road to Wiggins Road is planned to improve east-west movement in the southeast Olympia area. The City~~

~~will build part of this two to three lane street; private development along the corridor will build the rest.~~

~~This connection will create a new east-west corridor that will parallel Yelm Highway. Consistent with standards, this new major collector will include bike lanes, sidewalks, planter strips, trees, lighting, and a curved design to slow vehicle speeds.~~

~~The new street is expected to increase peak-hour traffic by approximately 60 percent on the existing section of Log Cabin Road (west of Boulevard Road), according to a 2011 projection of future peak-hour trips. This is within the capacity of the existing lanes on Log Cabin Road. The connection will also better distribute traffic in the area, and reduce the projected growth in traffic on Wiggins Road, Boulevard Road, Morse Merryman Road, and Yelm Highway. (Ordinance #5861, 12/15/98 and Ordinance #5661, 12/26/96)~~

This comprehensive plan includes specific language and guidance on street connections, and it proposes major street connections in parts of the City. The Log Cabin Road extension was proposed in previous comprehensive plans to connect Boulevard Road to Wiggins Road. This street connection was identified as a need for both the local and regional transportation system. It would serve motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and potentially transit.

A 2016 evaluation indicated that the Log Cabin Road street connection is likely not needed until about 2040. In 2021, the City Council removed the Log Cabin extension and other smaller street connections in this vicinity from this plan. Instead, in approximately 2030, the multimodal transportation needs in southeast Olympia will be studied. This in-depth evaluation is needed to understand the transportation and street connection needs in the southeast area. Because the Log Cabin Road street connection was identified as having regional significance, neighboring jurisdictions will also be involved in this evaluation. A public involvement process will be included in this evaluation.

Fones Road-18th Avenue Area Connectivity Evaluation

Eighteenth Avenue from Boulevard Road to the City of Lacey will continue to be the most northerly east-west major collector within the southeast area. In the past, other routes, north and south of 18th Avenue, have been proposed to help distribute the traffic. For example, in 1996, the City analyzed the proposed