

Preliminary Comprehensive Plan Amendment Supplemental Information

November 20, 2020

Reasons for No Roads in LBA Park

Topics – (underlined as titles in text below)

It is timely to remove the road from the plan.

The value of parks increases as our population grows denser.

The park, trails and wildlife habitat will be degraded.

Planning the road ignores climate emission reduction needs.

The park is valuable for climate sequestration and for wildlife habitat.

Land use has changed since this road was planned.

An alternate route is available.

Funding for this road is not forthcoming and removal avoids costs.

There is a lack of capacity west of Boulevard Road.

The road would go through the Wellhead Protection Area for Olympia water supply, Hoffman Well.

It Is Timely To Remove The Road From The Comprehensive Plan.

The landscape in this geographic area of Olympia has changed—literally and figuratively. When the Log Cabin Extension first appeared on regional transportation plans in the 1990s, the LBA Woods was slated to be cleared for 800-1000 homes. The developers of the Bentrige and Trillium parcels were expected to directly bear the cost of this roadway extension for most of its distance. And these developers were expected to pay approximately \$3 million in transportation impact fees to assist the City with its share of the project costs. These homes will not be built, these fees will not be paid, and this traffic will not be generated.

Now, instead of moving automobile traffic through a heavily developed landscape, the proposed transportation corridor would move traffic through the heart of 133 acres of mature upland forest that is now public park land. The 800 to 1,000 housing units are expected to be built elsewhere in the City, generating traffic issues in those other areas.

It is important to remove this project sooner, rather than later. The longer the project is in the plans, the more investments will be made assuming it will be built and more difficult to stop. As long as it is a possibility, the city may be less motivated to invest in needed improvements along Morse-Merryman Road.

We know that building more roads induces (encourages) more driving. As Thurston Regional Planning Council Director, Marc Daily, said during a Sept. 15, 2020 meeting of the Thurston County Transportation Policy Board, “We cannot build our way out of congestion.... Adding capacity temporarily helps things but in the long term, it induces demand therefore it gets more people out on the roadway.” Traffic planners need to start planning for a world with no road through LBA Park

The Value Of Parks Increases As Our Population Becomes Denser.

When the site was to be used for an 800-1000-unit development, the road was perhaps necessary and valuable. A “plus sign” in terms of value. But now, because the development has been scrapped, and people taxed themselves to buy the site as a park, the road is a huge “minus sign” subtracting from the value of the Park.

What Moves You is the title of the 2045 Thurston Regional Transportation Plan. To answer this literal question figuratively, what really “moves” our community through the LBA Woods are trails—not roads. Trails move us beneath the closed tree canopy, around wetlands, and among wildflowers. They connect us to nature, not to traffic circles. They provide peace and tranquility. Trails are for wandering and exploring, not for spoiling with a car. They are safe for wildlife and do not cause road kill. Trails provide mental and physical health benefits and contribute to the well-being of our community.

The road will replace peace and quiet with pollution and traffic noise. Sadly, there is no metric to gauge the contribution a forest makes to our community’s health and well-being.

The Park, Trails and Wildlife Habitat Will Be Degraded.

The existing trail network through LBA Woods will be erased: The mile-long extension road bisects the forested parkland already bisected by the Morse-Merryman Reservoir Access Road. The proposed road will sever existing trails at 10 separate points. Most of these impacted trails traverse relatively flat terrain and are especially suitable for people with limited mobility. LBA Woods is the only Olympia City park with such an abundance and diversity of trails for all fitness levels.

It will destroy the contiguity and connectivity of wildlife habitat. The road harms a valuable eco-system and causes wildlife road kills, noise, exhaust and light pollution.

Planning The Road Ignores Climate Emission Reduction Needs.

This road is moving us in the wrong direction. The goals of the new Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan clearly state that in order to meet the ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions, our community must move aggressively in the direction of preserving urban forests, reducing reliance on GHG-emitting vehicles and shifting more trips to zero-emission modes of transportation such as biking and walking.

For many years the City and the Region have expressed an intention to reduce motor vehicle use. This was originally a goal because the expense of new roads was not sustainable. Now, an even more compelling reason is the need to reduce GHG emissions to stop climate change.

Rather than build this road, the funds for this the project (\$8.6 million) should be used for transportation projects that support the city’s multi-modal transportation goals.

[The city is in the midst of a process to change its level of service standards – the very standard used to justify construction of this road – to a multi-modal level of service methodology.]

The Comprehensive Plan does not yet reflect the (currently draft) Climate Mitigation Plan. It does, however include the commitment to reduce GHG emissions. *Simply put, if we plan to build for even more traffic, we are planning to fail at the reduction of GHG emissions.*

In the Comprehensive Plan Natural Environment Chapter:

GN8 Community sources of emissions of carbon dioxide and other climate-changing greenhouse gases are identified, monitored and reduced.

PN8.1 Participate with local and state partners in the development of a regional climate action plan aimed at reducing greenhouse gases by 45 percent below 2015 levels by 2030 and by 85 percent below 2015 levels by 2050.

The Park Is Valuable For Climate Sequestration And Wildlife Habitat.

We need healthy urban forests. This road will destroy a mile-long swath of closed-canopy forest and degrade the integrity of a mature upland forest ecosystem in the LBA Woods. Forests function best in large contiguous blocks, not in isolated fragments created by roadways and clear-cuts and other major disturbances.

Recent scientific studies by the National Audubon Society show that refuges for migratory birds, such as the LBA Woods and other urban forests, are critical for maintaining global biodiversity. This major collector will bisect existing contiguous habitat and result in the loss of a closed-canopy forest and degrade a healthy urban forest that is an increasingly important refuge for wildlife in our region.

The City would demonstrate that it is not serious about addressing the impacts of climate change if they continue to plan for this road. Planners and policy makers must consider the environmental impact of clear-cutting and paving a swath of native forest, of rising levels of CO₂ from automobile emissions, of the ecosystem services lost, and of the opportunities for carbon sequestration squandered. Every tree sequesters 50 – 100 pounds of carbon every year.

The Natural Environment Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan includes the following goals and policies:

GN1 Natural resources and processes are conserved and protected by Olympia's planning, regulatory, and management activities.

PN1.4 Conserve and restore natural systems, such as wetlands and stands of mature trees, to contribute to solving environmental issues.

GN3 A healthy and diverse urban forest is protected, expanded, and valued for its contribution to the environment and community.

PN3.2 Measure the tree canopy and set a city-wide target for increasing it through tree preservation and planting.

Land Use Has Changed Since This Road Was Planned.

Several land use designations and zoning changes have happened since this road was originally put on the map.

First and foremost, the property that became LBA Woods Park will no longer have 800-1000 homes constructed. This was a major traffic generator source for the road.

Second, the area surrounding Chambers Basin was downzoned following a study in 2006 showing that the flood potential could not sustain urban levels of density. This lower density zoning protects ground water and prevents flooding. This also reduced the potential for increased traffic in this area.

Third, the City has adopted new wellhead protection zones for drinking water quality that include a portion of the path of the proposed roadway.

Pragmatically, the overwhelming sources within Olympia of potential traffic to use this road have been halted. Any traffic modeling would show that the primary sources of traffic that might use this road are from outside Olympia. The city should prioritize transportation expenditures that primarily benefit local residents and taxpayers.

An Alternate Route Is Available

The City and the Region are aiming to reduce travel to reduce GHG emissions. This will allow the Morse Merryman Road and other routes to handle future traffic as they are currently doing.

Morse Merryman road serves one elementary school, and is a major conduit to Washington Middle School. Improvements to Morse Merryman for walking and cycling safety should happen with or without this road. Previous cost estimates for Morse Merryman improvements have been excessive because they assumed large increases in traffic, which is an outcome that the community is not seeking for many reasons including climate mitigation. The cost of needed sidewalk and bicycle lane improvements along Morse-Merryman are much more modest than the \$8.6 million estimated cost of this new road project.

Funding For This Road Is Not Forthcoming And Removal Avoids Costs

The housing developments planned for this area will not happen and therefore impact fees will not be collected. The budget for this road included expenditure of impact fees to

help pay for the road. The growth will happen somewhere else in the City and those fees should be used to pay for the related impacts for that growth.

The Log Cabin Extension Road is a bad investment. The longer the road remains in the plans, the more money will go into projects inside Olympia and in adjacent parts of Lacey to connect to this proposed transportation corridor. In 15 to 20 years, the weight of these “investments” and the foregone opportunities for alternative roads will make it more difficult to reprioritize the proper corridor improvements. It is time to stop funding this \$8.55 million road and to plan to use our limited transportation dollars more productively elsewhere.

There Is A Lack Of Capacity West Of Boulevard Road

The current comprehensive plan description for this road includes a statement:

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.

While technically a short segment of Log Cabin Road west of the Boulevard roundabout to the intersection/transition to Cain Road has the ‘capacity’ for increased traffic, the remainder of the street system north and west of that intersection does not. Installing the Log Cabin Road segment will direct traffic west where there are numerous congestion and safety problems. The budget and planning for Log Cabin Road Extension does not show the costs of improvements that would be needed west of Boulevard Road to make the street safe for increased traffic.

The following segments of roadway west of the Boulevard Roundabout are predicted to receive increased traffic from the Log Cabin Road Extension but have serious congestion and safety issues that would result from this traffic.

- Cain Road north to 22nd Avenue – sidewalk on only one side, not bike lanes.
- Cain and North Street T-intersection – mini roundabout planned, limited right of way
- North Street west of Cain to Henderson – sidewalk on only one side
- North Street and Henderson intersection – currently congested at peak times.
- North Street west of Henderson – passes high school, ends in Tumwater at highly congested area near Cleveland Avenue / Tumwater Safeway. Geographic constraints in this area will make it very difficult to manage even more traffic than is already moving through.
- North Street currently experiences morning and evening congestion, particularly when Olympia High School is in session. Olympia High School traffic is not destined for the receiving area of this road and will not benefit from it – the receiving area is in Lacey, which is in the North Thurston School District.

- Henderson Boulevard north of North Street – passes an elementary school. City staff have struggled to reduce speeds in this area and have had limited success with existing traffic volumes. Increased traffic volumes will mean increased driver frustration, which can lead to more aggressive driving. This is precisely the wrong result.

The Road Would Go Through The Wellhead Protection Area For Olympia Water Supply, Hoffman Well.

The Natural Environment Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan includes the following goals and policies:

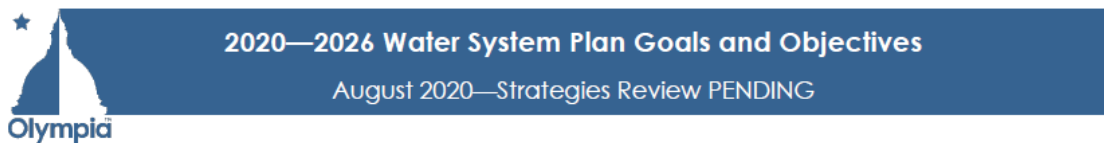
Goal 5 Ground and surface waters are protected from land uses and activities that harm water quality and quantity.

PN5.1 Reduce the rate of expansion of impervious surface in the community.

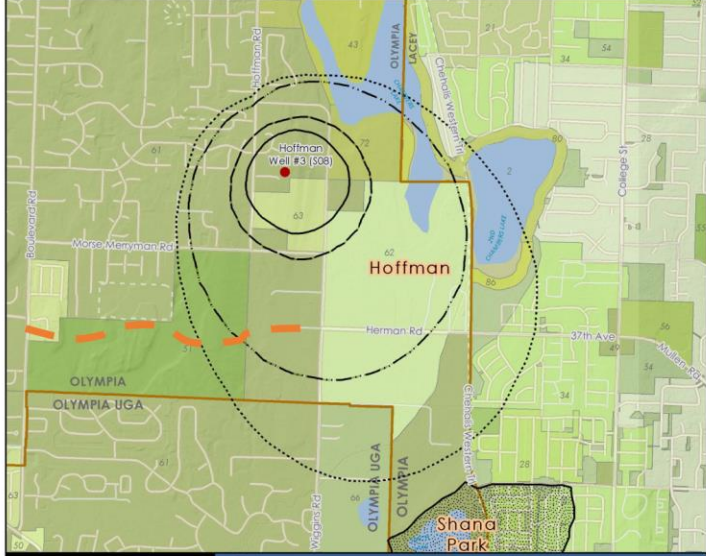
PN5.6 Limit or prohibit uses that pose a risk to water supplies in Drinking Water (Wellhead) protection areas based on the best scientific information available and the level of risk. Require restoration of any such areas that have been degraded.

Further, the Draft Goals and Objectives for the 2020-2026 Water System Plan indicate the City intends to strengthen protection of groundwater. A road could threaten the groundwater through ongoing runoff from road use as well as a potential accidental spill.

See Hoffman Wellhead protection area map below, with a general indication of the proposed road location added in red.



<p>Goal 5. Groundwater quality is protected to ensure clean drinking water for present and future generations and to avoid the need for expensive replacement or treatment facilities. (Chapter 7)</p>
<p>Objective 5A. Prevent contamination of groundwater through surveillance and response.</p>
<p>Objective 5B. Strengthen and exercise partnerships with citizens and state/local agencies.</p>
<p>Objective 5C. Improve program policies, procedures and tools to enhance the effectiveness of groundwater protection efforts.</p>



Vicinity Map **Hoffman**

Wellhead Protection Area	Well Types
Groundwater Time-of-Travel Zones	Source Well
— 6 Months	● Source Well
- - - 1 Year	
..... 5 Years	
- · - · 10 Years	

Zoning	Code	Description
2	AQUATIC	
21	HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	
28	LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL 0-4	
28	LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL 3-6	
34	MODERATE DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	
43	MIXED RESIDENTIAL 10-18 UNITS	
49	NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL	
50	NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL	
51	NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGE	
52	OFFICE COMMERCIAL	
54	OPEN SPACE INSTITUTIONAL	
55	OPEN SPACE PARK	
56	OPEN SPACE SCHOOL	
61	RESIDENTIAL 4-8	
62	SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (CHAMBERS BASIN)	
63	RESIDENTIAL 6-12	
66	RESIDENTIAL 1 UNIT PER 5 ACRE	
72	RESIDENTIAL MULTIFAMILY 18	
80	SHORELINE RESIDENTIAL	
86	URBAN CONSERVANCY	

Figure 7.5 I