

CHAPTER 4 SR 305



State Route (SR) 305 is the State Highway System's primary connection via the Washington State Ferry (WSF) between Seattle and the Kitsap Peninsula. Traffic during the morning and evening peak travel hours is congested, resulting in long delays. This chapter reviews the issues associated with SR 305 and its impact to the City's roadway system. The chapter also describes a special study that was performed, and recommendations for future actions.

Summary of SR 305 Issues

SR 305 is significant to the City's roadway system as the major north-south travel Corridor on the Island, not only for through traffic traveling to and from the ferry dock, but also for Island residents and employees. The Comprehensive Plan goals and policies address the LOS standard, access to the Island via the Agate Pass Bridge, improvements to the highway, impacts to the highway from the City's Comprehensive Plan elements, and off-Island improvements that affect on-Island traffic.

As a state highway, WSDOT is the agency responsible for the operation and maintenance of SR 305. This means that WSDOT sets the minimum LOS standard and is responsible for the funding and implementation of any improvements to the highway. According to WSDOT policy, control of the highway within a City's corporate limits can be transferred to the City if its population is greater than 22,500. Bainbridge Island exceeded this population threshold in 2010 with a population of 23,025, according to US Census data. As a result, some of the responsibility for highway improvements could shift to the City, however because SR 305 is a regional facility and is listed as a Highway of Statewide Significance, some responsibility could also remain with the WSDOT.

SR 305 LOS Impacts

The traffic analysis (described in Chapter 3) shows that current conditions on SR 305 do not meet the WSDOT minimum LOS standards, and future traffic will be even worse. Currently, along the SR 305 Corridor all collector street intersections fail and one secondary arterial intersection (Koura Rd.) does not meet level of service standards. The PM peak hour average speed along the seven-mile Corridor is currently 16 miles per hour, with several roadway segments operating below the average speed. The problem is most severe at the north end of the Island, where there are large back-ups beginning at the Suquamish Way intersection and Agate Pass Bridge. By 2021, all of these locations will have failed



LOS. Additionally, by 2035 the Day Road intersection will be LOS D and approaching falling below standard. The Corridor is forecasted to operate with an average speed of 14 mph by 2035, which is less than one-third the posted 45 mph speed limit at the north end of the Island. The expected level of service for the highway without improvement, described as the No Action alternative as shown for the 2015 and 2035 years in Figures 4-1 and 4-2.



Figure 4-1
SR 305 Level of Service
Existing Conditions





Figure 4-2
SR 305 Level of Service
2035 No Action





What Makes SR 305 Different?

The traffic issues on SR 305 are different than the issues associated with the rest of the Island's roadway system for several reasons. First, the highway facility is owned and operated by the WSDOT. This is significant because WSDOT is the lead agency and has primary decision making and financial responsibility for improvements to the highway. Second, even though the highway functions as a main north-south Corridor for Island travel, it is also heavily used by regional traffic, especially by vehicles traveling to and from the ferry terminal in Winslow. Because the WSF controls the ferry schedule, they have a great deal of influence on when and how much ferry traffic is using the highway. Third, the highway experiences substandard levels of service over most of the seven-mile length of the highway on the Island and the Agate Pass Bridge. Improvements to the highway would require several large projects that could be expected to require significant time to complete the planning, design, and construction of each, as well as a significant financial outlay.

SR 305 Special Study

Because of the major issues associated with SR 305 improvements, a preliminary study was undertaken to determine what kind of possible improvements could resolve the traffic issues without looking into the environmental, financial, or other issues associated with the improvements. The goal of the study was to identify possible improvements along SR 305 to compare their effectiveness to improve mobility along the Corridor, improve permeability across the Corridor, and provide reliable access to neighborhoods whose only access is from SR 305. Based on this information, the NMTAC and City Staff, included recommendations in the IWTP to better position the City to advocate for improvements.



Because SR 305 is a state facility, all improvements would require a commitment by WSDOT to be constructed. The City could participate in the improvements in order to improve mobility and level of service for the City roadway system.

Special Study Alternatives

Three preliminary alternatives were developed to examine different future scenarios to see if there is a way to overcome the SR 305 operational deficiencies. Alternatives for at grade signalized intersections, at grade roundabouts, and separated grade intersection improvements. Refer to Figures 4-3, 4-4, and 4-5.

Special Study Results and recommendations for further study

The three improvement alternatives were analyzed and compared to see how well they were able to meet LOS minimum standards. The special study compares at-grade and separated grade alternatives. Both at grade and separated grade alternatives maintain an acceptable LOS at intersections. However, in some locations alternative longer routes would need to be taken to access intersections meeting LOS standards. Additional intersection improvements could be evaluated in a more comprehensive plan. Roadway level of service failures are not mitigated in either of the two alternatives but would require additional roadway capacity along the SR 305 Corridor (e.g. in the form of added travel lanes) or decreased volume.



Further study is needed to design alignments and develop reliable cost estimates to plan for maintaining adequate level of service both currently and in the next 20 years along SR 305. Grade separated alternatives would be significantly more costly to implement than at grade alternatives. Both alternatives achieve acceptable LOS. Therefore, it may be difficult to justify the additional cost of grade-separated alternatives, especially larger interchanges. Some combination of intersection improvements and limited access is needed to reduce congestion and provide for reliable access. It may be practical to incorporate less extensive grade separation options for both motorized and/or non-motorized modes to maintain permeability along the Corridor.

The SR 305 Corridor as it exists today and with any future improvements has a significant impact on many aspects of transportation on Bainbridge Island. Further study should be inclusive of and comprehensive to address all aspects. The following issues have been identified for inclusion in further study of the Corridor:

- Operations of adjoining roadway networks and connectivity – The study should consider the effectiveness of the adjacent roadway networks along the Corridor. There may be opportunities to mitigate cut-through traffic and improve connectivity. There may be impacts to circulation and neighborhoods.
- Corridor permeability – Permeability for all modes remains a key consideration for any scenario.
- Maintaining reliable access for neighborhoods – For many neighborhoods, such as in the Agate Pass and West Port Madison areas, the only access is from roadways that connect to SR 305. Maintaining reliable access is an important aspect of any scenario.
- Sound to Olympics Trail and intra-Island trails – The City envisions a network of regional and sub-regional separated pathways along and crossing the SR 305 Corridor. The existing and potentially wider highway presents a barrier to many users. Permeability for active modes of transportation is a key consideration for intersection and other improvements.
- Bus transit – Improving efficiency of and access to transit along the Corridor is an important aspect that should be studied and integrated into all scenarios. Collaboration with Kitsap Transit is needed to explore possibilities.
- Vegetative Management – Preserve natural character and screening of SR 305 with trees.

Other SR 305 Issues

The deficient level of service is the most significant issue currently affecting the City's transportation system. The bridge, park and ride, and off-Island improvement issues will be addressed in future studies in conjunction with an overall plan for SR 305 improvements. The City should take a leadership role in initiating studies to develop improvement projects and not defer to WSDOT's timeline and priorities. The City should partner with Kitsap Transit and others to reduce vehicular demand on the Highway.

Past Improvements to SR 305

Since the 2004 IWTS, WSDOT has implemented a number of intersection projects including the following:

- Signal improvements at N. Madison.
- Signal timing optimization for peak hour ferry offloading at the Winslow Way intersection



- Signal timing optimization for the Day road intersection to improve access from Day and Miller.
- Bike through lane on right improvements to the north and south legs of the intersections at Madison, Sportsman’s Club/ N. Madison, and Day Roads.
- Right hand turn lane improvement to the south leg of the Suquamish Intersection, including bicycle lane, sidewalk, and crossing improvements.





Figure 4-4
SR 305 Level of Service
2035 Alternative B





Figure 4-5
SR 305 Level of Service
2035 Alternative C





SR 305 Recommendations:

A number of interim and long term recommendations are as follows based on the SR 305 Special Study.

Interim Improvements:

The following interim improvements are recommended at the time of this Report for the next 6 years:

- Advocate for WSDOT to include “do not block” intersection signage at intersections north of Day Road, Hidden Cove, West Port Madison, and Agate Point in the above WSDOT project.
- Intersection improvements at West Port Madison eliminating access to Seabold and providing a receiving lane (similar to Agate Pass) for south bound traffic. The intent of this proposal is to reduce cut-through traffic in the Seabold neighborhood and improve access to SR 305 from West Port Madison Road.
- Advocate for consistent 8 foot or wider paved shoulders along the full length of the Corridor to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians.
- Advocate for the Sound to Olympics Trail and its branch trails.
- Advocate for improved non-vehicular access to ferry and bus transit including park-and-ride and bike parking opportunities both on and off island.

Long Term Recommendations:

The following long term improvement projects are recommended:

- Advocate for continued improvements at the intersection to Suquamish to address north-south mobility/capacity.
- Advocate for capacity improvements to roadway segments north of the Miller Road intersection. Alternatives may include HOV lanes, a reversible HOV lane, or shoulder use by HOV's. Consider accommodation for bus rapid transit.
- Advocate for Agate Pass Bridge upgrades or replacement.
- Advocate for a separated pathway for non-motorized users in conjunction with other improvements.
- Advocate for limited access improvements at Reitan Road in conjunction with the bridge replacement. This would include access for Reitan Road and possibly connecting frontage roads from both sides of the highway.
- Advocate for intersection improvements at Agate Point and West Port Madison to restore access to these “highway locked” areas. A joint signal may be the most economical solution, if spaced evenly with adjacent signals allowing for signal synchronization. This could interrupt the continuous traffic at peak hours should the WSDOT proposed roundabout be constructed at Suquamish Way. Note that this signal could be programmed to flash yellow/ red during non-peak hours.
- Advocate for intersection improvements at Day Road. Improvements to accommodate additional (4 lanes) in the north-south direction at the signalized intersection would help with queuing for operational efficiency. The Phelps Road intersection with Day Road is in close proximity to SR 305. If funding can be secured for a two-lane roundabout it may be a preferred solution to address this complexity. With either a wider signalized intersection or two lane roundabout, additional facility investments would also be needed to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.



The above recommendations are based on information from the special study that was included in the update of this Plan. The special study was limited to the LOS data developed using the updated traffic data and traffic model. Further study and preliminary design and engaging the community in a process for decision making is recommended prior to developing and prioritizing specific improvement projects. The priorities for funding are based on reducing traffic congestion on SR 305 and maintaining access at intersection locations with no alternative access.

At the time of the writing of this Plan a gas tax increase had been passed by the State Legislature. The City of Bainbridge Island, Kitsap County, the Suquamish Tribe, and the City of Poulsbo are organizing a multi-agency effort to plan improvements for the Corridor. WSDOT is undertaking a State-wide effort for planning Corridors including SR 305, called “Corridor Sketches”.

New State funding may provide for intersection improvement at Suquamish Way and as much as \$6 million of improvements on Bainbridge Island. The level of funding for Bainbridge could address intersection improvement and other related work at the Day Road intersection, the Agatewood/West Port Madison intersections, and possibly some limited access roadway improvements. At other intersections along SR 305 where there are alternative routes to access SR 305 access restrictions would be employed for peak hours until additional funding can be secured.