



## Kingston Transportation Issues

Dear Kingston Residents,

*Many of you have reached out to me to express your concerns and ask questions about what is being done about the traffic situation in Kingston. I am very aware of the gridlock that ferry traffic causes in peak season, and I acknowledge the frustration for those of you that are just trying to get around town, but are unable. I also recognize the financial impacts to businesses due to traffic congestion as well as the pedestrian safety concerns. I prepared the following Frequently Asked Questions document to let you know of steps that are being taken for long-term and near-term solutions to the traffic issues. My hope is that as we reach key milestones along the way, we can keep this document up to date as a shared community resource.*

*The specific long-term solutions outlined below have been developed over many years by Kingston residents and state agencies, with support from Kitsap County. The timing is crucial to ensure our success in moving this long-term vision forward. The combined HWY 104 realignment and remote holding lot solution to traffic congestion has made great strides, but to be competitive and successful in our future requests for construction funding, we all need to be on the same page. Our greatest disservice to ourselves would be having funders walk away because they don't believe there is community consensus on the solution.*

*We have reviewed any number of options over the past several years, many that folks have even shared on social media outlets. But experienced traffic engineers and ferry operations staff believe this combined solution can work, and therefore I ask that you support these projects. Starting over or moving in a different direction would take many more years, more money and would erase the hard work that has been done. There will still be many opportunities for public input, and your ideas for specifics within the larger projects will be considered when we reach the appropriate milestones of the projects.*

*The table below has the latest information on what is being done to alleviate ferry traffic, but also addresses some other questions I have been hearing. I want to make sure that the public has accurate information and is not relying on rumors or inaccurate information. Please contact me at [rgelder@co.kitsap.wa.us](mailto:rgelder@co.kitsap.wa.us) or (360)337-7080 if you have questions or need clarification.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Gelder". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "R" at the beginning.

## *What is being done about ferry backups on Highway 104?*

### *Kingston Complete Streets*

Even before Complete Streets, there were efforts to improve traffic in Kingston by adding a holding lot near Lindvog and rerouting traffic to First Street. In 2000, the *Kingston Traffic Circulation Study* was completed by WSDOT. In 2007, Commissioner Endresen led a group of Kingston representatives and state and county agencies to work on solutions. The focus of that group was to reroute SR 104 to First Street. In 2016, Kitsap County adopted the [Kingston Complete Streets](#) plan. The plan was funded with a 2013 PSRC Rural Town Centers grant. It was a collaborative effort involving the Kingston Complete Streets Advisory Committee, the Kingston Citizens Advisory Council, the Kingston Economic Development Council (which was sunsetted in 2016), the Port of Kingston, WSDOT and WSF. The purpose of the study was to develop planning strategies, design recommendations and projects that will make downtown Kingston a safer, more accessible, more distinct, more vibrant and more attractive place to be through the application of *Complete Streets* principles and concepts. Twenty projects were identified, including the rerouting of ferry traffic from Highway 104 to 1<sup>st</sup> Street, and the upcoming [Washington Boulevard enhancements](#). As a document from 2016, planning cost estimates are likely to change by the time of construction.

### *Highway 104 Working Group*

Since 2016, the Highway 104 Working Group has been meeting to discuss options for ferry traffic mitigation. The current group has similar representation to a group that worked with former North Kitsap Commissioners. It has representatives from the State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Washington State Ferries (WSF), Washington State Patrol (WSP), Kitsap Transit, Kitsap County Public Works, and several community members (Jerry Kirschner, Walt Elliot, Dave Wetter, Tania Issa, Susan Golden, and Cam Fletcher).

A \$500,000 proviso from the state revived discussions about long-term options for traffic mitigation. The Working Group was tasked by WSDOT with confirming the best long-term solution and deciding how funds should be spent. The decision was made to fund a feasibility study for the Lindvog holding lot and signage improvements, as Kitsap County was successful in securing other funding to move the realignment project along (\$740,000 for preliminary engineering for the SR 104 realignment, and \$1.4 million for right-of-way acquisition along 1<sup>st</sup> Street. (See Realignment of Highway 104 section below for more detail)).

With consensus on the long-term strategy affirmed, the group meets as needed when key milestones are reached or key decisions need to be made.

*Short-term  
Traffic  
Management*

Senator Rolfes led the effort in getting a budget appropriation for Ferries that will in part pay for law enforcement to hold traffic at Lindvog Road and distribute boarding passes during peak times for the next two years. While this is WSF funding, the Commissioner's Office convened a conversation and distributed a draft schedule for law enforcement staffing for comment from relevant agencies, including State Patrol, Sheriff's Office, Ferries and WSDOT.

The wording in the budget appropriation is as follows:

*"\$650,000 of the Puget Sound ferry operations account – state appropriation is provided solely for increased staffing at Washington ferry terminals to meet increased workload and customer expectations. Within the amount provided in this subsection, the department shall contract with uniformed officers for additional traffic control assistance at the Kingston ferry terminal during peak ferry travel times, with a particular focus on Sundays and holiday weekends. Traffic control methods should include, but not be limited to, holding traffic on the shoulder at Lindvog Road until space opens for cars at the tollbooths and dock, and management of traffic on Highway 104 in order to ensure Kingston residents and business owners have access to businesses, roads, and driveways."*

While the money is for terminal operations throughout the system, the Washington State Patrol estimates that it would cost \$235,000 in this biennium for Kingston. WSF is working with WSP on finalizing specific dates for scheduled law enforcement assistance. This will make staffing more predictable for the community as well as for ferry customers and law enforcement. We know that members of the community still have unanswered questions. Updates will be provided once a contract is finalized and a schedule is published. Call WSF Customer Service with questions or concerns at 511, (888) 808-7977 or (206) 464-6400.

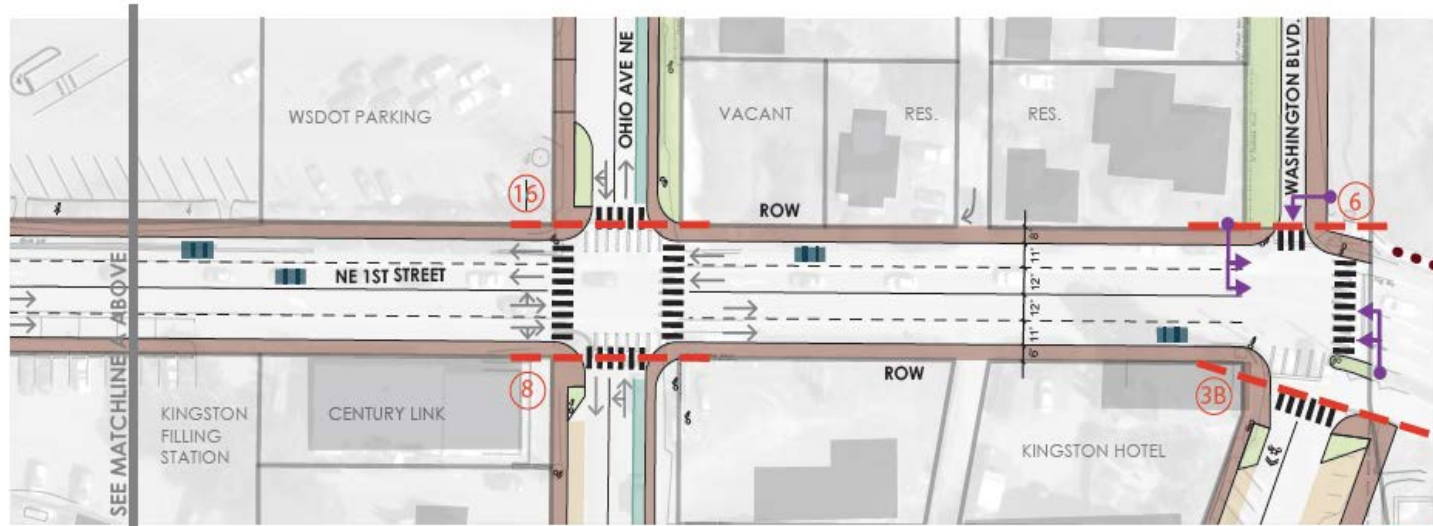
*Realignment of  
SR 104*

Kitsap County received \$740,000 for preliminary engineering for the corridor realignment, which it passed along to WSDOT. WSDOT is contributing \$115,500 to the effort. The engineering should be complete by the end of 2019, and will be presented to the residents at a public meeting. The designs will also be available online.

Kitsap County prepared a grant for Right of Way acquisition through the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) Rural Town Centers grant competition. The \$1.4 million request ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 12 projects and was funded. The presentation given during the funding competition can be found [here](#).

As for future construction funding, we will likely compete in the next regional transportation funding competition through PSRC which begins in February of 2020, and will allocate funding for 2023-24. The next Rural Town Centers competition is in 2021. We will also be working with the 23<sup>rd</sup> legislative delegation for assistance through any state transportation packages, which will be a great opportunity for community involvement and advocacy at that time.

Overall functionality is increased in tandem with the holding lot at Lindvog.



### *Lindvog Holding Lot*

The Port of Kingston is managing a feasibility study for construction of a holding lot for ferry traffic at the corner of Lindvog and SR 104. It is being paid for by the same legislative budget proviso to WSDOT as noted previously. Kitsap County planners and engineers are working closely with the Port, WSDOT and a consultant to prepare the feasibility study, which will determine capacity and potential functionality.

Deliverables for the study include - capacity analysis, right-of-way access analysis, critical areas and wetland delineations with a mitigation plan, geotechnical analysis, cultural analysis, active traffic management operational analysis, a conceptual site plan, and a community outreach plan. Stormwater needs for the location will also be reviewed and will inform any future preliminary engineering.

Once the feasibility study is complete (anticipated late 2019), funding will need to be acquired to move forward.

Kitsap Transit does not currently have plans for a Park & Ride at the Lindvog location but is pursuing funding for a Park & Ride lot at the corner of SR 104 and Bond Road.

WSDOT owns the two parcels highlighted in yellow. Kitsap County owns the parcel outlined in green.



### *Improvements to ferry operations*

The Kingston Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC) will be working with WSF on possible improvements to ferry information and signage, including radio information and road signage. WSF maintains a webpage about the Kingston terminal, available [here](#). The site includes multiple cameras so travelers can see the ferry lines at the dock and along Highway 104. You may also sign up for alerts from WSF [here](#).

The Kingston Citizens Advisory Council (KCAC) Transportation Committee did a lot of work about signage and made it available to WSF and the Highway 104 Working Group. Members also met with WSDOT in Kingston to discuss pedestrian signage options, and some of their recommendations were installed. The KCAC Transportation Committee also shared suggestions for demand management, variable message signage and boarding pass education.

WSF and WSDOT maintain the variable message signs that can be seen on Highway 104 west of the Hood Canal Bridge and along Highway 3 that warn of long waits at the Kingston Terminal.

Currently, the ferry holding lot is loaded according to the protocol below:

Lane #

- 1: Transit and shuttle buses
- 2: ADA pick up and drop off, motorcycles and bicycles
- 3-5: Oversized vehicles
- 6: Carpool, vanpool, medical preference, elevator access, restroom access and other ADA vehicles
- 7-15: The 126 most recent cars through the toll booth
- 16: A safety separation & emergency access between the most recent arrivals and those waiting from the last sailing
- 17: Traffic leftover from the last load, who will be the first on the next boat
- 18-27: The remaining 160 cars already placed on the dock prior to later arrivals placed in lane seven

*Highway 104  
Signals*

Some members of the community have raised concerns that signals along Highway 104 cause traffic to stack up in town when the boats are offloading. WSDOT has recently checked signals in Kingston and verified that they are working correctly. The light on 1<sup>st</sup> Street was programmed to provide a brief gap in ferry traffic as a result of concerns about a sudden flush of traffic that quickly overwhelms the town's transportation system. Equipment embedded in the roadway detects the unloading ferry traffic. Once traffic gets beyond NE 1<sup>st</sup> Street, WSDOT signals are programmed to help ferry customers leave Kingston. If drivers follow the speed limit and there is no side street traffic, ferry traffic will most likely encounter green lights at Bannister and Lindvog Roads.

*Other Highway  
104 Intersections*

There is a plan to expand the scope of the Highway 104 Working Group to partner with WSDOT on the SR 104/SR 307 corridor between Kingston and Poulsbo. Through this process, similar to the process with the SR 305 corridor, the group would identify corridor and intersection improvements and develop a list for funding through a future transportation package.

*Contact  
information*

If you have specific comments, questions or complaints about ferry issues, please call WSF at 511, (206) 464-6400 or (888) 808-7977. Or, you may visit their website, which has an online form that can be submitted at <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Ferries/infodesk/customerfeedback>.

If you have comments, questions or complaints about issues related to the Highway 104 roadway, please email [orfeedback@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:orfeedback@wsdot.wa.gov).