

III. WHEATON WAY CORRIDOR

BACKGROUND

Wheaton Way (State Route 303) is a five-lane principal arterial roadway that bisects the Wheaton - Riddell District Center. The long term configuration of the roadway has important implications for the District Center and east Bremerton as a whole. It is generally accepted that at some future time a substantial roadway improvement to the SR 303 corridor will be required. Section III of the Sub Area Plan provides guiding principles for Wheaton Way's reconfiguration from the City's perspective as developed during the Wheaton - Riddell Sub Area Plan. The focus is on urban design and transportation needs. The Sub Area Plan for Wheaton - Riddell seeks a coordinated and efficient future development pattern in one of the City's District Centers. Without careful consideration of Wheaton Way the Sub Area Plan would not be complete.

SR 303 Transportation Planning

In 2002 the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) completed a study of long term transportation needs in the SR 303 corridor. WSDOT produced an evaluation of impacts for a range of alternatives for north / south circulation in a study area extending from downtown Bremerton to Silverdale. The study arrived at a concept level preferred alternative for future circulation improvements in the Wheaton Way corridor.

The State selected a preferred alternative focused on extensive Right of Way (ROW) Improvements on Wheaton Way rather than dispersed improvements to other north / south arterials in the vicinity. The preferred alternative calls for access control and widening of the roadway to six lanes with additional turn lanes at key intersections such as Wheaton - Riddell. The State's preferred alternative calls for the outer lane in each direction to be dedicated rapid transit / HOV lanes during peak periods, and open to all vehicles during non peak periods. City of Bremerton electeds and other agencies participated in the study. However, at the time the City had not yet adopted its 10 year Comprehensive Plan Update and did not have a recently prepared planning framework to evaluate the State's proposals.

During roughly the same timeframe Kitsap Transit conducted a study of long term public transit potential in the SR 303 corridor. It is likely that SR 303 from Bremerton to Silverdale (along with SR 305 from Poulsbo to Winslow) will be among the first corridors in Kitsap County to receive substantial investment in an improved system of rapid transit. Kitsap Transit contracted consultant Nelson Nygard to study various modes of rapid transit and made recommendations for SR 303. The Nelson Nygard study concluded that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) would be the most effective solution for future transit in the corridor based on cost, physical configuration and other factors.

BRT is a system of upgraded high capacity busses running on frequent intervals, that receive advantages to move the busses past traffic (such as HOV lanes), with stops at select stations only. The Nelson Nygard study included a review of intersection queue jumping for BRT as a potential method to advance buses through traffic. The queue jumping option is pursued as in interim measure in this Sub Area Plan.

The Sub Area Plan works within the framework of the WSDOT SR303 corridor study and Kitsap Transit's study. Generally the Sub Area Plan accommodates conclusions of both. However, it is important to note that neither of the previous studies detailed upgrades to a site specific or design level. The Sub Area Plan takes steps towards a future physical design concept for SR 303 within the study area and by extension for other urbanized sections of the corridor in Bremerton. The design principles articulated in Section III of the Sub Area Plan will help guide City policy as plans for the SR303 corridor move into the design and implementation stages in the coming years.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Wheaton Way in the vicinity of the area is the primary north / south circulation route in Central Kitsap. It is configured with 5 lanes, two northbound and two southbound, with a center turning lane. At major intersections there are additional right hand turn pockets. In the study area there is not currently a dedicated right hand turn pocket in the northbound direction at Riddell Rd. Just north of the study area boundary (In Kitsap County) there is a dedicated right hand turn pocket in the southbound direction at Riddell Rd.

Wheaton Way is a high volume through corridor for commuter traffic to employment and the ferry terminal in Downtown Bremerton. Southbound volumes are greater in the morning peak period and northbound volumes are greater in the afternoon peak period, evidencing the importance of this route as a commuter corridor. At the time of the WSDOT study the Average Weekday Daily Traffic (AWDT) volume on Wheaton Way just north of Riddell Road was 33,500; at Sheridan Road 31,100; and on the Warren Avenue Bridge 41,900.

The WSDOT study suggested that in year 2030 under a no action alternative traffic volumes in the corridor would increase to 49,700 at Riddell Rd; 45,600 at Sheridan; and 67,200 on the bridge. Under the preferred alternative volumes were projected to increase to 58,000 at Riddell Rd; 56,300 at Sheridan; and 77,300 on the bridge. That marks an increase of about 16% more vehicles in the corridor at Riddell Rd. with the proposed improvements compared to without them. Further, the study estimated a 'mode split' between the number of travellers in Single Occupancy Vehicles vs. those using transit at 84% to 16% in 2030 with no improvement, and 74% / 26% under the preferred alternative. When proposing concept level design variations to the WSDOT preferred alternative, the City of Bremerton acknowledges that a review of how the improvements perform compared to these WSDOT projections will be required.

PREFERRED URBAN DESIGN

The following are the general design principles arrived at during the Sub Area Plan process for the redevelopment of Wheaton Way. Ideas and preferences for the Wheaton Way Corridor are based on collaborative discussion and work sessions with the public, property owners and transportation agencies during the fall and winter of 2006. The public expressed a strong desire for the Wheaton Way corridor to be more visually appealing and attractive. Most members of the public do not like the roadway's current character and do not view it as a place they like to go to.

The Sub Area Plan design team also held meetings with a transportation stakeholders working group including WSDOT and Kitsap Transit regarding the Wheaton Way reconfiguration and design. City meetings with WSDOT were highly productive, and arrived at a concept for improvements that may phase in over time. Phasing and careful design can allow for achievement of throughput transportation goals as well as a dramatically improved character and ambience for the corridor. The City will establish building setbacks and ROW improvement requirements to mesh with the phased Wheaton Way ROW improvements. (See IV.WF Wheaton Frontages)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SR 303 IMPROVEMENTS

See also illustrations on following pages.

1. Enhance the visual character of the Wheaton Way Corridor to create a strong sense of place.

- Create a boulevard that makes a gateway to Bremerton.
- Use plantings medians, and amenity strips along the roadway edge of sufficient size to enhance the visual character of the roadway.
- Upgrade pedestrian features such as sidewalks, paving, signage/wayfinding, street furniture bus shelters, and crosswalks.
- Underground the overhead utilities with redevelopment of the SR 303 corridor.
- Insert distinctive lighting fixtures at both the pedestrian and vehicle scale.

2. Maintain and improve traffic flow to meet future transportation needs of Central Kitsap.

- Implement access control and consolidate curb cuts to facilitate flow.
- Add dedicated turning pockets at key intersections including at Riddell northbound.
- Create a locally scaled frontage road adjacent to the principal roadway.
- Seek to accommodate WSDOT traffic volume and through-put goals.

3. Enhance the secondary circulation network to improve traffic flow.

- Encourage interior circulation and locally scaled frontage roads in the blocks fronting Wheaton Way.
- Locate the north / south bicycle route within the secondary circulation routes rather than adding bicycle lanes directly onto Wheaton Way.

4. Facilitate and integrate Bus Rapid Public Transit (or other transit) in the corridor.

- Accommodate Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Install a system of queue jumping at signalized intersections for BRT within right turn pockets.
- Integrate BRT station upgrades with shelters and amenities.
- Route local serving busses through the Center on frontage and interior circulation roads.

5. Include a focus entry / exit intersection at the middle of the District Center.

- Include a right-in / right-out / left-in, turn pocket intersection at a central location.
- The central intersection could transition to a signal intersection at a future time. (Options include relocation of the existing light at Hollis St., or a future new signal light after substantial infill.)
- Align the entrance / egress easements at the focus intersection within the District.
- Include attractive and highly visible amenity features at the focus entry / exit.
- Explore creation of at least one pedestrian crossing at a location between Hollis St. and Wheaton.

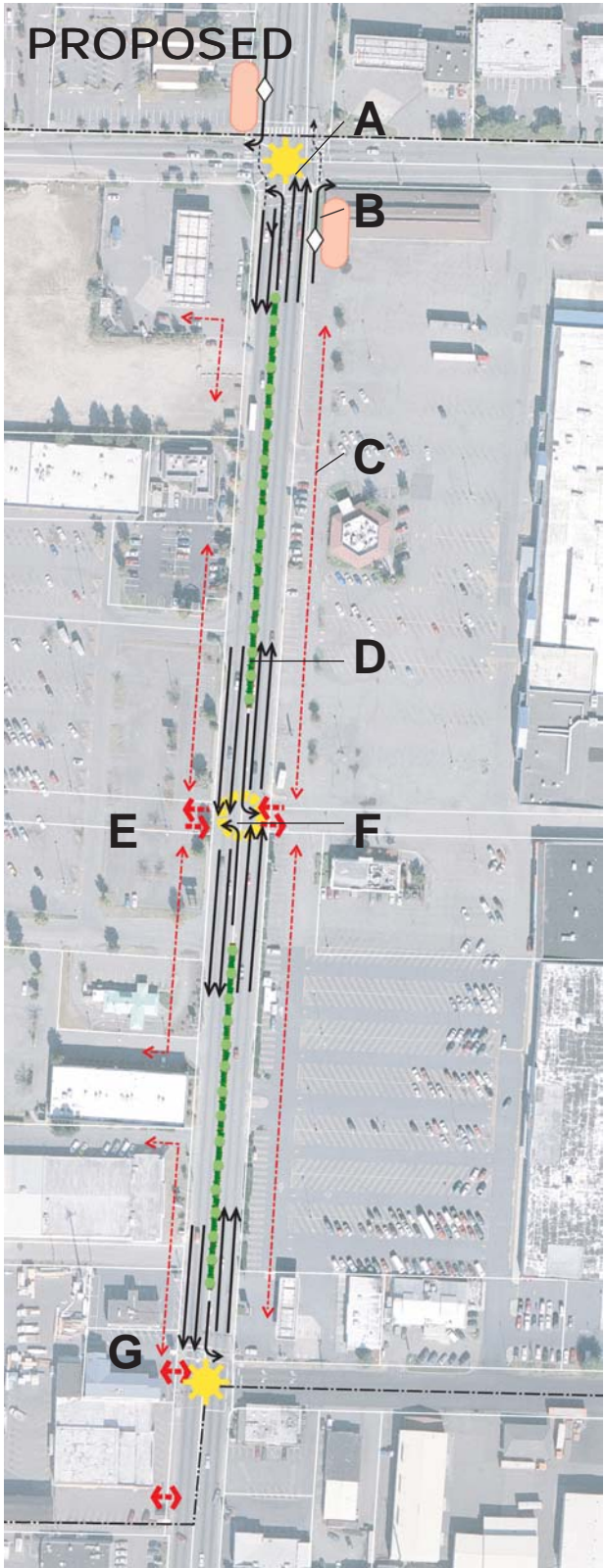
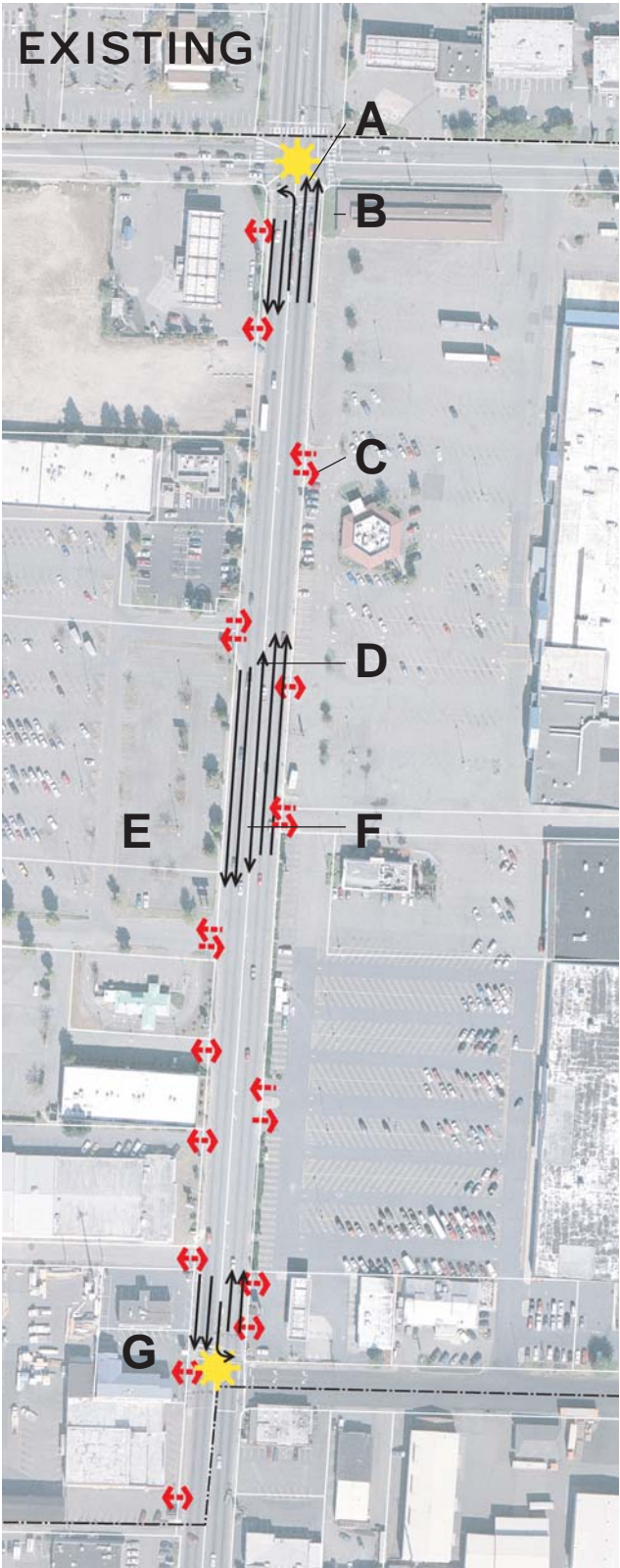
6. Phase-In ROW Improvements Beginning With Access Control

- As a first step create a planted center median, and implement curb cut consolidation.
- New development contributes to ROW sidewalk upgrades as consistent with first phase.
- Access control measures must double as urban design features.
- Create a neighborhood scale frontage road initially within private setbacks.
- In the long term frontage road can transition to additional travel lanes if necessary.

6. Minimize eminent domain takings to respect private property and manage project costs.

- If volume and throughput goals can be met with access control and phased improvements, avoid addition of more lanes, which requires property acquisition.
- Work with WSDOT on the 'phasing in' concept to avoid eminent domain and to minimize cost.

WHEATON WAY ORGANIZATION WITHIN DISTRICT CENTER



OVERALL ORGANIZATION WITHIN DISTRICT CENTER

The figure at left summarizes the preferred overall organization of traffic flow through the District. Detailed depictions are on the following pages.

A. Wheaton Way / Riddell Intersection

Existing - Signalized intersection. Striped center turn lane becomes designated left hand turning lane.

Proposed - Improve signalized intersection. Median planter strip / access control tapers to a designated left hand turning lane. Upgrade signal light to allow BRT queing and synchronize light with Hollis St. light. mechanism (See also B.).

B. Right Turning and Transit (BRT)

Existing - Currently no right turn lane or dedicated lane for transit.

Proposed - Add right hand turn lane that doubles as a Bus Rapid Transit Zone. Busses advance ahead of northbound traffic with queue-jumping. BRT station is located here with shelters and amenities.

C. Access Control (Throughout Corridor)

Existing - Too many existing curb cuts (14 total). Interrupts flow, and is dangerous and confusing.

Proposed - Consolidate curb cuts with access control / planter strips. Planted center median and planter strips at sidewalks edges. Create a network of interior circulators including small scale frontage road within private setback.

D. Mid Block Lane Configuration

Existing - 2 northbound and 2 southbound lanes with striped center two way turn lane.

Proposed - 2 northbound and 2 southbound lanes with center planter strip / access control. Planter strip tapers to left hand turn pockets at focus entry, Riddell Rd. and Hollis St.

E. Easement and Lot Line Adjustments

Existing - Major access easements on opposite sides of Wheaton Way do not align.

Proposed - Work with property owners to adjust easements and lot lines for alignment at focus entry in the middle of the District.

F. Create Focus Entry at the Middle of the District Center

Existing - No focus entry to the shopping center, many curb cuts.

Proposed - Create a focus entry where access to both halves of the District is consolidated. Remove all curb cuts in the Center, except for here. Focus entry is right-in / right-out / left-in. Include measures to ensure safe and pleasant pedestrian connection between the two halves at this location, or another location between Hollis and Wheaton.

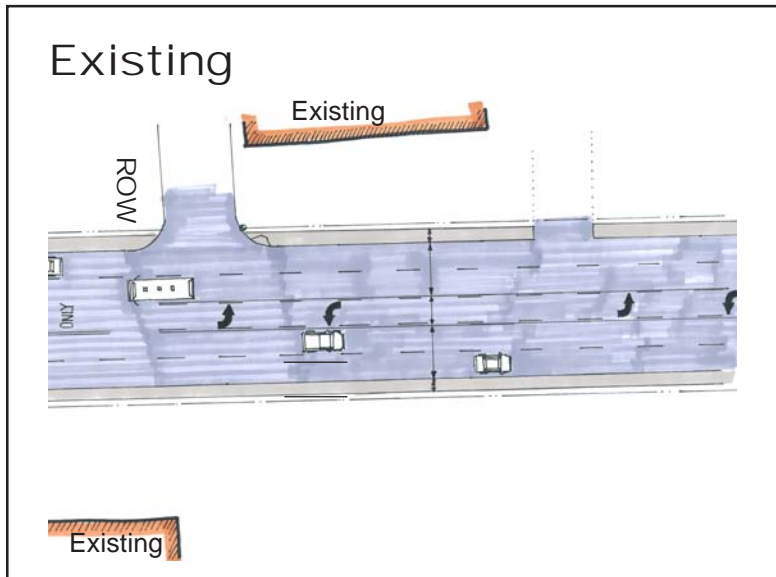
G. Hollis Street Intersection

Existing - Signalized intersection. Striped Center turn lane becomes designated left hand turning lane.

Proposed - Improve signalized intersection. Median planter strip / access control tapers to allow for designated left hand turning lane.

TYPICAL MIDBLOCK CONFIGURATION

This proposal is to a concept level and will require future study and design.



Existing

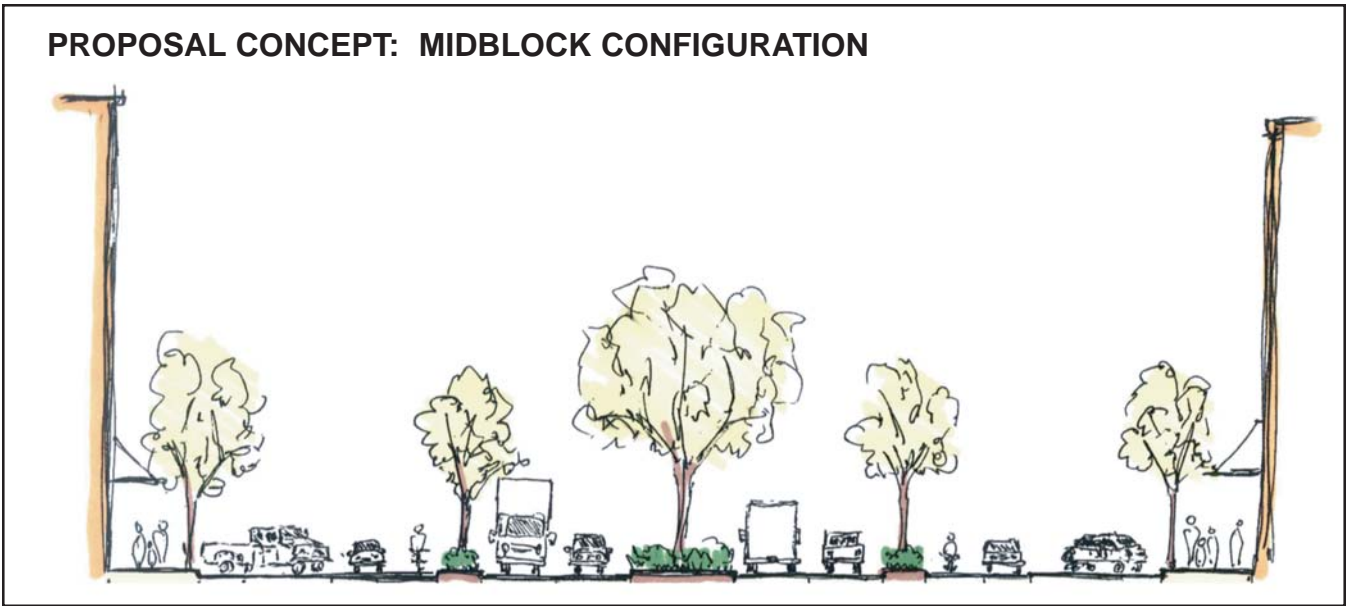
The existing configuration of Wheaton Way between Hollis St. and Riddell Rd. includes two 11' northbound and two southbound travel lanes with a 12' striped center turning lane. The total existing ROW width is 72'. There are numerous curbcuts (15) between the two cross streets. On both sides of the roadway there are narrow 5' sidewalks. Overhead utilities are located on the west side of the street. In most locations there are asphalt parking areas immediately behind the sidewalks. Most existing largescale commercial structures are set back several hundred feet from the ROW, but several smaller structures are located within 50 feet of the ROW.

Proposed Concept

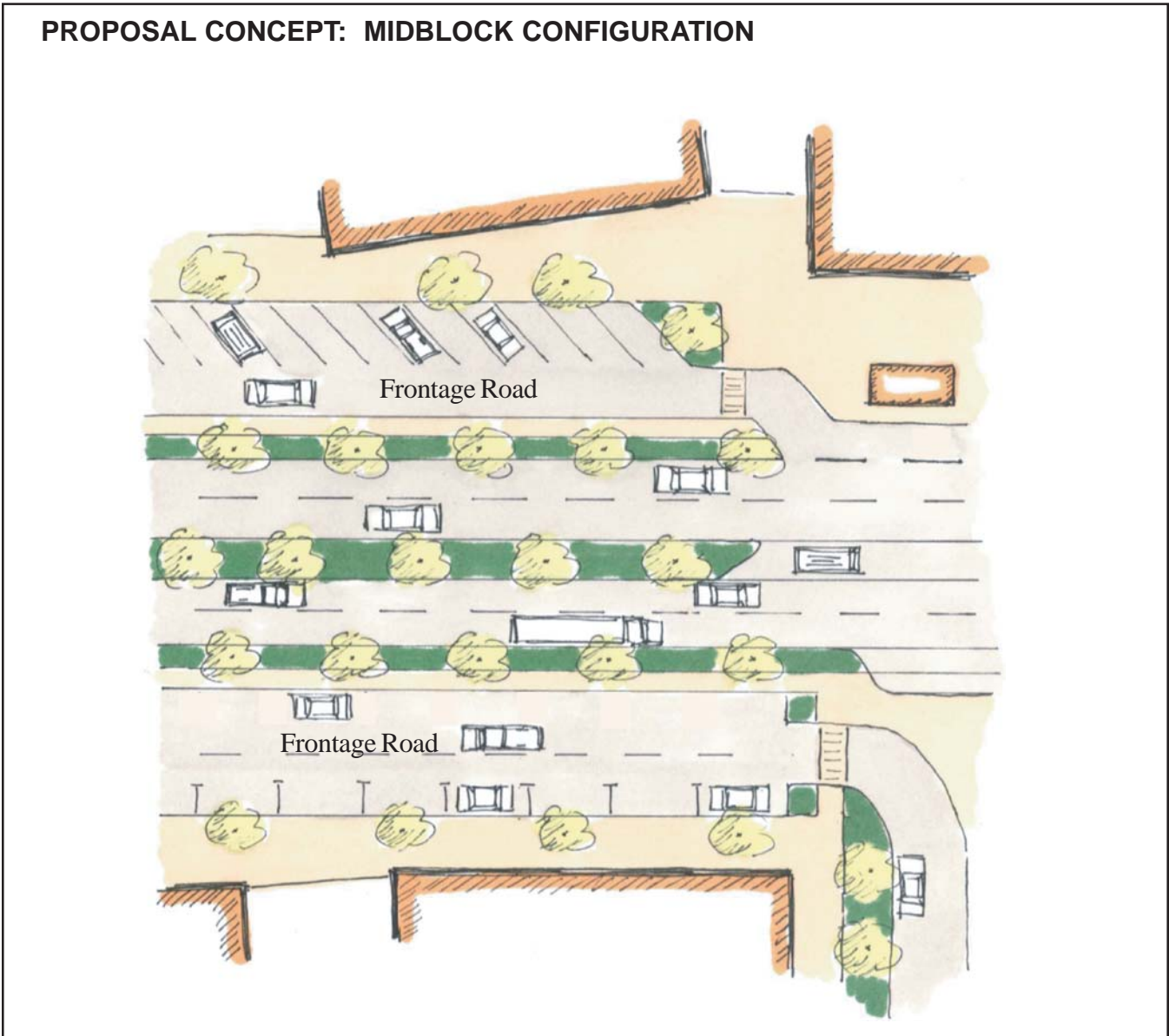
Two 11.5' northbound and southbound travel lanes and an access control median are proposed. Extensive access control is implemented. A center median / planter strip is added to consolidate left hand turning at key locations (intersections and the central focus entry). Access control is also implemented on the sides of the Right of Way. The total right of way width would have little or no expansion in the interim phase. A secondary circulation network is created with the additional of a neighborhood scale frontage road that would be located in the front setback on private property. In the long term, if WSDOT required additional lanes for the full extent of the roadway, the frontage road could be converted to ROW.

Through Sub Area planning the City will add requirements and standards for interior circulation on private property. A privately owned 'frontage road' is proposed on each side of the ROW. The City will require or incentivize development of the frontage road to a standard. The frontage road provides access to businesses, and functions as a secondary network for north-south circulation. (Other interior roadways within the sub area will also assist with north-south circulation). Parking at storefronts on the frontage road will be allowed and encouraged. Bicycles will be routed through the frontage roads rather than directly on the Wheaton ROW.

PROPOSAL CONCEPT: MIDBLOCK CONFIGURATION

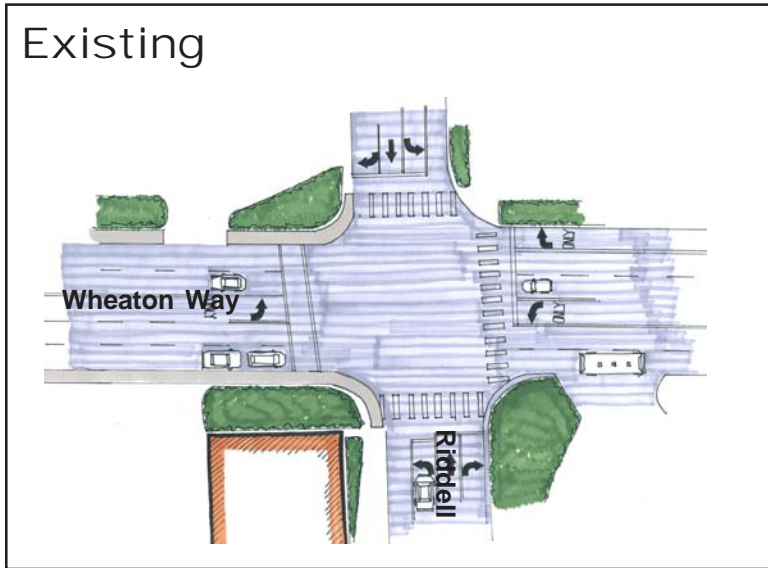


PROPOSAL CONCEPT: MIDBLOCK CONFIGURATION



FOCUS INTERSECTION (WHEATON / RIDDELL)

Design is to a schematic level only and will require future study and design.



Existing

The existing configuration of the Wheaton / Riddell intersection is shown at left. Note that there is no existing right turn pocket in the northbound direction at the intersection. The left turning lane is a striped center lane that continues as a center two way turning lane.

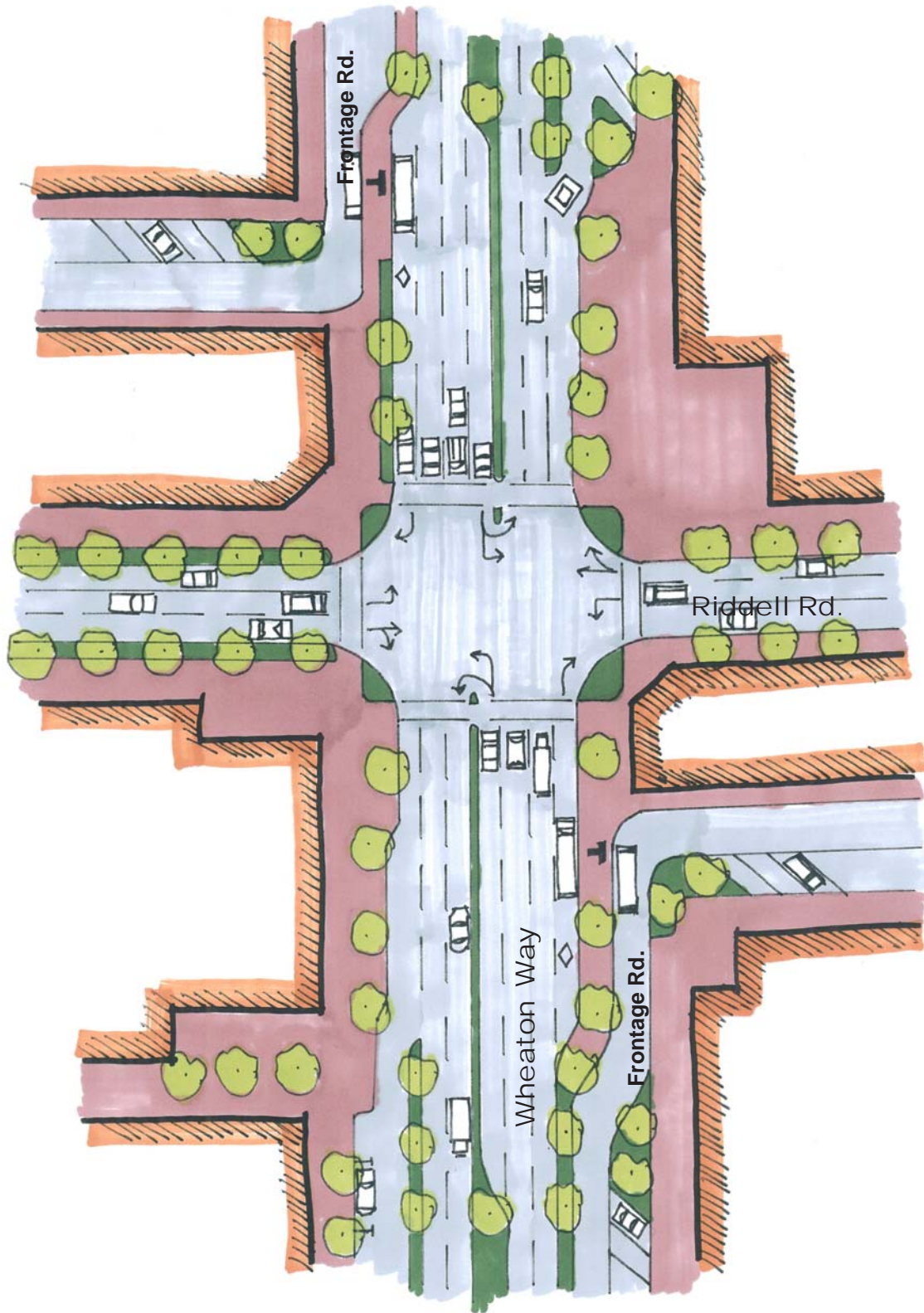
PROPOSAL CONCEPT

The proposal suggests a dedicated left-hand turn pocket at the intersection, which emerges from the center planted median. The center median would be narrower at mid-block locations. The planted median would 'fan out' as it approaches the intersection to have adequate width for a vehicle turn lane, and would then taper back to allow space for the left hand turn lane.

The proposal also includes a dedicated multi purpose right hand turn lane and BRT Transit lane before the light in both the northbound and southbound directions. The signal light is programmed to allow Transit bus advancement. At these locations space and amenities for a BRT Station are included. The necessary length of both the right hand and left hand turn pockets would need to be studied.

Entrances to the frontage road after the intersection are provided. These entrances are right-in only. They also allow additional space after the signal light for transit busses to merge back into traffic.

PROPOSAL CONCEPT: INTERSECTION



This concept shows BRT transit plaza areas before the signal light. Kitsap Transit indicated a preference for direct rider access between the BRT bus on Kitsap Way to a locally circulating bus through the frontage road. The concept also explores entries and exits to the Frontage Rd. directly onto Wheaton Way.

Existing



Proposed



WHEATON WAY SENSE OF PLACE

The figures at right demonstrate the existing and proposed visual character and sense of place within the Wheaton Way corridor in Bremerton.

Existing

A number of features detract from the visual character of the corridor, and are not conducive to future development of the area as a District Center:

- Narrow Sidewalks
- Few Trees or Vegetation
- Intrusive Overhead Utilities
- No pedestrian scale lighting
- Expansive Asphalt Parking Areas Directly Adjacent to ROW
- Buildings set back hundreds of feet from the ROW
- Signage tailored to auto traffic only

Proposed

The proposal creates a visual character and sense of place befitting of a District Center by including the following features:

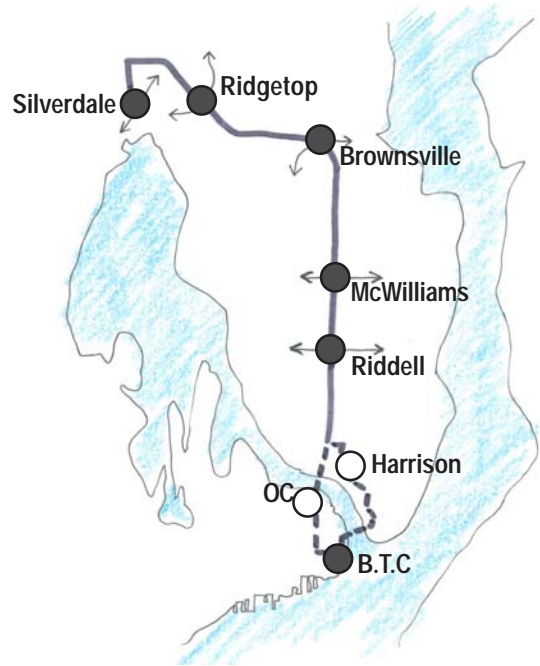
- Heavily planted medians and planting strips
- Generous sidewalks at multiple locations
- Neighborhood scale Frontage Roads
- Undergrounding of intrusive utilities
- Pedestrian scale lighting
- Infill development creates street 'enclosure'
- Activities in building enliven the streetscape
- Traffic on Wheaton flows better due to access control

TRANSIT & WHEATON / RIDDELL

The SR303 corridor from Bremerton to Silverdale is likely to be one of the first corridors in Kitsap County to receive substantial investment in transit. The preferred transit technology according to Kitsap Transit and recent momentum is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). BRT is a regionally scaled bus system, where busses are larger, faster, and make fewer stops. BRTs should be designed to advance past other traffic and can be powered by alternative fuels such as biodiesel, fuel cells or other fuels. The City of Bremerton strongly supports the development of BRT in the SR303 corridor to Silverdale.

It is likely that a BRT would have select stops at 'station areas' spaced at intervals similar to those shown at right. Each station area would have linkages to locally serving bus connections or park and rides. Bremerton would like to partner with Kitsap Transit so City land use planning can accommodate and facilitate BRT transit station areas.

The City supports the inclusion of a BRT station area at the Wheaton - Riddell District Center. Other likely locations for BRT stations may include Olympic College, Wheaton / Sheridan (with proximity to Harrison Hospital), McWilliams Road; Fairgrounds Rd; Ridgetop Blvd.; and Downtown Silverdale.



Potential BRT. Schematic, for illustrative purposes only based on preliminary discussions with Kitsap Transit. Development of system by Kitsap Transit in coming years. Routing of BRT system through the Bremerton core to be determined. Either a Warren Ave. or a Mannelle Bridge option are possible.