



SR 3 - Belfair Bypass Alternatives Outreach Effort

Frequently Asked Questions

2009 Senate Substitute Bill Number 5352 Section 306 (16)

The department shall conduct a public outreach process to identify and respond to community concerns regarding the Belfair bypass. The process must include representatives from Mason County, the Legislature, area businesses, and community members. The department shall use this process to consider and develop design alternatives that alter the project's scope so that the community's needs are met within the project budget. The department shall provide a report on the process and outcomes to the Legislature by June 30, 2010.

1. Why is WSDOT here?

The Legislature directed WSDOT to conduct a public outreach process to identify and respond to community concerns regarding the Belfair Bypass project.

2. I heard that the Belfair Bypass project lost its funding. What happened?

In 2005, WSDOT was authorized \$15 million to complete the environmental and design work on the Belfair Bypass project. However, in the 2009 Transportation Budget, this funding was deferred until 2023-2025. (Note: the deferred \$15 million doesn't include construction costs and the construction funding is not yet identified.) In the just passed 2010 Transportation Budget, WSDOT received \$750,000 to complete the Environmental Assessment.

3. I have ideas for the Belfair Bypass alternatives, how can I share my ideas?

Complete our online survey by March 22, 2010, at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr3/belfairbypass. In addition, participants may complete a hard copy of the survey at tonight's Belfair Bypass town hall meeting.

4. I heard that WSDOT will only build a road to full standards.

All new state highways must be built to full standards for safety and mobility reasons.

5. Why isn't WSDOT building the Belfair Bypass now?

No funding has been provided for construction of the bypass. There is a tremendous amount of work that needs to be completed such as design, permitting and environmental elements before construction of the bypass can begin.

6. How soon could the Bypass be constructed?

Once full funding is authorized by the Legislature, the bypass could be constructed within 5 years. In those 5 years WSDOT would get the necessary permits, environmental approvals and complete design and construction (assuming that the necessary environmental approvals, permits, and needed right of way could be acquired). All construction projects must first complete the environmental, design and right of way components before construction work can begin.

7. Can the Belfair Bypass project be built in stages?

Theoretically project construction can be built in stages. However, in the case of the Bypass, a partial road would not be a good use of public funds because it wouldn't provide a public benefit.

8. What can we do to keep the Belfair Bypass project on track?

Help us brainstorm alternatives tonight. An expert panel will review all public comments and determine whether they are feasible to implement.

9. Since construction bids are coming in so low due to the state of the economy, why can't we use the extra money for the bypass?

Over the last few months, WSDOT has received contractor bids for projects that are significantly lower than we estimated. The result is the WSDOT has more money available to fund more projects. WSDOT is funding projects based on a prioritized list of statewide transportation needs. The Belfair Bypass project will likely not benefit in the near term from those extra funds.

10. What plans does WSDOT have in the short term to improve mobility through Belfair?

In 2012, WSDOT will construct a widening project on SR 3 in Belfair that will include a full length two-way left turn lane, wider shoulders, new sidewalks and improved lighting.

11. I heard that the county has already completed an environmental document on the Belfair Bypass. Why can't WSDOT use it?

It is true that Mason County did a lot of work on an environmental document for the Belfair Bypass. When WSDOT inherited the Belfair Bypass project (2006), we considered and utilized those portions of the county's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis that remained valid for the newly developed state highway proposal.

However, WSDOT must complete the

NEPA process and obtain Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) approval via a "*Finding of No Significant Impact*" before design work can be completed.

12. What would it cost to build the Belfair Bypass?

The WSDOT estimates that the Belfair Bypass would cost \$78 million in 2009 dollars (including all construction, right of way and design elements.) Note: this estimate may increase if engineers discover any unforeseen complications during construction or WSDOT includes additional improvements along SR 3.

13. In the design prepared by WSDOT, how many lanes would be in the proposed Belfair Bypass?

Initially, WSDOT would build two lanes. Additionally WSDOT plans to purchase enough right of way to build two additional lanes (total of 4 lanes) to accommodate future expansion.

For More Information:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr3/belfairbypass

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