



## Federal Way City Center Access Study Comment Log Summary

### Project overview

The City of Federal Way is pursuing the City Center Access project to find ways to improve access to Federal Way’s City Center and the surrounding area. The City is studying solutions to congestion in the vicinity of the S 320th Street corridor between SR 99 (Pacific Highway) and Military Road S.

This project will study the current and future traffic conditions, expected future needs, and environmental impacts associated with:

- Enhancing traffic operations
- Leveraging transit opportunities
- Increasing safety and efficiency
- Improving pedestrian and bicycle connections

The Federal Way City Center is comprised of both the City Center Core, an urban center/regional growth center, and the City Center Frame which, together, are meant to complement each other to create a “downtown” area in the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The City Center is bounded by I-5 to the east, S 312th Street to the north, and 11th Place S and 14th Avenue S to the west.

This study is identified in the City of Federal Way 6-Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) as an environmental documentation study. The study is driven by the City’s identified plans to modify access at S 320th Street and S 324th Street along I-5, as well as other local infrastructure improvement needs.

The City is preparing this study in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, King County Metro, South King Fire and Rescue, and King County Roads.

### Background

Between April 2 and April 22 the City of Federal Way’s City Center Access study team hosted various events and reached out to multiple stakeholder groups to engage the people who work, visit, and live in Federal Way to understand their experience accessing the City Center and the surrounding area. The study team tailored feedback venues to specific groups with varying levels of interest. Whether in-person or online, the city provided community members impacted by the congestion in the vicinity of S 320th Street between SR 99 (Pacific Highway) and Military Road S an opportunity to share their experience and propose solutions.

Date	Channels	Comments
April 2 and 9	Social media	84
April 9-22	Online open house	15
April 11	In-person open house	20
April 3-11	Other	4



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### Key findings

Depending on the channel where people left comments, their themes varied substantially. People who commented through social media, with a lower barrier for participation, mostly focused on local solutions, whereas people who commented through the online open house, which required more sustained engagement with study information, mostly referenced interchange alternatives from the 2009 study. People who attended and commented at the in-person open house provided the most diverse input, a likely result of the in-depth conversations attendees were able to have with study team members. Some key themes stood out, including:

- Interchange modification recommendations
  - Comments varied but focused mostly on 2009 alternatives; some comments favored a new interchange at S 312th Street, others favored an interchange at S 324th Street
  - Consider interchange modifications or additions north of S 312th Street
  - Revise the S 317th Street HOV exit as a general purpose exit and/or provide a connection to the east side of I-5
- Local improvements
  - Build roundabouts
  - Synchronize light signals during peak morning and afternoon hours
  - Widen Military Road S
- Walkability and bikeability
  - Support for new safe and user-friendly pedestrian and bicycle access
- General
  - Be mindful not to compromise green spaces and negatively impact existing neighborhoods
  - Increase and improve transit options
  - Increase community safety
  - Add more parking around Federal Way Transit Center
  - Fix congestion; congestion is bad
- Community engagement
  - Keep community informed; ask the community for input



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### Online open house

A screenshot of the City of Federal Way website. The top navigation bar includes the city logo and links for 'Project Overview', 'Project History', 'Project Need', 'Community Partners', 'What's Next', and 'Comment'. The main content area features a large photograph of a busy street intersection with cars and a bus. Overlaid on the photo is the text 'City of Federal Way' in a large white font, and 'City Center Access Project' in a smaller white font below it. Below the photo, the heading 'Project need' is followed by a paragraph: 'Based on conversations with community members and current traffic modeling, the City identified the following problems to study:'. A bulleted list follows, detailing traffic congestion, economic vitality, transit reliability, pedestrian/bike access, and emergency response issues on S 320th Street.

The City of Federal Way hosted an online open house to engage a broad audience in and around the Federal Way City Center. Visitors learned about the project’s history, current need, and next steps while providing feedback on their experience of congestion at a time that worked for them.

The online open house comment period was open from April 9-22, during which time 99 individuals visited the site, 15 of whom submitted comments. All participants indicated they shop in Federal Way. Six of the visitors who commented live in Federal Way and two work in Federal Way.



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### Key themes:

- Concern about and praise for 2009 interchange alternatives, specifically more support for S 312th Street interchange than S 324th Street interchange
- Preservation of green spaces
- Access to transit

### Frequent comments include:

- An off ramp on S 312th Street is the best option to alleviate traffic around the City Center.
- The City should build more pedestrian and bicyclists options that are safe and user friendly.
- An off ramp on S 324th Street would not address the congestion issue and does not improve access to City Center.
- A new interchange may compromise green spaces.
- Consider the impacts of a future light rail station on traffic congestion.
- Concern about negative impacts on the Steel Lake neighborhood.
- Increase transit options around the City Center and do not spend City funding on new structures.

## In-person open house

The City of Federal Way's study team hosted an in-person open house at the Federal Way Community Center on April 11, 2018 to inform residents about the City Center Access study, learn about their experience of traffic in the area, and answer specific questions.

The open house's 66 attendees received a participant guide to lead them through the event, from historical background on the 2009 study to the team's proposed need statements. The study team embedded opportunities for attendees to comment and engage with study team members throughout the event and provided several opportunities to submit written comments.

## Comment forms

The study team collected a total of 22 comment forms at the open house. The comment form asked three questions:

1. Are there specific solutions you would like us to consider?
2. Other than the needs that the project team identified, and any feedback you have on the project needs boards, is there anything you would like to share about community issues?
3. Anything else you want us to know?



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### Key themes:

- Neighborhood impacts
- Interchange additions and modifications
- Bicycle and pedestrian access
- Community engagement

### Frequent comments included:

- Consider solutions that do not impact an existing neighborhood.
- An on/off ramp on S 324th Street will drive traffic close to Belmor Park where mobile homes that may be affected.
- An interchange at S 312th Street would be too far from downtown to help with congestion around City Center.
- The City should consider interchange modifications or additions north of S 312th Street for those who are not going to City Center.
- The City should consider incorporating bicycle lanes going across I-5 since there are currently no safe paths.
- Impacts on Steel Lake Park would affect the senior citizens and children who use it.
- Please notify potentially impacted neighborhoods of future infrastructure plans for Federal Way.
- It is important to make pedestrian and bicycle access a priority in this project.
- Engage in more communication and open dialogue with residents of Federal Way and unincorporated King County surrounding the study area.
- Provide more information on Sound Transit's Federal Way Link light rail project.
- Choose options that do not impact the neighborhoods and parks north of S 320th Street.
- I am glad the City is addressing this issue and hosting events for the community to engage with this study.

### **“What do you experience?” table map**

In addition to the comment forms, the study team invited participants to comment on a large map of the area, displayed on a table, and labeled “What do you experience?” Attendees placed a total of 26 comments around the map using sticky notes.



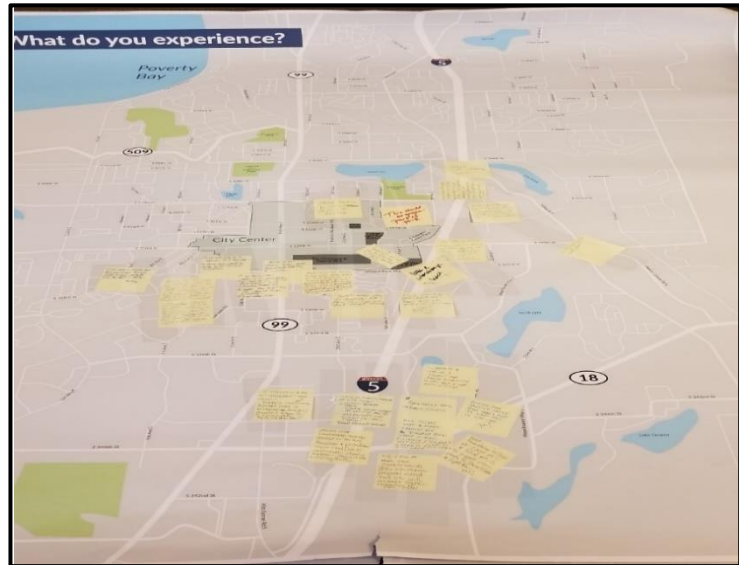
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### Key themes:

- Safety concerns
- Preservation of green spaces
- Need for new interchanges
- Parking and access to transit
- Freight restrictions

### Frequent comments included:

- The City needs to ensure the safety of Federal Way residents.
- The City should preserve existing green spaces around Federal Way Transit Center and create new ones.
- The City should place an interchange at S 324th Street.
- The City needs to make new connections east and west of City Center.
- There is a need for more pedestrian access around City Center, as current conditions are not safe.
- There is a need for more parking around Federal Way Transit Center to accommodate City Center and future light rail users.
- Government agencies should offer shuttle services to move users from gathering places in City Center.
- The City should restrict freight access to City Center by routing trucks away from S 320th Street and S 324th Street.
- There should be physical barriers between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycle traffic.





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### Social media

The City of Federal Way promoted the in-person and online open house on its Facebook page on April 2, in advance of the April 9-22 online open house comment period. The post on Facebook received 28 likes. Other users, including the Federal Way Police Department, South King Fire and Rescue, and the Multi-Service Center in Federal Way, shared the post 24 times.

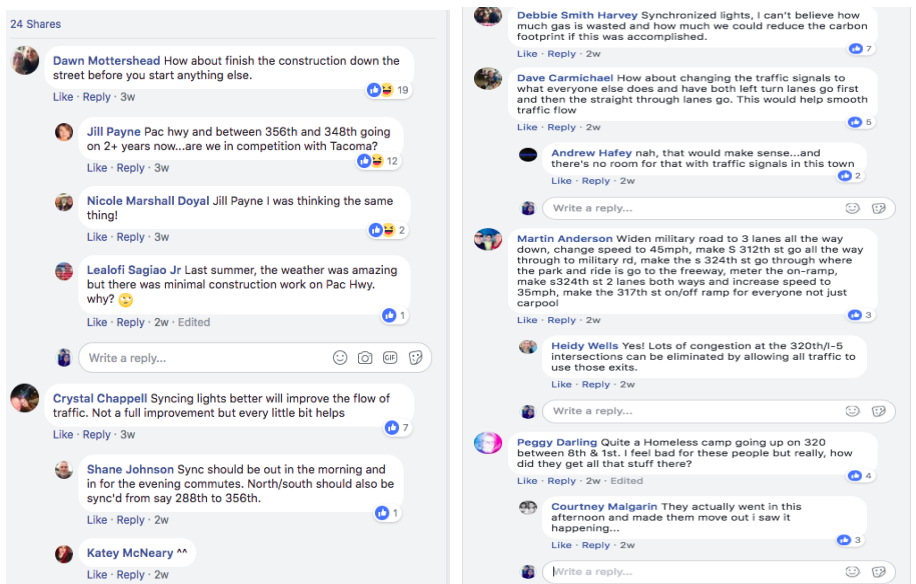
Users commented 84 times, including comments left on partner agency Facebook accounts. In general, Facebook users focused on local solutions to congestion around the City Center.

Key themes:

- Experience of traffic congestion
- Local solutions
- Alternate routes
- Safety concerns

Frequent comments included:

- I feel frustrated with traffic congestion in City Center.
- Roundabouts in City Center are a solution to increase flow of traffic, improve safety, and eliminate traffic signals.
- Try synchronizing light signals around City Center during peak morning and afternoon hours.
- The City should widen Military Road to increase access to less traveled surface streets.
- The City should build a connection from South 312th to residential surface streets.
- Repurpose the South 317th HOV lane for all traffic and connect HOV lanes to roads and highways east of I-5.





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### Other comments

Residents had the opportunity to submit comments to the study team directly through email and verbally at the April 11 open house. Study team members recorded the comments they received.

Key themes:

- Concern about interchanges
- Preservation of green spaces
- Parking and access to transit

Frequent comments included:

- The City should allocate more parking for the Federal Way Transit Center.
- I use alternate routes to avoid S 320th Street while accessing the City Center.
- An overpass at S 324th Street would not benefit local access and would not connect to surrounding major highways.
- A connection on S 324th Street may impact green spaces, like Celebration Park.