

Before the Thurston County Hearings Examiner
 Comment on 2023102411 Aurora Oaks Planned Residential Development
 Submitted by Karen Messmer
 January 18, 2024

There were public comments regarding the opening of the new development Road C to the existing development to the south on Waldon Drive. If these are to be public roadways now, or in the future, the connection between the existing and new streets should remain open to the public for cycling and walking access.

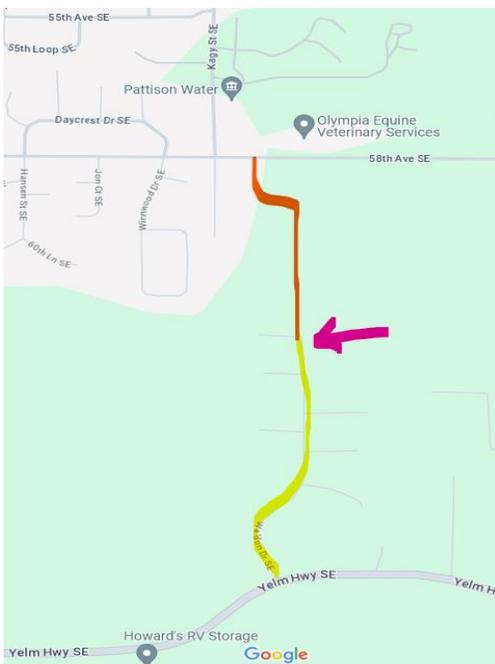
This new development presents a rare opportunity to make a connection north-south between Yelm Highway and 58th Street SE. There is no current north-south route from Yelm Highway to 58th for .8 miles to the east at Meridian Road and for 2.1 miles to the west at Compton Boulevard.

On the image below the **yellow** highlights the existing Waldon Drive SE traveling north from Yelm Highway. The **orange** highlights the potential roadways in this new development. At the **pink arrow** will be the intersection of the two roadways. This new connection will offer a different route for people who are cycling.

For people who use a bicycle as transportation, these connections can make a difference for avoiding high traffic areas and shortening their ride. Cycling can be much safer in residential areas and off of heavily traffic roadways.

The relevant Thurston County Comprehensive Plan Transportation Objectives and Policies are listed below highlighting the policy support for making this connection.

At a minimum, this connection should remain open for public use without obstructions such as gates or fences that prevent using this route. This should be a condition of approval.



Thurston County Comprehensive Plan Objectives and Policies supporting cycling/walking connection from Aurora Oaks to Waldon Drive SE to the south

OBJECTIVE 2B: Ensure compatibility between transportation and land use.

POLICIES:

T.2B.2. Plan, design and construct multimodal, context-sensitive, complete streets and roads.

T.2B.6. Continue and support development of an interconnected grid of local streets and roads to increase individual travel options and neighborhood connectivity, while improving efficient use of the overall regional network.

OBJECTIVE 3B: Provide for quality travel mode options appropriate to existing and future land uses, including walking, bicycling, public transportation, rail, and motor vehicles, including freight.

OBJECTIVE 3C: Increase the overall operating efficiency of the transportation system through the effective use of measures that reduce the need to drive and help achieve the Regional Transportation Plan's targets for reducing vehicle miles traveled as well as the State commute trip reduction goals for the jurisdiction and region.

POLICIES:

T.3C.1. Encourage use of public transportation, ridesharing, bicycling, and walking by improving access, convenience, and reliability.

OBJECTIVE 3E: Increase the share of all trips made by bicycling.

POLICIES:

T.3E.1. Develop a continuous, safe, and convenient regional bicycle network that functions as an integral part of the overall transportation system.

OBJECTIVE 3F: Increase the share of all trips made by walking.

POLICIES:

T.3F.1 Develop a continuous, safe, and convenient regional pedestrian network that functions as an integral part of the overall transportation system.

T.3F.2. Develop and encourage connections for pedestrian and bicycle travel to shorten trip lengths to transit routes, schools, parks, trails, activity centers, and other destinations.

From: [karen karenmessmer.com](mailto:karen.karenmessmer.com)
To: [Sonja Cady](#)
Subject: 2023102411 Aurora Oaks Planned Residential Development - additional comment from Karen Messmer
Date: Thursday, January 18, 2024 7:09:32 AM

Sonja,

Please also pass along the following to the Hearings Examiner -

I realized that I did not include my standing in this case as part of my written testimony. I have been a cyclist in the Thurston County area since 1986. I was an officer in the Capital Bicycling Club when it was active and taught bicycle safety basics to school children as Sprocket Woman for a few years. I am currently involved with the Thurston Climate Action Team which advocates for individual and community wide actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

I was a member of the Olympia Planning Commission for 11 years, City Council for 4 years and Intercity Transit Authority (Board) for 9 years. I have been an advocate for walking and cycling in our community since 1986. I am a board member of Olympia Safe Streets, which advocates for safe walking and cycling conditions in our area. I have received extensive training on cycling and walking safety and urban design and have presented at national conferences on these topics.

Karen Messmer