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*The following information is being provided by the East Aberdeen Mobility Project planning team in response to questions raised by potentially-impacted property owners and other stakeholders during various public outreach activities. For more information, please review the project fact sheet and other materials available online at [www.ghcog.org](http://www.ghcog.org), or contact Grays Harbor Council of Governments Executive Director, Vicki Cummings, at 360.537.4386 / [vcummings@ghcog.org](mailto:vcummings@ghcog.org).*

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### → Why is the East Aberdeen Mobility Project needed in the first place?

- The US 12 “gateway corridor” is experiencing several challenges related to congestion and safety. Congestion issues result from a combination of factors, including parked trains blocking ingress and egress points at adjacent commercial business destinations, the timing of signalized traffic lights and geography. There’s simply no room to solve these challenges by widening the highway. These issues are expected to intensify as additional cargo is shipped through the corridor in the future.

### → If trains are the main reason for mobility delays, why don’t we just move the rail line?

- Project planners are seeking a financially-viable solution. Per federal law, rail has priority over vehicular traffic. Even if the rail line could be moved, it would be prohibitively expensive to permit and relocate the route over a waterway. In addition, building an elevated rail line might improve traffic flow, but not necessarily increase safety.

### → Is this really just a project to help transport oil?

- No. The Port of Grays Harbor is projecting growth in a variety of customer markets, including grain, cars and other materials. Additional trains are coming, even if oil does not. The current level of train traffic causes significant traffic impacts, which must be corrected even if there is no additional train traffic.

### → You’ve presented three action options. Aren’t there other possibilities?

- The engineering team examined 10 distinct options. In the end, the three alternatives presented to the public were deemed best-suited to achieving project goals, which include: easing congestion, improving safety, limiting impacts to businesses and property owners, and being implementable from both an environmental and cost perspective.

### → Have people indicated a preference among the three alternative solutions?

- Yes. At our first public meeting and through a subsequent electronic questionnaire, participants expressed a clear preference for what is being labeled the “Chehalis Street Overcrossing” option. This solution provides an alternative route for vehicle traffic into and out of the Gateway Plaza via an overpass in the event that a train is blocking grade level access. It also replaces existing traffic lights at Newell Street with a roundabout so that traffic can maintain a steady flow, while also providing easier and safer access to businesses and residences on the north side of US 12.

→ **The alternatives you're exploring appear to be long-term solutions. Are any interim solutions being explored?**

- The complexity of the problem requires a long-term solution. Unfortunately, it will take several years to secure funding and permits for any of the three alternatives. In the interim, the design team is looking at ways to ensure emergency response capacity within or into the Gateway Plaza area when a train is blocking normal entrance points. The team is also working with rail operators to identify potential safety enhancements at rail crossings. While there has been some discussion about building a temporary roadway into the Plaza, an acceptable solution has yet to be identified. Challenges include funding, permitting and safety.

→ **All of your proposed options include the installation of a roundabout. Aren't roundabouts difficult to navigate (I think I hate them)?**

- According to WSDOT, if you're anxious at the thought of driving a roundabout for the first time, you're not alone. While most drivers get that 'deer in the headlights' look initially, studies show after drivers use roundabouts, they like them. While roundabouts are new to the Grays Harbor area, approximately 120 roundabouts have been installed throughout Washington State as of 2014, including one in Ocean Shores and 34 in the Olympia vicinity. The benefits of roundabouts include:
  - Improve Safety – Studies have shown that roundabouts are safer than traditional stop sign or signal-controlled intersections.
    - A 37 percent reduction in overall collisions
    - A 75 percent reduction in injury collisions
    - A 90 percent reduction in fatality collisions
    - A 40 percent reduction in pedestrian collisions
  - Reduce delay and improve traffic flow
  - Less expensive – Building a roundabout and a traffic signal is comparable but considering long-term maintenance cost between the two, roundabouts save between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per year.

→ **Won't roundabouts impede traffic?**

- Contrary to many peoples' perceptions, roundabouts actually move traffic through an intersection more quickly, and with less congestion on approaching roads. Roundabouts promote a continuous flow of traffic. Unlike intersections with traffic signals, drivers don't have to wait for a green light at a roundabout to get through the intersection. Traffic is not required to stop – only yield – so the intersection can handle more traffic in the same amount of time.

Studies by Kansas State University <http://www.ksu.edu/roundabouts/> measured traffic flow at intersections before and after conversion to roundabouts. In each case, installing a roundabout led to a 20 percent reduction in delays. Additional studies have found that roundabouts contributed to an 89 percent reduction in delays and 56 percent reduction in vehicle stops.

→ **Can logging trucks, fire engines and large vehicles navigate roundabouts?**

Roundabouts are designed to accommodate vehicles of all sizes, including logging trucks, emergency vehicles, buses, and recreational vehicles towing a boat. Many roundabouts are designed with a truck apron, a raised section of pavement around the central island that acts as an extra lane for large vehicles. The back wheels of the oversize vehicle can ride up on the truck apron so the truck can easily complete the turn, while the raised portion of concrete discourages use by smaller vehicles.

→ **How would these changes impact pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users?**

- Modern roundabouts are designed to be safer for pedestrians than traditional intersections since vehicles are moving at a slower rate of speed. Pedestrian facilities are included in all three overpass solutions. In addition, at-grade pedestrian crossings would be improved and train crossings secured to prevent collisions and enhance safety for all modes of transportation. Transit users would continue to use existing stations for pick-up and drop-off.

→ **How can I get involved or share my input?**

- The Grays Harbor Council of Governments and Port of Grays Harbor will host a second community open house on the East Aberdeen Mobility Project on Wednesday, December 17, starting at 5:00 PM at the Rotary Log Pavilion. Interested parties may also contact COG Executive Director, Vicki Cummings, directly at the telephone number or email address listed above.