



What is being done about ferry backups on Highway 104?

Kingston Complete Streets

Even before Complete Streets, there were efforts to improve traffic in Kingston by adding a holding lot near Lindvog and rerouting traffic to First Street. In 2000, the *Kingston Traffic Circulation Study* was completed by Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). In 2007, Commissioner Endresen led a group of Kingston representatives and state and county agencies to work on solutions. The focus of that group was to reroute SR 104 to 1st Street. In 2016, Kitsap County adopted the [Kingston Complete Streets](#) plan. The plan was funded with a 2013 PSRC Rural Town Centers grant. It was a collaborative effort involving the Kingston Complete Streets Advisory Committee, the Kingston Citizens Advisory Council, the Kingston Economic Development Council (which was sunsetted in 2016), the Port of Kingston, WSDOT and Washington State Ferries (WSF). The purpose of the study was to develop planning strategies, design recommendations and projects to make downtown Kingston a safer, more accessible, more distinct, more vibrant, and more attractive place to be through the application of *Complete Streets* principles and concepts. 20 projects were identified, including the rerouting of ferry traffic from Highway 104 to 1st Street, and the Washington Boulevard enhancements.

Highway 104 Working Group

In 2016, the Highway 104 Working Group began meeting to discuss options for ferry traffic mitigation. The group has similar representation to a group that worked with former North Kitsap Commissioners. It has representatives from WSDOT, WSF, Washington State Patrol (WSP), Kitsap Transit, Kitsap County Public Works, and several community members (Jerry Kirschner, Dave Wetter, Tim Davis and Alena Wolotira).

A \$500,000 proviso from the state revived discussions about long-term options for traffic mitigation. The Working Group was tasked by WSDOT with confirming the best long-term solution and deciding how funds should be spent. The decision was made to fund a feasibility study for the Lindvog holding lot and signage improvements, as Kitsap County was successful in securing other funding to move the realignment project along (\$740,000 for preliminary engineering for the SR 104 realignment, and \$1.4 million for right-of-way acquisition along 1st Street. (See Realignment of Highway 104 section below for more detail.)

With consensus on the long-term strategy affirmed, the group meets as needed when key milestones are reached, or key decisions need to be made.

Short-term Traffic Management

Former Senator (now Commissioner) Rolfes led the effort in getting a budget appropriation for WSF to partially pay for law enforcement to hold traffic at Lindvog Road and distribute boarding passes during peak times. While this is WSF funding, the Commissioner's Office convened a conversation and distributed a schedule for law enforcement staffing for comment from relevant agencies, including WSP, Kitsap County Sheriff's Office, WSF and WSDOT.

The wording in the budget appropriation is as follows:

"\$650,000 of the Puget Sound ferry operations account – state appropriation is provided solely for increased staffing at Washington ferry terminals to meet increased workload and customer expectations. Within the amount provided in this subsection, the department shall contract with uniformed officers for additional traffic control assistance at the Kingston ferry terminal during peak ferry travel times, with a particular focus on Sundays and holiday weekends. Traffic control methods should include, but not be limited to, holding traffic on the shoulder at Lindvog Road until space opens for cars at the tollbooths and dock, and management of traffic on Highway 104 in order to ensure Kingston residents and business owners have access to businesses, roads, and driveways."

While the money is for terminal operations throughout the system, WSP estimated that it would cost \$235,000 in the 2019-2021 biennium for Kingston.

Realignment of SR 104

The Kingston – Edmonds ferry route handles the second highest annual volume of vehicles and drivers (over two million) and the third highest volume of additional passengers (1.9 million) in the WSF system. Currently inbound traffic to the ferry terminal loads through the heart of the Kingston Village Center on Main Street and exits along 1st Street. Ferry loading backups during peak, near peak, and ever-increasing random times create ferry traffic congestion, pedestrian circulation conflicts, air quality concerns from vehicle idling, and traffic circulation gridlock within the Village Center and along SR 104. Realignment of both inbound and outbound traffic to 1st Street will remove ferry traffic congestion from Main Street in the Village, restoring the traffic and non-motorized circulation within the Village Center, revitalizing community and economic activity, and improving ferry operations.

The project will shift all WSF traffic to a four-lane 1st Street, reconfigure Main Street to a two-lane, local road with enhanced sidewalks and bike lanes, and add roundabouts at Iowa and 1st and Iowa and Main.

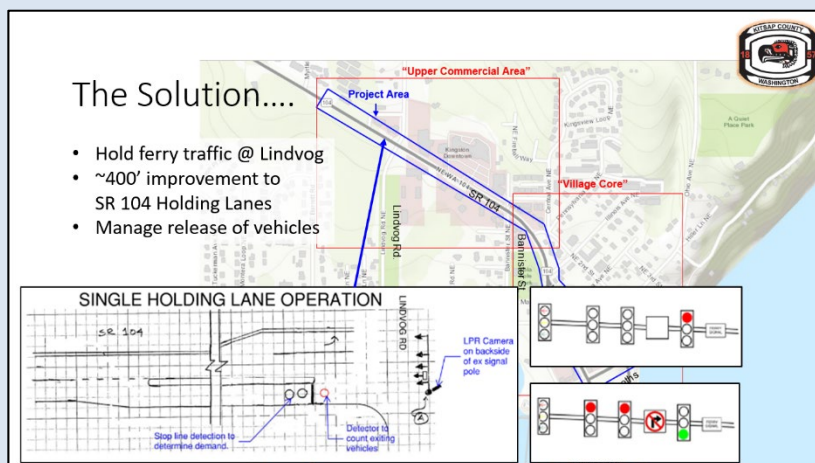
Preliminary Engineering (PE) and right-of-way (ROW) have been underway by WSDOT through two federal grants obtained by Kitsap County. Continuation of PE and ROW is being funded by a Washington State Transportation Budget appropriation and will restart in the 2023-25 biennium with construction in the 2025-27 biennium. Authorized budget is \$18.6 million.

SR 104 Holding Lanes – ATMS (Active Traffic Management System)

Kitsap County, Kitsap Transit and the Port of Kingston worked with WSDOT and WSF to identify and implement improvements on SR 104 to reduce traffic issues.

Ferry traffic at peak and near-peak times creates gridlock and unsafe conditions within Kingston. Ferry peaks can be difficult to predict, sometimes driven by irregular events such as lavender blooming in Sequim, an NHL exhibition game in Everett, or a sunny weekend. The “SR 104 Realignment – Kingston” projects address the viability and circulation within the “Village Core” area. The Active Traffic Management System (ATMS) project is an additive approach to manage WSF vehicle traffic through the “Upper Commercial Area” and “Village Core”. The SR 104 Holding Lane- ATMS project is a “practical solutions” approach to manage all east bound ferry traffic within Kingston. The project supports the existing SR 104 alignment and the SR 104 realignment. Incorporating or shifting the ATMS detection elements between Main and 1st St. realignments is very simple.

The ATMS project is a more robust, efficient, and effective automation of the “Tally System” used by WSF. The system monitors the Main St. (or 1st St.) holding lanes occupancy and toll booth vehicle processing time to determine whether ferry traffic should be held or released from the SR 104 shoulder holding lane west of Lindvog Road. The ATMS algorithm will be set so ferry vehicles will not be released from Lindvog unless there is holding capacity at the toll booths and the SR 104 mainline through Kingston is clear of congestion and obstructions. The ATMS system aims to eliminate ferry traffic queueing within Kingston and blockage of access points and cross streets by waiting ferry traffic.

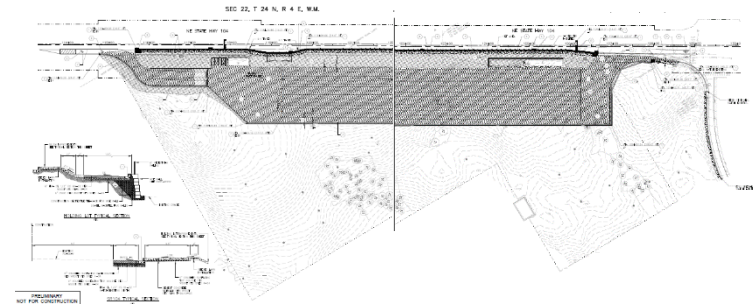


The project received a federal grant and is currently in Preliminary Engineering (PE) with anticipated operations in 2025. Once constructed, WSDOT will operate and control the ATMS system.

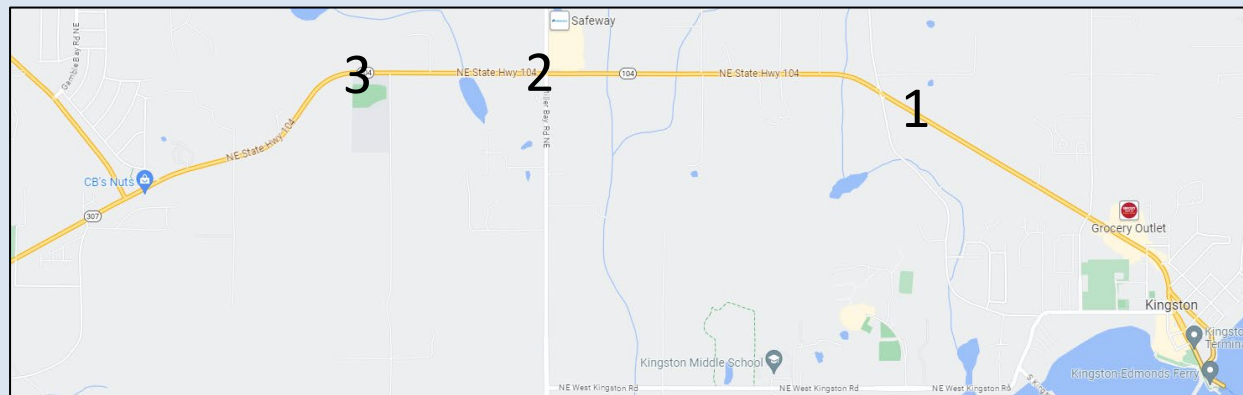
WSF Remote Holding Lot

The Port of Kingston managed a feasibility study for construction of a holding lot for ferry traffic at the corner of Lindvog and SR 104. The study developed a 30% design for a 380-vehicle holding lot that integrated Active Traffic Management Systems (ATMS) to manage release of the vehicles to the ferry.

The study identified some significant issues associated with the proposed site, including topography, wetlands, stormwater, and costs. Estimated cost was \$12.8 million. The study led to exploring implementation of the ATMS in the SR 104 Holding Lanes – ATMS project.



Other SR 104 Issues



1. SR 104 & Barber Cut Off Road

This intersection has been identified by the public as a safety concern due to existing design. WSDOT has reviewed the project as a safety project, but it has not yet been prioritized for funding under the WSDOT Safety Program.

2. SR 104 & Miller Bay/Hansville Road

The SR 104 & Miller Bay/Hansville Road intersection has identified vehicle congestion issues. The County, WSDOT, and Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe are working together to identify a preferred improvement and identify funding. A roundabout is the leading contender for the improvement, but additional analysis and alternatives analysis are needed.

3. SR 104 & Highland Road (David Wolfle Elementary School)

Concerns have been identified at this intersection relative to congestion related to parent “drop-offs and pick-ups” from the school.

4. SR 104 – Hood Canal Bridge

The Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO) has identified Hood Canal Bridge operation as a concern for regional transportation. The PRTPO is working to develop an estimate of the average vehicle hours of delay and economic impacts to the traveling public attributed to opening the bridge for large sailboats. This is information the Legislature and Coast Guard can use to review and update, if necessary, the current policies and standards governing bridge openings for recreational vessels.

