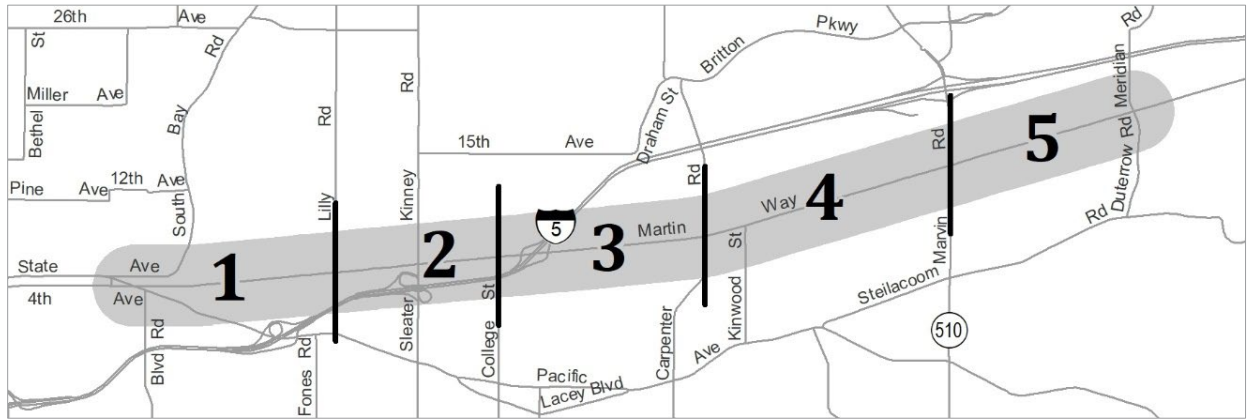


OPPORTUNITIES & ALTERNATIVES REPORT: Executive Summary

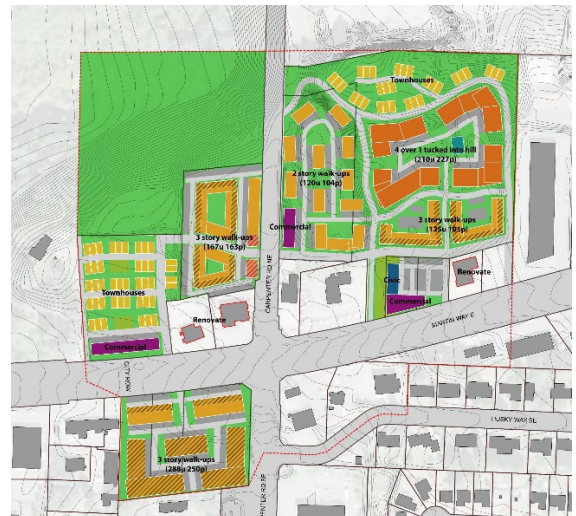
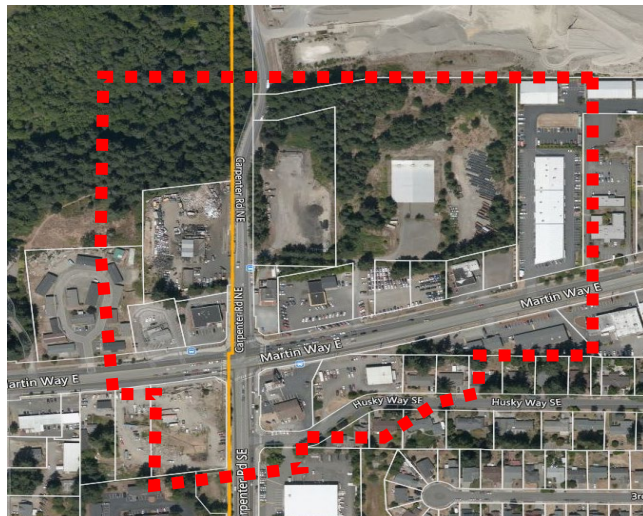
Martin Way is a crucial urban artery that links multiple jurisdictions and connects people throughout the region to homes, businesses, and services. Over its 85-year history, Martin Way has evolved from its roots as a state highway to a local route that supports many uses and users. More than 40,000 vehicles travel Martin Way every day, and the corridor is home to nearly 9,000 residents and 13,000 jobs. Over the next 25 years, Martin Way will help define how the region adapts to growth: what mix of housing, offices, and retail areas will meet community needs? Will more people choose to walk, bike, or use transit to get where they need to go, or will most drive by car? How will these changes impact the flow of traffic and access to businesses?

Map of the Martin Way Corridor



The Martin Way Corridor Study is a joint planning effort between the Thurston Regional Planning Council, Thurston County, City of Olympia, City of Lacey, and Intercity Transit. With significant growth anticipated for the coming years, the Martin Way Corridor Study provides an opportunity for a community conversation for how Martin Way should look, function, and feel in the future.

Conceptual visualization of a transit-oriented nodal development



Corridor Vision and Goals

A Steering Committee made up of staff from each partner reaffirmed the vision for the corridor, and established goals, based on feedback from community members.

Martin Way Corridor Vision

The Martin Way Corridor is an attractive mixed-use, high-density residential and commercial area where people enjoy walking, shopping, working, and living. Over time, it will transition away from automobile-dominated use to a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape that also encourages bicycling and supports high-capacity transit.

1. Improve safety and local mobility for all users

- **Walking** – Make walking safer and easier
- **Transit** – Make riding the bus safer and easier
- **Bicycling** – Make biking safer and easier

2. Balance needs and accommodate regional mobility

- **Transit** – Make riding the bus faster
- **Flow** – Keep traffic moving through the corridor

3. Enhance accessibility and connectivity

- **Businesses** – Maintain local business access
- **Disabilities** – Make it easier for people with disabilities to get around
- **Connections** – Improve connections to trails and other destinations

4. Support inclusive growth

- **Housing** – Increase the number of people living in the corridor
- **Affordability** – Increase the amount of affordable housing
- **Vibrancy** – Increase investment and activity in the corridor

5. Build a sense of place and ownership

- **Aesthetics** – Improve Martin Way's visual appeal
- **Public Spaces** – Increase access to public space and amenities
- **Community Engagement** – Increase community involvement and a feeling of ownership in the corridor
- **Continuity** – Apply more consistent standards and approaches to development across the corridor jurisdictions



Alternative Futures

Study partners considered different options for redevelopment, land use standards, and transportation facilities that would help achieve the corridor’s vision and goals.

Land Use Alternatives

The study considered five future land use alternatives that applied a variety of tools, including changes to zoning and development codes, changes to permitting processes, financial tools, civic investments, and public/private partnerships.

- **A – Existing Future:** Allow existing standards and market forces to drive development patterns on Martin Way.
- **B – Transportation Investments Only:** Use transportation investments and improvements to drive development patterns along the corridor.
- **C – Nodal Development with Maximum Affordable Housing:** Maximize retention and development of affordable housing at key nodes on Martin Way Corridor.
- **D – Nodal Development with Maximum Redevelopment:** Maximize opportunities for development and redevelopment at key nodes on Martin Way Corridor.
- **E – Corridor-wide Continuity:** Apply policies and tools that enhance consistency at a corridor-wide scale.

Takeaways: With the existing approach that relies heavily on market conditions and private investment, Martin Way will have a similar look and feel to what it does today, and is unlikely to achieve the community’s vision. A nodal approach that provides incentives for affordable housing performs best for supporting inclusive growth and building a sense of place, while a corridorwide approach has the broadest impact across all goals.

Transportation Alternatives

The study considered four future transportation alternatives. Each alternative included a suite of potential improvements, including changes to support walking, cycling, and transit, improve intersection function, and manage access points.

- **Existing Transportation Improvements** – only make planned investments
- **Minimal Improvements** – make small investments to improve safety and mobility for people walking and bicycling
- **Moderate Improvements** – make big investments at key locations to improve safety and mobility for people walking, bicycling, using transit, and driving
- **Mighty Improvements** – make transformative investments throughout the corridor to improve safety and mobility for people walking, bicycling, using transit, and driving

Takeaways: Planned improvements on Martin Way will address some anticipated areas of congestion, but will fall short of creating conditions described in the corridor vision. The mighty approach performs best for safety and connectivity, but with some tradeoffs for vehicle travel times and business access. It is also the most expensive approach. A moderate approach balances goals without negatively impacting any individual mode.

A Preferred Alternative for Martin Way

Sticking with a business-as-usual approach to permitting and investing in development and transportation means the vision for Martin Way is not likely to be attainable in the next 25 years. There is strong public support for proactive action by local government partners to improve the corridor. Interventions in land use can build vibrancy, investment, economic activity, and accommodate growth. Investments in transportation can improve safety and mobility for all modes of travel (car, bus, bike, and foot), and ensure the corridor provides accessible connections for all members of the Thurston region.

The preferred alternative for Martin Way identified by the Steering Committee would achieve the following:

LAND USE

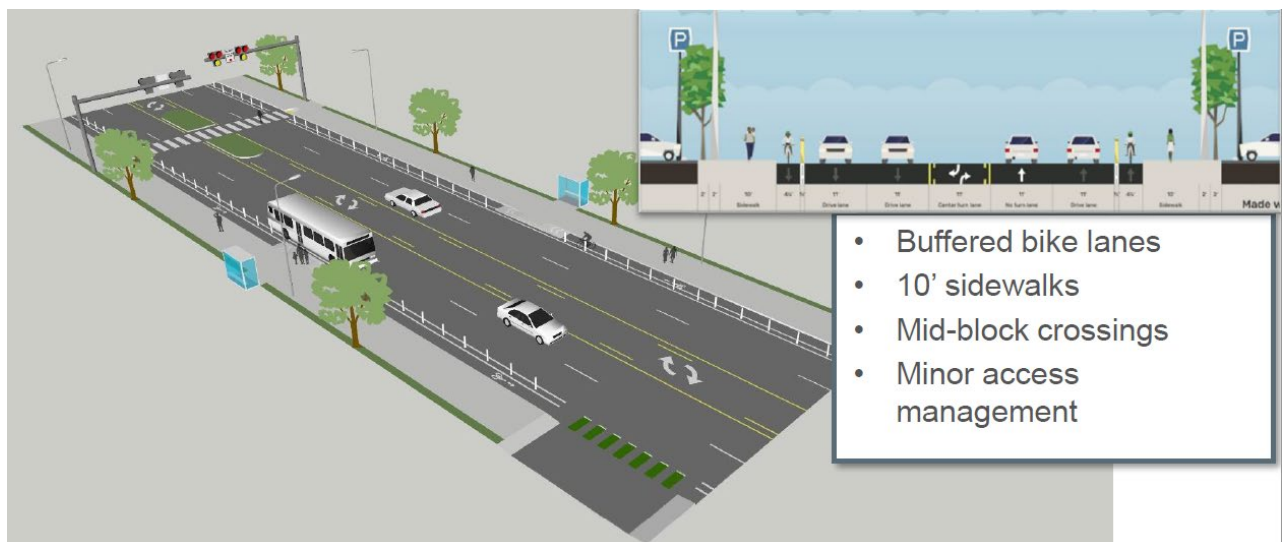
Martin Way cultivates distinct, dense hubs of population and activity at key nodes, connected by lower activity stretches of less intense land uses and open space. These nodes will boast a high concentration of affordable housing with convenient access to attractive gathering places and services that help build community, as well as transportation options that connect residents and travelers to other parts of the corridor and region.
(Land Use Alternative C)

TRANSPORTATION

Short Term—Martin Way receives high-impact transportation investments at key locations, such as nodes, that improve safety and mobility for people using the corridor while balancing the needs of all travelers. Improvements enhance access to transit, create bicycle and pedestrian connections with comfortable facilities, and balance local business access with access management. (Moderate improvements)

Longer-term—The region continues discussions on moving toward transformative options for the corridor, including transit-priority lane management, and lays the foundation for those next steps.
(Mighty improvements)

Example visualization of the preferred option for transportation

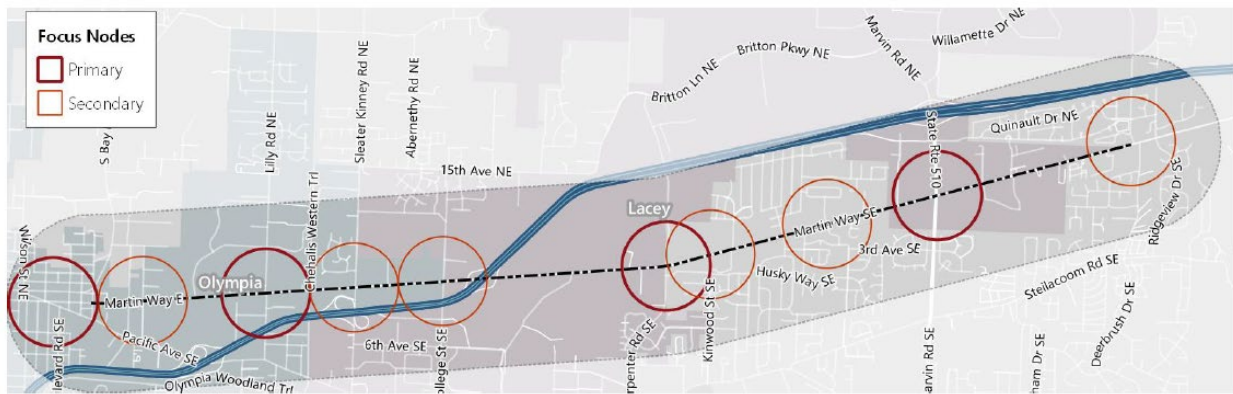


In addition, the preferred alternative incorporates the following guiding principles:

- Improve safety and predictability for all travelers (drivers, walkers, cyclists, transit users)
 - Fill gaps in the sidewalk network, including larger breaks where adjacent private development is unlikely to trigger improvements
 - Provide more midblock crossings at key locations
 - Create better separation for the bike lane
 - Manage access on the corridor by consolidating driveways and controlling turn locations
 - Consult and coordinate with Intercity Transit on the location and layout of transit stops during the review and approval process of development along the corridor, including public improvements within the right of way
 - Adopt consistent or complementary design standards for the areas around transit stops that create inviting, comfortable, well-lit, and easily recognizable areas that support transit use and connect transit users to adjoining land uses
- Establish a nodal approach to land use that focuses on retaining and increasing affordable housing in close proximity to retail, services, and other urban uses
 - Identify intersections at Pacific Avenue and Meridian/Duterrow as western and eastern gateways to the corridor
 - Establish locations of nodes that would best serve community needs and transportation connections
 - Establish density and design standards for areas within nodes
- Support future expansion of transit options on the corridor
 - Establish Meridian/Duterrow intersection as a terminus for future extension of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
 - Ensure projects on the corridor do not preclude a future dedicated transit or business access lane (BAT lane)
 - Continue a regional discussion about the role of transit on the corridor in balance with other uses
- Improve the look of the corridor and build a sense of place
 - Incorporate landscaping and placemaking elements into design of transportation and frontage improvements
 - Orient buildings and public facilities in the corridor to appreciate views, including of open space areas
- Consider Martin Way as the spine of a larger street grid that includes a network of lower volume streets
 - Develop east/west route alternatives to relieve vehicle pressure on Martin Way
 - Develop multimodal north/south routes that help channel travelers to and from the transportation connections on the corridor, including to transit stops, bicycle routes, and walking paths

- Make public investments to help achieve the corridor vision
 - Employ innovative financial tools to proactively fund transportation improvements
 - Employ financial incentives to increase construction of affordable housing
- Continue regional coordination on corridor projects and planning, especially around the future role of transit and lane management
 - Ensure the future vision of Martin Way, including the important role of transit, informs permitting review

Potential activity nodes within the Martin Way Corridor.



Next Steps

The results of this analysis will be used to develop an Action Plan for the Martin Way Corridor that identifies more specific policies and investments needed to achieve the preferred alternative. The results of this study may be used to inform future updates to Comprehensive Plans, Transportation Improvement Programs, Capital Facilities Plans, zoning and development regulations, and other plans and programs.