



Graphic courtesy of Mason Transit Authority  
**Preliminary mock-ups of the permanent park and ride facility to be built just north of downtown Belfair show space for 100 cars, offices and a multipurpose conference room open to the public. Mason Transit Authority General Manager Danette Brannin says completing the Belfair facility will be a priority this biennium.**

## Park: Agency hopes to open Belfair facility by June 2019

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a significant amount of time.

Several factors were key in picking the right spot. The facility would ideally be close to state Route 3 and the proposed Belfair Bypass, which is one of two big projects identified in the Belfair Urban Growth Area Plan. Construction on the bypass is expected to get underway in summer 2019.

The park and ride would also need to be close enough to Bremerton so that people using it would easily be able to get to the Kitsap Transit Fast Ferry, which provides transportation to Seattle in 30 minutes. Brannin said this could contribute to making North Mason an attractive place to live.

"We see this as giving more options to people," she said. "That's really what I think the future holds for North Mason County, and we get to be part of that."

Brannin said having the park and ride just north of downtown Belfair was especially important for the high number of commuters who work at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

After narrowing down the options to four possible locations, then comparing them to the established criteria, MTA selected a location near Log Yard Road, just off state Route 3 and south of Ladder Lake. Though this location is not as close to downtown Belfair as hoped, Brannin said it hits high marks in

### **BELFAIR PARK AND RIDE TIMELINE:**

- September 2014 – Mason Transit Authority submits a grant application
- November 2015 – MTA park-and-ride grant is officially awarded
- March and April 2016 – MTA hires a contractor and a consultant for the project
- September 2017 – MTA purchases 7 acres of land on Log Yard Road
- June 2019 – MTA plans to complete construction on Belfair park and ride

every other category. There is space for surrounding economic development, and the price fit the plan.

The building and lots will cover four of the seven acres purchased, leaving room to expand parking should demand necessitate it. The most recent building layout plans include office space, a kitchen and break room, and a multipurpose conference room that Brannin said will be open for public use.

"It kind of gives us a bigger presence up in North Mason," Brannin said.

Brannin said of the multiple ongoing park-and-ride projects, she is especially excited to see what the Belfair facility will be able to do for the community.

MTA plans to close its temporary rental facility in downtown Belfair, as well as the lots at the Belfair Assembly of God and other office and storage rental spaces after the permanent park and ride is up and running.

The transit authority will have to provide 20 percent matching funds for the total cost of the six-year project, approximately \$950,000. MTA also received \$2,250,000 in Regional Mobility Grant funding from the Washington state Department of Transportation (WSDOT) with no match requirement. Brannin said the project aligns with MTA's available funding for 2017-19.

"There's always that risk if we don't expend the funds that we have available during the biennium that we have to ask to have that reappropriated, and there's always that risk that they could decide not to reappropriate us the money if they feel like we're not progressing," Brannin said.

Looking ahead over the next few years, Brannin said MTA is working to make security upgrades to the park and ride on Cole Road (located south of downtown Shelton); increase the number of stalls and lighting on Pickering Road (halfway between Shelton and Alllyn); add 20 stalls to the Pear Orchard facility (at the north entrance to downtown Shelton) as soon as the Belfair facility is complete; and add 60 stalls to the Matlock site in Shelton. The only other MTA park and ride in operation is along state Route 108 in the Kamliche Transit Center.

Though MTA plans to move forward with the Cof-

fee Creek park and ride, it is waiting to hear from WSDOT about a nearby fish barrier project first.

MTA plans to hold several meetings with community members in February about the park and ride, specifically to gather input on how the intersection on state Route 3 will be configured — with stop signs, stoplights or a roundabout. The biggest concern is driver safety when turning onto or off the highway.

"There's no traffic control other than stop signs at this point," Brannin said. "Sometimes traffic can get pretty backed up, so we're looking for some alternatives to be able to safely move onto Highway 3 for our buses as well as the users of the park and ride."

The *Herald* will provide dates and times for these meetings as they are made available.