



PHOTO BY ARLA SHEPHARD BULL

Community members consider the four possible park and ride locations that Mason Transit Authority has identified in Belfair.

# Mason Transit considers park and ride space

**By Arla Shephard Bull**  
Mason County Life

Mason Transit Authority is considering four locations for a future park and ride site in Belfair, including the temporary parking lot the agency unveiled earlier this summer on Roy Boad Road.

Developing a new park and ride in Belfair is part of the agency's plan to improve all of its park and ride sites, including sites at Highway 3 and Pickering Road, Highway 3 entering Shelton, Shelton-Matlock Road at US Highway 101, and Southeast Craig and Cole Roads in Shelton.

The agency has been working since 2014 to secure funding for the \$10 million countywide project; more than 90 percent of the funding will come from the state's Regional Mobility Grant program.

In May, Mason Transit contracted with the engineering firm SCJ Alliance to see the entire project through, with the first priority being the development of a new park and

ride in Belfair.

"We are in the middle of the process to decide a location," said SCJ Alliance project engineer Scott Sawyer at an open house, Aug. 22 in Belfair. "The next step is to develop criteria, weigh each site against that, do some concept designs and create a cost estimate for each site."

With input from a group of stakeholders, SCJ Alliance narrowed down a list of about 15 potential park and ride sites in North Mason to four locations that it presented to the public, including the Roy Boad site in town and three sites near the county line to Kitsap.

The group of stakeholders included Mason Transit employees, Mason County Commissioner Randy Neatherlin, North Mason School Board member John Campbell, Mason County Public Works Deputy Director Melissa McFadden and private citizen John Piety.

**See TRANSIT, 7**

## Transit from 5

SCJ Alliance plans to present its findings to the stakeholder working group this fall, but some community members expressed concern at the open house that Mason Transit had not done enough to involve the public in the process.

"I was the only worker-driver who could come tonight," said Frank Gilger, who takes Mason Transit to work at the shipyard in Bremerton each day. "It's difficult when the stakeholder meetings are scheduled in the middle of my workday."

Gilger advocated for the park and ride location at the current temporary parking lot on Roy Boad Road because the site is the most convenient for workers.

"I live 15 miles out," he said. "Wherever you build this up the hill is going to be another mile out. Roy Boad is close to Bill Hunter Park, so if I take a nooner I can go and take the bus

home early. It's near QFC and Safeway, if I need to call my wife and pick up something on my way home."

Campbell, the school board member, defended Mason Transit's focus on three sites north of downtown Belfair.

"For years Mason Transit has been trying to build a park and ride in Belfair, the problem is the land (in Belfair) keeps sinking," Campbell said. "Closer to home is closer to the water. There's been a long history about why they want to do this uphill. These are the sites that seem feasible."

Mason Transit needs between 5 and 10 acres for the park and ride in Belfair, said Development Manager Mike Oliver, adding that the Roy Boad site is limited by its size, about 3.5 acres unless the agency is able to purchase additional surrounding property.

The other three sites are about 5 to 10 acres, depending on how much land Mason Transit could purchase; only prelimi-

nary conversations have been had with some of the landowners, Oliver said.

Other community members expressed interest in Mason Transit partnering with groups in Kitsap, such as Kitsap Transit or the Port of Bremerton, as well as the Port of Allyn.

SCJ Alliance will score each site against the following criteria, weighted in order from most important: flexibility of access, flexibility of operations, proximity to the future Belfair Bypass, proximity to downtown and economic development opportunities.

The Belfair Bypass is currently funded by the Legislature for construction between 2020 and 2025.

To follow updates on the project, visit [www.masontransit.org/parkandrideproject](http://www.masontransit.org/parkandrideproject). For more information, contact MTA Development Manager Mike Oliver at 432-5710 or [moliver@masontransit.org](mailto:moliver@masontransit.org).