

MTA eyes Belfair park and ride site

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MASON COUNTY LIFE

Mason Transit Authority has narrowed a list of sites for a park and ride in Belfair and plans to enter into negotiations with landowners of the top two ideal parcels.

A workgroup made up of Mason Transit Authority board and advisory board members, Mason County officials and a participant in the worker-driver program to the Bremerton shipyard ranked four sites identified by transit staff as potential park-and-ride locations.

The top-ranked site, owned by Overton & Associates, is on the southeast corner of Highway 3 and Log Yard Road, providing direct access to the highway and the side road and located near the future Belfair bypass connection.

State legislators have earmarked funds in the 2019 biennium toward the Belfair bypass.

The workgroup, which worked with the Lacey-based consulting firm SCJ Alliance, also looked at other factors at the sites, such as proximity to downtown, partnership opportunities and whether the property could provide space for Mason Transit Authority's project goals.



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Patrick Holm of SCJ Alliance explains how Mason Transit Authority's workgroup ranked four sites for potential development of a North Mason Park and Ride.

"Access to Highway 3 and roads, how users and buses would get to our site, was our No. 1 priority," said Patrick Holm of SCJ Alliance at a public meeting on March 1 in Belfair. "Second was operations flexibility: How would this site fit with Mason Transit Authority's goals?"

The transit authority will approach and negotiate with Overton & Associates first, and if those talks don't prove successful, the authority will move to the second-ranked property, a parcel owned by Brad and Angela Schauer, said Mason Transit General Manager Dannelle Brannin.

The Schauers' properties on the other side of

country line also had limited space because of the parcel's configuration, Holm said. The transit authority

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The workgroup looked at the nine parcels and then presented the top four options at a public meeting in August in Belfair.

initially identified 14 potential sites in North Mason to locate a park and ride and immediately winnowed that list to nine

At the meeting in March, some residents expressed frustration that Mason Transit Authority had eliminated their property from consideration or had not widely publicized the meetings.

"I don't feel my properties got a fair valuation because you looked at them

based on the availability of those parcels and other factors. See **PARK, Page 6**

as two separate sites," said Earl Iddings, whose properties neighbor the Overton and Schauer sites. "Wouldn't you be better off buying a property for (cheaper) than a property that will need a lot of infrastructure?"

Mason Transit Development Manager Mike Oliver assured Iddings and

others that having two high-ranked sites didn't preclude the authority from looking at other sites if negotiations with both landowners fall apart.

"We're not married to either of these two properties," he said. "These are just the two properties that rose to the top... if the price is astronomical,

cal, it's back to the drawing table."

If Mason Transit Authority is able to purchase land this summer, construction on a park and ride could begin next year.

"We're excited to have a presence in the North Mason community," Brannin said. "Having

space for our worker-drivers has been a challenge. We just look forward to being a part of the community and working to enhance the community."

For more information, visit www.masontransit.org or call 360-427-5033.