



Memo

To: Residents of Birch Bay Village and other Interested Parties
From: Jeff Monsen, County Public Works Director
CC: County Executive and County Council
Date: October 24, 2006
Re: New Birch Point / Lincoln Connector Road.

A number of phone calls have been received by Public Works voicing concerns over construction work adjacent to Birch Bay Village associated with the "Horizons" development. Most of the concerns are based on misinformation about the subject connector road being constructed between Birch Point Road and Semiahmoo Parkway/Lincoln Road. This memo is intended to describe the facts about the situation.

1. Construction of a new roadway has a long history

For at least 20 years land use and transportation plans have indicated the need for a connector road between Birch Point Road and Semiahmoo Parkway-Lincoln Road. Its construction has always been envisioned to be accomplished as a part of the eventual development of land northeast of Birch Bay Village. Some people may recall this connector road previously referred to as the Selder connector. While the name and specific location used for a new connector roadway have changed with time due to various development concepts, approval of the Horizons project finally allowed implementation of this long standing transportation goal.

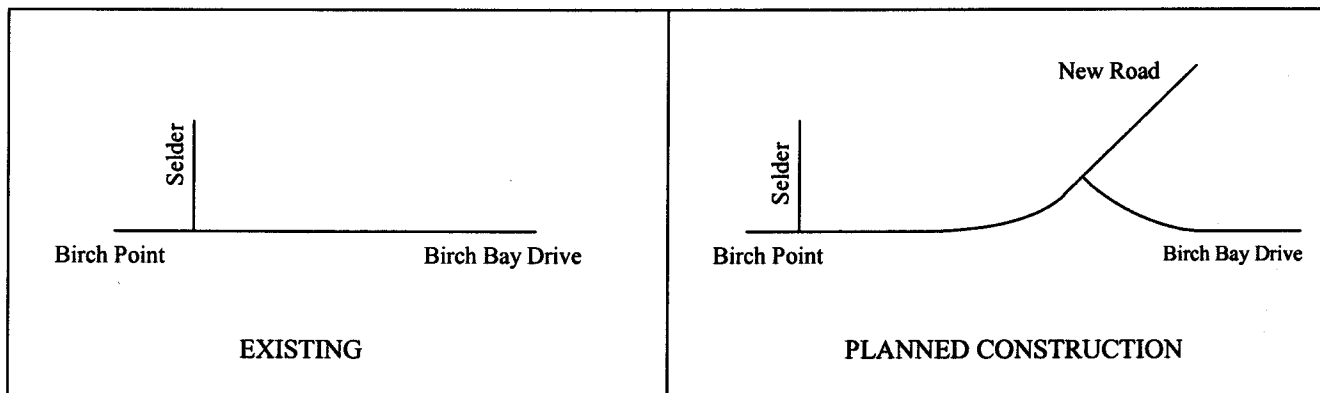
The vision for construction of the new connector roadway has always included the desire to improve travel options for residents of and visitors to Birch Point. More recently the construction of the connector road has also been seen as one of the important steps to begin restoration of the Birch Bay shoreline and to improve water quality in the bay.

Even though these goals have been stated for many years, the most recent affirmation occurred September 28, 2004, with the adoption of the Birch Bay Community Plan and the completion of the Birch Bay Stormwater Plan this past summer. All historical transportation and stormwater planning, including the two noted recent planning exercises, always included representatives from Birch Bay Village.

2. Birch Point Road and access to Birch Bay Drive IS NOT being closed

The construction of the connector road includes a change in the traffic pattern to support the goals referenced above. No access options are being eliminated as a part of the reconstruction.

Below is a sketch of the roadway changes, with the length of added travel distance between Birch Point Road and Birch Bay Drive being less than 200-feet.



As a part of this new roadway, design work is already underway to complete improvements to Lincoln Road from Shintaffer Road to Blaine Road, and preliminary design for improvements to the intersections of Birch Bay Lynden/Blaine and Birch Bay Lynden/Portal. We are also working with the State towards improving Blaine Road. All of these roadway segments and intersections should be improved within the next few years.

3. The Horizons developer IS NOT forcing these improvements on the community.

All roadway improvements and stormwater management features are requirements placed on the developer by the County. The public hearing for the Horizons development was held on September 29, 2005, including representatives of Birch Bay Village participating. The final development proposal and all of its mitigation requirements were approved on October 27, 2005.

These new roadway segments will be publicly owned and maintained once completed.

4. The stormwater pond adjacent to the new intersection IS NOT for the Horizons development.

The stormwater pond to be constructed adjacent to the new intersection is located and sized to collect and treat only water draining from the new sections of public roads. (*There is a much larger stormwater pond north of this site to be owned and operated privately servicing the development.*) In order to maximize the removal of pollutants associated with roadways, the pond will have standing water in it during any rainy period of time. It will also include plants typically seen within wetlands to increase the effectiveness of pollutant removal. Once complete, the County will own, monitor, and maintain this pond as an integral part of the road.

Since water quality in Birch Bay is a high priority issue, these types of stormwater features will become increasingly common in the region. It is recognized that any standing water attracts mosquitoes during certain times of the year. With the importance of water quality, we will not be able to avoid this potential. However, increased operational efforts to deal with mosquitoes will also need to become a routine part of improving water quality through stormwater management.

5. There has been NO change in the goals and planned actions associated with Rogers Slough.

The subject road and stormwater work in no way changes the County's intention to continue to work cooperatively with Birch Bay Village on stormwater issues specifically associated with Rogers Slough. Even though very challenging due to natural tidal actions and adjacent land elevations, Rogers Slough continues to be a significant drainage outfall as well as providing significant environmental functions. Both of which are important to protect and enhance.

6. Temporary closures and detours

Throughout the construction process there will be various temporary closures and detours. One of these is occurring at this moment on Birch Point Road due to sewer construction work. It is possible that recent information about "temporary" actions have been confused with the actual final outcomes.

If you have further questions about the scope of the projects being completed, please contact the County Public Works office at (360) 676-6692. Depending on the question you may have, your call will be directed to the appropriate staff member for response.