

# Ensign Lane: City takes stab at eliminating jams

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oversees and requires cities to put in place, Warrenton Public Works Director Collin Stelzig said.

The proposals are being discussed in Salem, Stelzig told city commissioners. The state also is reviewing the signal timing at Ensign and

Highway 101 to ease congestion.

"I would expect a response in a couple of weeks," he said.

Neither Ken Shonkwiler, senior transportation planner, nor Mark Buffington, District One supervisor for Oregon Department of Transportation, were available to answer questions Wednesday.

The TSP prioritized access to the Highlands Shopping Center and also included a project," Shonkwiler wrote in a letter to Stelzig. "This project would essentially remove the median to provide a turn lane on the westbound direction."

Responses were mixed. City commissioners have been frustrated with the state, which has control over most of Warrenton's main routes. Dolphin Road, which used to feed drivers onto Highway 101, runs behind Warrenton Highlands shopping center – where Wendy's is located. It was blocked off when the center was built and several city leaders have advocated reopening the road as a solution to the stress on Ensign Lane.

Mayor Henry Balensifer conducted an informal poll Tuesday night of everyone in the council chambers, asking them which of the three options offered was preferable. Responses were mixed.

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It will never happen, Shonkwiler has said. The state has a policy of reducing the number of roads that feed into 101 and will not consider the idea. He acknowledged the city's dilemma in answering constituents who demand solutions, but said safety and the intersection with 101 take priority over the shopping center intersection a half-block away. ODOT hired a company to come up with solutions for the Ensign Lane intersection with 101, the mayor noted. "It amazes me that the agency in charge of traffic for the whole state hires consultants to tell them how to handle traffic."

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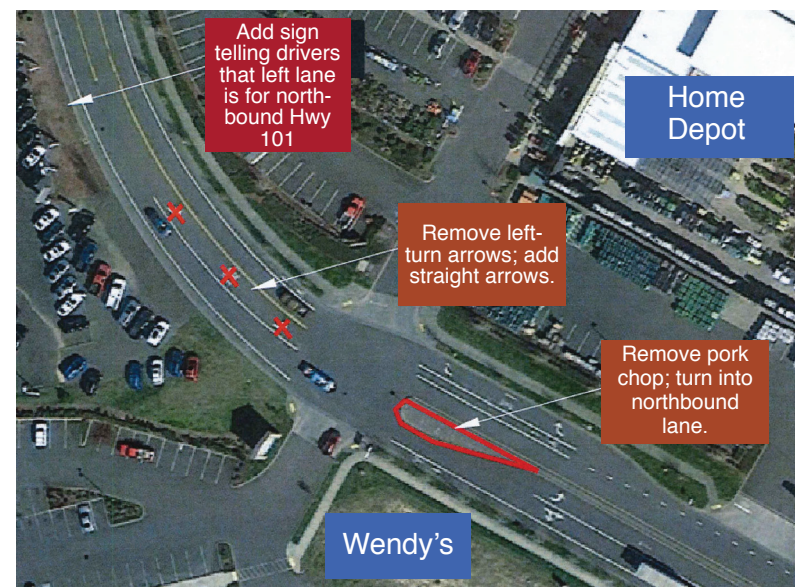
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