

# Travelling Through Time:



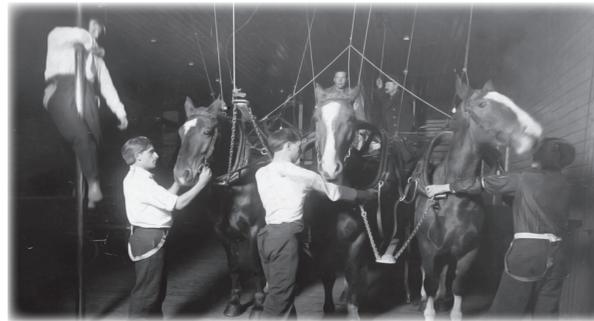
## A Walking Tour History of Transportation in Olympia



Olympia sprang up in the 1850s on the shores of shallow Budd Inlet, where a northern spur of the Oregon Trail reached the south end of Puget Sound. The city developed around the waterfront and quickly became a hub of maritime commerce, having the first port-of-entry on the Puget Sound. When the Washington Territory was created from the upper regions of Oregon in 1853, the small town of Olympia was named as its capitol.



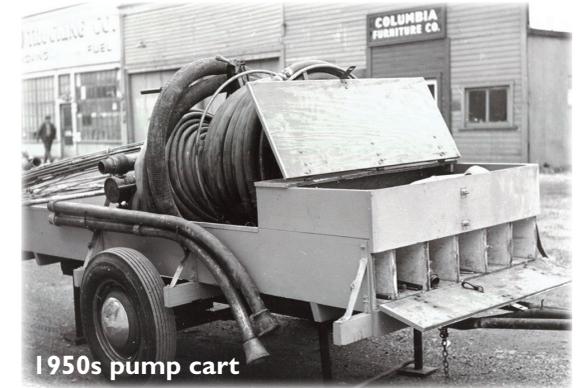
As the city grew and prospered, so did its transportation system. Olympia boasted the first fire engine company established in Washington Territory, a street car line, downtown street lamps and a newly constructed bridge to the westside. When Olympia was bypassed by mainline railroads in the 1870s, the city residents built their own line to connect to the Northern Pacific main line 15 miles to the south. These improvements helped Olympia retain its position as capitol when Washington became a state in 1889.



The turn of the twentieth century brought changes to the topography of the city. Street grades were flattened to ease transportation needs and a gigantic dredging and filling effort created a deep water harbor and added almost 22 blocks to the downtown. In an effort to build for the future, the bridge to the westside was reconstructed with a concrete replacement.



The 1950's saw the construction of Interstate 5, a new freeway through Olympia stretching from Canada to Mexico. Personal mobility became more dependent on the motor vehicles and services catering to vehicle sales and maintenance sprang up in the downtown.



1950s pump cart

As time has gone on, the city has matured by integrating transportation choices into the fabric of the city. Transit service links Olympia to the surrounding communities of Tumwater, Lacey and beyond. A regional bicycle and pedestrian trail network follows the same routes as former rail lines. Streets are being reconstructed to provide more walkable, livable communities.

So please take a journey around Olympia and experience her transportation stories. They have helped create the city we love today, and will continue to shape her future as the transportation system evolves.



For information about the **City of Olympia Heritage Commission**  
contact *360-753-8314* or visit *www.olympiawa.gov/historic*

\* Photographs courtesy of Washington State Archives