

## Cedarhurst Road/Westside Highway Heritage Corridor

**Location:** Vashon Island

**Length:** 8.2 miles

**Begins:** Cedarhurst Road at Vashon Highway

**Ends:** SW 220th Street

Includes the entire length of SW Cedarhurst Road running west from Vashon Highway SW, and continuing south as Westside Highway SW to the intersection of SW 220th Street.

### Road history in local context

Cedarhurst Road, the northernmost segment of the Cedarhurst Road/Westside Highway Heritage Corridor, drops abruptly from the crest of Vashon Island down into the forested canyon of Shinglemill Creek. Here Native inhabitants found bracken fern and camas, berries and cattail growing in abundance. At the mouth of the creek at Fern Cove, settlers established a homestead and a shingle mill in the early 1880s. From 1908 to 1942, the family of Dr. Belle Baldwin owned Fern Cove, and their property improvements became an anchor in the development of this remote corner of the island. A public dock was put in along the shoreline just north of the cove in 1916, and the community was named Cedarhurst.

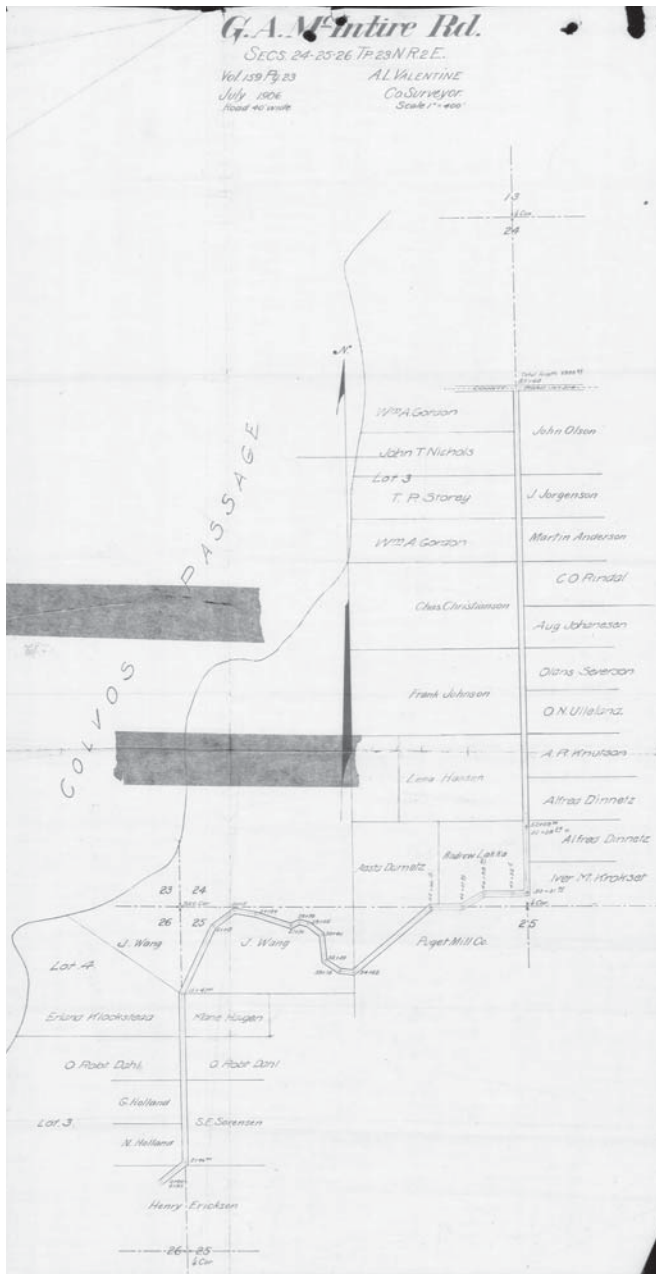
Increased settlement at Cedarhurst, as well as the opening of the auto ferry at Vashon

Heights in 1919, no doubt spurred completion of a good road to the island's crest. Cedarhurst Road was established as a county road during the 1920s. Alignments on the steep upper grade have changed at least three times. A graded and graveled road was in place by 1926 and appears on a Kroll map of that date. Along the west shore of Vashon, other small settlements at Colvos, Cove, and Lisabeula flourished in the early 20th century. Once early logging operations had cleared lands for agriculture, a population of Scandinavian farmers, boat builders, and fisherman arrived. Each named community featured a post office, sometimes a boatyard, a store and a dock serviced by small local freight, and passenger steamboats collectively known as the "Mosquito Fleet." By the 1910s, farming on the island's west side focused on strawberries, fruit orchards, intensive poultry farming, and even some greenhouse horticulture.

Westside Highway proper, as a county road, was constructed in increments between 1891 and 1923. King County road records document these segments—first named after the petitioner or landowner who requested creation of the road. These names included the Langill Road, Thorson Road, Simmons Road, Priest Road, McIntyre Road, and Lamb Road. These newly established



*Westside Highway at Colvos, 1923. Used by permission of Vashon-Maury Island Heritage Association, img004-011*



McIntyre Road, 1906. From King County Road Services Division Map Vault Database; Road History Packet, Road No. 857

sections provided rudimentary access up steep slopes from the beach, or connected fledgling farmsteads on the heights. Often they tied into existing logging roads.

The McIntyre Road No. 857, for instance, was filed by petitioner G.A. McIntyre in 1906 and established in 1908. Some thirty landowners quit-claimed real estate to King County for this major section of today's Westside Highway. It was laid out as the long straight stretch at the north end of the corridor, between Colvos and Cove.

A 1936 aerial photograph of Vashon depicts a fully cultivated corridor along Westside Highway, with an amazing number of orchards, berry fields and row crops stretching from Colvos south as far as the intersection with Thorson Road. According to the aerial, the roadway itself had been straightened in the previous ten years, with several major curves eliminated. Agricultural buildings standing in 1936 include multiple examples of long narrow barns, very likely chicken coops. Structures of the little resort at Lisabeula are visible at the southern end of the corridor. The resort was easily accessible then by water as well as land, off the stretch of Westside Highway then still known as Lamb Road.

Sources: King County records: Assessor's Property Record Cards, Land Use and Aerial Survey - 1936-1941, Historic Preservation Program HR database, *Index to Roads Records, Engineer's Road Establishment Atlas - 1913*, Roads' Map Vault database. Maps: Anderson - 1888, 1907; Kroll - 1912, 1913, 1926, 1930, 1936, 1938; Metsker - 1926, 1936; Washington Map & Blueprint Co. - 1900, 1905, 1908. *Shinglemill Creek Watershed Stories* (Vashon Maury Island Land Trust, 1998); *Vashon Island's Agricultural Roots: Tales of Tilth* (Writers Club Press, 2002).

## Corridor signature

- Quintessential Northwest landscape
- Memorable forest, farm, and water views
- Evocative historic sites

Cedarhurst Road/Westside Highway Heritage Corridor offers the most varied farm, forest and marine vistas in the Heritage Corridor system. Dropping down from the island's crest to the western shore, the route passes through deep cedar forest before breaking into a patchwork of open farmlands. Water views in the middle distance off to the west are framed by small orchards and stands of conifers. The road connects several rural crossroads settlements that present opportunities for interpretation.

## Contributing features

The following **roadway features** contribute positively to overall corridor character:

- Early alignment, with both arrow-straight and curvilinear segments
- Historic profile, following hilly topography with minimal cuts in slope
- Narrow shoulders, with ground cover to edge of pavement
- Lack of fog lines

The following **contextual features** contribute positively to overall corridor character:

- Overall rural Northwest ambience
- Persistence of agriculture, including grazing livestock and orchards
- Wide variety of historic property types—churches, stores, barns, chicken coops, farmhouses, small residential clusters
- Natural edges defining property lines, frontages, and gardens
- Two-track gravel driveways
- Colvos Store (King County Landmark)

## Non-contributing features

The following elements visually detract from overall corridor character:

- King County Waste Transfer Station within mile 5.0
- Power lines in right-of-way

