

Whatcom County Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Call-in Virtual Meeting (video available on BPAC webpage)
Wednesday, July 15th @ 5:45PM

Members Present: Stephen Zylstra, Sonja Max, Eileen Kadesh, Kyle Morris, Pete Sharp, Gary Malick, Patrick Alesse, Alec Howard, Robin Thomas

Members Absent: Sunny Beaver

Staff Present: Jason Ardt (Public Works), Mike Donahue (Public Works)

Public Present: David Henken, Daniel Tepper, Sheli Moore

1. Meeting was called to order by Stephen and Sonja at 5:57pm
2. Eileen moved to approve June meeting minutes, Gary seconded
3. Sheli Moore provided a detailed summary of progress on the Bay to Bay (formerly Blaine/Birch Bay) Trail. Currently the biggest challenges are:
 - Crossing waterways; The California Creek Bridge is too narrow to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. It is thought that a separate ped/bike bridge is required to be 200-300' long to cross the future unconstricted waterway, despite the current constricted waterway being 100' wide. The Dakota Creek Bridge is also too narrow to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. A warning system could help with this.
 - South end of Dearborn Avenue between Drayton Rd and Shipyard Rd; a right of way has been acquired but the trail needs to be constructed.

Additional challenges/projects include:

- Widening shoulders between private developments. Developers are paying for road improvements as developments are constructed, but they are not contiguous.
 - Looking for easements that connect to acquired lots
 - Bottlenecks in residential areas
 - Hill with drainage issues on Harborview Rd.
 - Harborview road has enhanced shoulders; ditches are very deep, some areas have rough edges or aren't wide enough
4. Jason provided an overview of the county TIP. It is a document used for planning purposes, outlining which capital public works projects may be completed. Any project receiving federal funding is required to be in the TIP. Annual construction program projects and TIP projects are included once approved by council. Current BPAC-related projects on TIP are:
 - Birch Bay Birm
 - Marine Drive Improvements
 - Samish Way Crosswalk at Galbraith Lane
 - Lincoln Rd (Jason advises caution regarding 6-year timeframe; this is development-driven)
 - Multimodal improvements at Northshore Road from Y Rd. to the lake (this could include adding climbing

lanes)

- Multimodal & safety improvements on Lakeway Drive; City of Bellingham would like the county to continue bike lanes, road diet, center turn lane

Eileen asked about including some of the Bay to Bay trail projects in the tip. Jason stated a project doesn't have to be on the TIP to use a ROW that the county already owns. A trail permit could be used by a private property owner to open a ROW. The ROW in the area discussed may not be contiguous, and pose issues for getting into the TIP. Regarding the California Creek crossing, Jason recommended discussing with Jim Karcher. Sonja asked if a temporary bike/ped bridge were to be installed over the constricted 100' wide waterway, could it be removed when the main bridge is rebuilt in 15-20 years, provided the main bridge is widened to accommodate bike/ped traffic safely? Jason thinks even a temporary bridge would have to be 200-300' long (width of unconstricted waterway that will be widened when bridge is replaced in the future).

Eileen inquired about the lack of sidewalk on one side of the road on Lakeway between Lowe and Euclid. Jason will look into it.

5. Discussion of which priority projects the committee should consider for inclusion in the TIP:
 - Gary asked for RR crossing at the end of Old Marine Drive to be included
 - Eileen supports the top 4 priority projects on the BPAC priority list (includes Nooksack Loop Trail, Bay to Bay Trail and Kendall Connectivity Trail). Patrick supports this.
 - Alec inquires about the ranking criteria and if it includes equity/serving underserved communities. Eileen confirms that equity was part of the ranking criteria.
 - Northshore Drive is already on the TIP – no need to add.
 - Sonja shared a Google Map with some priority project segments that BPAC could consider for the TIP
 - Pete asked what the Blue Canyon Connector and South Lake Whatcom Connectors are; Sonja thinks the Blue Canyon Connector is the piece south of the Hertz Trail where getting an easement has not been possible due to the landowner. Daniel Tepper thinks the South Lake Whatcom connector involves Camp 2 Rd. between Park Rd and Alger Cain Lake Rd, to connect to Lake Samish. This is perhaps intended to be a trail.
 - Sonja and Stephen reiterated that the entire Nooksack Loop Trail must be broken down into segments that are buildable by Public Works, Parks and other authorities depending on where the segments lie. Segments eligible for the TIP could include Marine Drive between Wynn Rd. and the Nooksack Dike Trail off of Marine Drive; and Kope Rd. between the north end of the future Airport Trail and Slater Road.
 - Sonja mentioned that the Kendall Connectivity Trail (along State Route 547) might want to be considered for the TIP, not because the county would contribute funds, but in order for WSDOT to contribute funds it must be on a local TIP. Mike confirmed this is the case.
 - TIP goes to council in September for a vote. BPAC must get projects into draft document well before that. Jason recommended it occur before the next BPAC meeting in August. Sonja and Stephen will continue this effort.
6. Gary gave a Marine Drive Petition update. He has collected 123 signatures from residents in support of reducing the speed limit over the bridge. He has also received support from 3 of the 4 local business owners (including Smith Gardens).

Eileen suggested showing up to a Public Works Committee of the County Council meeting and talking to or giving a presentation to Council members.

Jason says the petition and BPAC letter of support can be sent electronically to Council or to Jim Karcher. If it

goes to Mr. Karcher, it will get sent on to council. Sonja or Stephen will send the documents to Mr. Karcher.

7. Daniel Tepper introduced himself and gave some advice to BPAC members.
 - Recommended not to forget about Parks & Recreation's involvement in trail projects
 - Reminded BPAC that there is a Parks component to the Kendall Trail. The Parks & Rec Foundation owns some of that ROW. Sonja offered to meet with Daniel to learn which pieces are owned by WPRF.
 - Stated that Public Works projects don't have to occur along roadsides. He says if the most direct route for bikes/peds is not along a road, it doesn't have to be.

8. Gary asked Jason for some information about how the Cliffside Drive RR crossing was upgraded. Jason says it was upgraded to a silent crossing with mountable curbs, so the train engineers don't have to sound their horns when passing through. The mountable curbs prevent drivers from driving around the signal arms, but allow emergency vehicles to pass through if necessary. Gary asked if these types of curbs could be used elsewhere, say to protect a bike lane. Jason said it is unlikely.

9. Sonja shared a map of destinations around the county that BPAC could use to start developing a network of bicycle routes around the county. The goal is that Public Works can start adding shoulders and better bike facilities to roads that are designated bike routes.

Eileen remarked that she attended a talk about a Skagit connectivity study. Perhaps BPAC could learn from that.

Pete offered to help with the connectivity project.

Eileen reminded us that SmartTrips has good maps too.

Jason said that Joe Rutan's idea was to find out what places draw people and where do they ride already, with the goal of creating more routes by adding shoulders where needed.

Sonja showed the Strava Heatmaps which could be used as a tool to learn where people already ride the most frequently in the county.

10. Alec reminded us that a bicycle fatality occurred on eastbound Slater Rd. Jason had limited information; the report indicated the person on the bicycle entered the roadway from the shoulder and was hit.

11. Eileen gave a brief update on a recent conversation with Kurt Baumgarten about the Airport Trail. The plan is waiting to go in front of the commission August 11, and Kurt will keep us posted on how BPAC can support it. The consultant said that the use is such low impact it shouldn't be a problem, and it may even enhance security because of improvements to the airport road.

12. Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm