

Whatcom County Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee

August 15, 2018

Minutes

Members present: Eileen Kadesh, Gary Malick, Susan Adamson-Towner, Matt Paskus

Staff present: Jon Hutchings, Public Works

Members absent: Annie Honrath, Sunny Beaver, Daniel Tepper, Alan McConchie

Highlights

- The meeting was called to order by Eileen at 5:34 pm.
- Gary made a motion to approve the July 18, 2018 meeting minutes with one revision. Motion seconded by Matt. Unanimously approved.

Bob Wilson, Executive Director of the WCOG, provided an update on the Kendall-Sumas Trail after giving some background information about the Council of Governments.

- The Council of Governments' main focus is transportation planning.
- WCOG consists of the seven cities in the County, both tribes, the Port, and the County's legislative delegation.
- The COG's Long-Range Transportation Plan is updated every five years.

Kendall Road, a state route, currently has a posted speed of 40 mph, although people tend to drive at 50 mph. The speed used to be 55, but it was reduced to 40 in 2013.

Kids use Kendall Rd. to get to the library, visit friends, go to Starvin' Sams, etc. Over the past 10 years, 57 crashes occurred on this road, 11 involving utility poles. In 2016 a 14-yr-old boy was killed while cycling on the road. In the wake of this accident, the Kendall-Columbia Valley Connectivity Plan Association was formed. Mary Anderson, who, at the time was with the Council of Governments, served as liaison to this group.

A \$75,000 study was completed by Wilson Engineering to develop a preliminary cost for building a trail. The estimated cost with lighting, benches, etc. was \$11 million. Bob Wilson's job was to manage expectations. The cost they are now looking at is around \$3 million. Representative Van Werven was able to get \$300,000 for technical design. There is currently a Request for Qualifications out to hire a consultant for a preliminary engineering study, which is expected to be completed by next January.

The Council of Governments will be seeking construction funding in the next legislative session. COG is acting as the fiscal agent for the Kendall Valley Connectivity Plan Association, which consists of the Mt. Baker School District, the Fire District, the

Whatcom County Health Dept., Whatcom County Planning Dept., the National Park Service, WSDOT, and a few other entities.

Puget Sound Energy is currently in the process of planning for relocation of the utility poles. Easements will be negotiated by PSE, which will provide room for a trail. The proposed trail is 3.3 miles in length.

There has been some opposition from the community, particularly focusing on the removal of some trees.

The Whatcom County Parks Department has offered to maintain the trail.

Given the prohibitive cost, the trail would not have lighting initially, but conduit would be run so the trail could be lit in the future. The trail would not initially be paved, although this would deter efforts to plow the trail, which is meant to be an all-season trail.

Implementation of the trail is slated for 2020.

Bob mentioned that State Senator Steve Hobbs from Snohomish is floating the idea of a 25 cent per gallon gas tax, all of which would go toward transportation. The Governor's gas tax would not cover transportation needs.

Matt Paskus asked Bob Wilson if COG would like BPAC's support for this trail. Bob responded that it is probably not needed at this time.

Jon Hutchings attended the meeting to discuss the Jack Louws briefing with the BPAC.

- Eileen mentioned that the BPAC had pushed for two major ideas at the July 31 meeting with Jack. One was the hiring of a full-time Active Transportation Manager; the other objective was to have the County set aside more funding for bike/ped projects.
- Jon indicated that Jack is asked to make similar commitments by every advisory committee. Jon said that our three top priority projects for 2019 (Marine Drive bike/ped improvements, the Airport Trail, and the Nooksack Loop Trail between Bellingham and Ferndale) have great potential and that Jack realizes this.
- Jon encouraged the committee to get moving on those things we can actually get done. He indicated that the ADA analysis that Mike Donohue and Jason Ardt will be heading up presents an opportunity for investment in small projects such as crosswalks and sidewalks. There is currently no inventory of missing sidewalk connections, but this is something that can come out of the consultant study.

Eileen mentioned that Annie is currently on a one year road trip with her husband and will not be attending meetings during this time. Eileen asked the members present if they thought

Annie should drop off the committee. It was suggested that we put Annie in a “holding pattern” and worry first about getting the three vacant BPAC positions filled.

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.