

Whatcom County Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee

11 January, 2023

Minutes

Members present: Sonja Max, Stephen Zylstra, Gary Malick, Sunny Beaver, Pete Sharp, Kelly Kendall, Sandy Phillips, Walter Hudsick,

Members excused: Patrick Alesse

Staff present: Jason Ardt (Public Works), Jim Karcher (Public Works Engineer)

Public present: none as of start, and No public comments were submitted

Sonja Max called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

1. There were no public comments.
2. Pete Sharp moved to approve the minutes of the December BPAC meeting. Sunny seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Co Chair Updates

- The letter of support for the Birch bay project has been completed and has been submitted.
- There is a new Whatcom County Parks director, Bennett Knox. He appears very supportive of multi-modal trails in general. The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is next Thursday January 19th at 6:00pm at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center. Multimodal trail discussion will be on the agenda. Address: 8251 Kendall Road, Maple Falls, WA

The chairs of BPAC plan on meeting with the county executive and want to work on getting on the schedule to meet with the county council, the idea of being more visible as a committee.

Sunny suggested to attend a Council's Public Works and Health Committee meeting. Sunny and the former BPAC chair Eileen met with them a few years ago. The next Committee meeting is Tuesday January 24, 2023 at 311 Grand Ave , Suite 101 , it is a Hybrid meeting.

SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL 360.778.5010)

4. Multimodal Funding Conversation with Jim Karcher (county engineer):

Sonja introduced Mr. Karcher (he likes to be called Jim) and the subject of looking for his insights on how multimodal projects can get regular and increased funding in the TIP (Transportation improvement Program). This could include a prescribed number of projects, dollar amount or percentage of dollars.

Jim started out with explaining the Public Works has had some big successes as of late such as: The Marine Drive phase 1 upgrades with bike lanes and sidewalks and overall road widening; the Birch Bay Berm project (The Birch Bay Drive & Pedestrian Facility Project a.k.a. "The Berm" runs parallel to Birch Bay Drive from Cedar Avenue to the mouth of Terrell Creek. It's a 1.58-mile separated berm with a pathway to encourage pedestrian use along Birch Bay Drive, support safety, and protect the roadway

from storm damage). In addition, the Berm provides mitigation for both beach erosion and roadway protection. These projects all take time and resources, which put a strain on the very limited staff. Jim pointed out they only have one engineer currently.

What he does see as possible projects in the near future are the Samish way/ Galbraith crossing located near the new parking lot for the mountain bike trail area and some possible crossings near the Alderwood Elementary school.

There was more discussion of other projects the county has on the TIP such as a flood mitigation project, Jason shared some webpages of a break down of the projects Jim described; these are available online to the general public at this URL : <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/2469/Public-Works-Projects>

There was further discussion of the above mentioned Samish crossing. It was stated that the county is covering the cost of the engineering and the City of Bellingham will be doing the installation of the needed items.

Gary asked about adding a Marine drive Phase 3 to include the bridge over the railroad tracks. Jim mentioned the bridge is a low priority since it is in good physical shape compared to others in the county's area of responsibility. Jim also mentioned there was a report created several years ago regarding the feasibility of adding a separate bike/ped facility to the existing bridge. He has not seen the report.

Questions were put forth such as: How are projects prioritized? How our forthcoming bike route map could inform projects on the TIP? Essentially, county roads will always cater first and foremost to cars, and the current county staff will avoid prioritizing multimodal projects unless they are required to (as in the case of the Marine Drive UGA).

Pete asked about when road repairs are done could they be to the new wider road standards, Jim mentioned this would involve the need to increase the right of way and that could be prohibitive to this idea.

5. Bakerview/Northwest Crash info (Gary)

Gary Shared an accident report with the committee for a bicycle vs. car accident that occurred at Bakerview and Northwest on the morning of December 1, 2023 at 6:43 am. The driver of the vehicle involved was cited for failure to yield the right-of-way to any vehicle approaching from the opposite direction which is within the intersection or so close thereto as to constitute an immediate hazard. A person on a bicycle was going north (straight) on Northwest; the driver of the vehicle turned left on green, striking the person on the bicycle. This intersection has been the site of several accidents and the committee agreed that extra caution should be used in this area, as well as safer roadway design to prevent this from happening. More information can be seen if needed by referencing the crash report which is city of Bellingham #22-B74976. More information on this type of infraction can be seen here: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=46.61.185>

6. Jason gave a quick update on the status of the Marine Drive Phase 2 project that is on the TIP. A WSDOT grant was applied for but rejected. The project came in #59 out of 144 projects that were submitted for funding with the state Bike and Ped project program. The Pedestrian and Bicycle grant

program objective is to improve the transportation system to enhance safety and mobility for people who choose to walk or bike. The top 28 submittals were chosen.

7. **Inspirational Video** Sonja shared a video about the Toronto gateway bike hub program. A community bike program set up in Toronto's Flemingdon Park neighborhood doesn't only offer residents a mode of transportation, it's helping them access jobs, independence and keeping some away from drugs and gangs. The video can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNIC_hRSRI4

8. **Pete** shared some interesting observations about the bike and ped crossings of the railroad tracks in the White Rock area of British Columbia. He wondered if the same type of crossings could be provided here in the county to allow safe crossings of the railroad in areas such as Marine drive at Old Marine drive. He will research how this was accomplished in BC.

Meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm