

Whatcom County Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee

January 16, 2019

Meeting called to order at 5:37 pm

Members present: Eileen Kadesh (Chair), Alan McConchie, Daniel Tepper, Jason Ardt (Public Works), Gary Malick, Sunny Beaver, Matt Paskus

Guests present: Aaron Dutton (member of public)

Approval of minutes from December 18, 2018 meeting

- Daniel moved approval of minutes; Gary seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Continuation of Priority Project Rankings

- Nooksack Valley High School improvements
 - Jason was contacted by the Sheriff's department about installing a crosswalk from the parking area on the west side of Nooksack Rd to the school
 - Possible improvements: upgraded sidewalks, addition of a crosswalk from parking area, upgrade school zone signs to have flashing amber lights.
 - Daniel: Do we have any guidance on whether this type of project should be applied to a high school? Conceivably, older students already know how to cross the street safely. There is currently a crosswalk at the intersection of Nooksack and Badger Roads.
 - Project does not meet the criteria for a user-actuated crosswalk.
 - Project was scored 45 using the ranking criteria

Action taken: Daniel moved to add project to the priority list; Eileen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Lookout Mountain Project
 - City of Bellingham project
 - According to Christ Thomsen from County parks, the project is essentially complete
 - Project can be removed from the priority list.
- South Lake Whatcom Connector
 - Not on any current county parks plans
 - Potential route goes through Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land, an also a county-owned parcel.

- Daniel suggested keeping it on the list even with a very low ranking. That way the committee could point to the list in the event that the county attempts to sell the parcel.
- Birch Bay Berm Update
 - Recent storm damage resulted in 700 feet of roadway needing repair
 - Will require additional funding and design
 - Had the berm already been in place, the damage to the roadway would have been prevented.
 - US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Whatcom County, and the Lummi Nation need to agree on mitigations for tribal fishing areas.
 - It may be possible to combine the storm damage repairs with the berm plan.
 - If berm project does not move forward, the road damage would likely be repaired separately.
 - Recommended that the committee keep the project on the priority list.
- Kendall Connectivity Trail (Kendall-Sumas Trail on the list)
 - Overlaps with the proposed Everson to Maple Falls segment of the Bay to Baker Trail
 - Connection to Sumas is actually a separate trail, but still part of the proposed Bay to Baker Trail
 - Added 15 points to the ranking for being a key network link
 - Overall score: 79
 - Jason suggested that we don't include the Kendall-Sumas trail project on the list
- Marine Drive/Airport Trail/ Nooksack Loop Trail (NLT): Bellingham to Ferndale
 - These are currently two projects on the list
 - Matt: should they be combined into one?
 - Daniel suggested that they stay on the list separately. The opening of the Airport Trail will change the routing the NLT, but it has value as a stand-alone project.
 - BPAC will be able to give input on the proposed roundabout where the Airport Trail meets the intersection of Rural Ave and Slater Road
- NLT: Ferndale to Lynden
 - Proposed route to follow the Nooksack River and Bertrand Creek to Berthusen Park (City of Lynden)
 - Route goes through agricultural areas prone to flooding and areas of resistance to trails
 - Overall score: 81 points
- NLT: Lynden to Everson
 - Project is ready to go when/if BNSF abandons the railway; a portion has already been abandoned and the rails removed.
 - Overall score: 73 points

Discussion about project focus

- Do we wait for meeting with Jon Hutchings?
- How do we get from priority list to implementation? Might get some ideas at the 2/28 Trails Summit
- Gary: Does the committee have standards about when and how to recommend bike-ped facilities? For example, upcoming City of Bellingham and DOT work on Hwy 542. It's possible the BPAC could have an influence on work done at the Hwy 542/Hannegan and Hwy 542/Hwy 9 intersections
- Eileen: suggested that we ask the Council to appropriate the funds for "neighborhood-level" projects, e.g. crosswalks.
- Committee should solicit groups to give presentation on projects in order to receive the support of the committee. Alan also suggested that input from the public be used to inform the committee's priorities.
- Daniel: How do we want Public Works to react to the list?
- Eileen: What are the opportunities/obstacles to land acquisition? Can we take advantage of the County's existing Purchase of Development Rights program?
- Daniel: Keep the pressure on Public Works to implement as many projects as possible
- Matt: What are the liability issues associated with using volunteer labor for projects
- Eileen: We should consider talking to Jack Louws about ranking criteria, projects, and the committee's recommendations.
- Daniel: Be sure that the County Council is also aware of the project list and try to get councilmembers to attend the BPAC meetings

Other Business

- Annie Honrath resigned her seat.
- This is Daniel Tepper's last meeting, as his term has expired and he's not eligible for another.
- Committee currently has three openings, with two new applicants awaiting confirmation from the County Council.
- Eileen: Should there be training on how County government functions for new committee members?

Meeting Adjourned at 7:35 pm.