

Whatcom County Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee
August 19, 2020

Meeting called to order at 5:46 pm

Members present: Eileen Kadesh, Sunny Beaver, Gary Malick, Patrick Alesse, Sonja Max, Alec Howard, Pete Sharp, Robin Thomas

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

Approval of minutes from July 15, 2020 meeting

- Eileen suggested re-phrasing point 5 about the Kendall Connectivity trail and changing Public Works Committee to Public Works Committee of the County Council.
- Eileen moved approval; Gary seconded. Approved unanimously with Eileen's changes.

Report on TIP meeting

- Sonja and Stephen met with public works about getting our projects on the upcoming TIP
- None of our suggested projects were added
- Staff suggested that we come back in January 2021 and prepare for getting a project on the 2022 TIP. It was also suggested that while we can request smaller projects, there is a preference for larger ones.
- Jason mentioned that both the Marine Dr improvements and Birch Bay Berm are coming off the TIP in 2021, theoretically freeing up space/funding for priority projects of the committee.
- Eileen expressed disappointment that we were unable to get any projects on the TIP for the second consecutive year.

Parks Comprehensive Plan Discussion

- Rod Lamb shared a map that shows a "vision" for trail linkages and corridors. The map does not reflect actual locations and/or budgets.
- Most trails in the plan are multi-modal, with the exception of the proposed trail over Stewart Mountain.
- Proposed Bay to Baker trail routing is along an abandoned railroad right of way. In the interim property owners have constructed driveways, etc., making it more difficult to create a continuous trail.
- Gary suggested that we pursue other options for the routing of this trail
- Eileen suggested keeping this theoretical routing, but also adding a separate trail along Highway 542. According to WSDOT Active Transportation, this roadway presents a high level of traffic stress for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Pete suggested utilizing Deming and Truck roads along this route to reduce the number of trail miles to be built
- Rod Lamb talked about a trail project in the South Fork Valley on the east side of Hwy 9. It's an intra-park trail that will connect two county parks properties, with potential connections to other trails on DNR lands.
- Eileen wondered about a connection to the Centennial Trail
- Community outreach for the new parks comprehensive plan will start in late 2020 ahead of next year's update. This is the time for BPAC to discuss adding projects to the plan

- Sonja expressed concern about different agencies focusing on certain types of trail projects, i.e. Public Works for transportation; Parks for recreation. Where is the intersection of the two?
- Jason suggested getting the County Executive and County Council on board for a dual mandate of transportation/recreation across the agencies.
- Sonja asked if there was a long-range planning document other than the TIP. Jason answered that there is a transportation element of the County Comprehensive Plan. It was last updated in 2016 and will be updated again in 2024.

Discussion on Safety Goals

- Robin brought up the idea of tracking both collisions and near-misses and wondered how we are identifying areas that are dangerous.
- Jason mentioned that Public Works will provide 5 years of collision/fatality data to the committee. Public reviews every collision on county roads, including in the field for collisions involving bicycles or pedestrians.
- Public works does not keep track of near misses- they must go by reported collisions
- Robin gave the example of Oakland, CA and Bellevue, WA as cities that have used camera monitoring to track near misses. The resulting data shows areas that users intuitively know to be dangerous, which has led to intersection improvements.
- Robin gave an example of a near miss study in MA. It was found that women (cyclists/pedestrians) were encroached on more frequently than men.
- Pete made the point that near misses are very subjective and likely difficult to track
- Jason will send the committee the WSDOT collision data, which is mapped and broken down by county.

Status Update on Marine Drive Petition

- Jason completed report and submitted it to the county engineer. He also met with the Sheriff's Sergeant assigned to the area. Public works will discuss more in the coming month and it will possibly be introduced by the County Council on 9/15. Public hearing could be held at 9/29 meeting.

Update on Recent Car-Cyclist Collision in Blaine

- On 8/4 a vehicle and cyclist were both east bound on H Street Rd near the intersection with Valley View. The driver passed the cyclist too closely and hit the cyclist with the corner of their vehicle. The cyclist suffered significant injuries to the head and arms. The driver was cited for improper lane usage.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:54 PM