

**Whatcom County Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee  
Oct 12, 2022**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members present:**

Walker Hudsick, Stephen Zylstra, Sonja Max, Pete Sharp, Kelly Kendall, Gary Malick, Brian Johnson, Sandy Phillips

**Members excused:**

Patrick Alesse, Sunny Beaver

**Staff present:**

Jason Ardt (Public Works)

Sonja called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

**1) Public Comment**

There was no public comment

**2a) Approval of July Meeting Minutes**

Gary moved to approve September Meeting minutes. Walter seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

**2b) Approval of September Meeting Minutes**

Walter moved to approve September Meeting minutes. Gary seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

**3) Co Chair Updates**

A committee vacancy is open

Discussed details for a group walk at Birch Bay

**4) WTA Guest - Mary Anderson**

What is going on at WTA - top 5 things what is going on with transit and WTA.

Mary is a senior planner at WTA. Has been with WTA for 5 years. A few things she wanted to mention (and/or myths to debunk)

1 - Time to implement

How much time it takes to add new service. At least 12 months to implement new service (or new service changes). Begins with an **idea**, goes to **research and outreach**, then **resources** (buses) need to be procured, then **public hearings** will occur, then the driver **mark-up** (to pick new shifts), marketing materials are **created**, then active **marketing** goes public, then new **service can start**.

Notes: the work a bus does is called a block and can be interlined (routes linked together),

2 - GHG Reduction

Transit doesn't always reduce GHG emissions - unless the buses are electric. Needs 18 people on the buses to break even (assuming the buses are diesel).

### 3 - Marketing

Used to get the word out about whether or not buses are options and benefits of taking the bus. Marketing alone will not sway people to start taking the bus.

### 4 - Farebox Recovery

How much of our operations are covered by fares? For 2022, it's only 2.3% of operation costs are covered by fares. Prior to Covid, it was closer to 12%. Ridership is down, contract w/ WWU changed.

### 5 - Smaller buses

Smaller buses don't cost much less than larger buses. The cost is \$600k for a diesel, \$1.2m for an electric bus. For a small electric bus, it's only \$80k less. Drivers wages/benefits are the largest costs associated with the bus.

During Covid, ridership plummeted. Limited 12 people per bus.

Ridership slowly recovering.

2 WTA routes = 40% of ridership

WWU tax themselves where their student cards work on WTA buses

WTA has not changed bike racks to accommodate e-bikes over 50lbs

Pete asked about inconsistent policies when the bike rack is full - different drivers handle it differently.

Most routes at 60% pre-covid ridership - since WWU went back, other routes have probably increased.

Lynden Hop is a pilot project for mobility on demand. Increased demand has required WTA to add extra vans during busier times. Weekdays peaked at 63 riders.

For an increase in ridership will be to increase frequency - which takes time. Currently on a 6 year plan to increase service. Also needs to partner with the cities.

## **5) Active Transportation**

Trying to determine the active transportation funding goals. The goal is to increase multi modal projects in the (TIP).

Jason recommends that if the committee would like to pursue this, they make a proposal and bring it to the executive.

Not all county roads require bike infrastructure.

Jason recommends the committee consider a minimum number of multimodal projects on the 6 year TIP.

Sonja wanted to work with Stephen and then bring it back to the committee.

Jason gave an update on the Galbraith crossing. The goal is for it to be constructed by spring.

Sonja wanted the group to consider multi-modal improvements along state highways.

Update from Jason: The Executive has budgeted \$50,000 from the Paths and Trails Fund in 2023 for the committee's study of multimodal infrastructure projects (RFQ; this gives Public Works the budget authority to pursue the consultant services agreement should the WCOG not receive grant funding from SS4A for the County Safety Plan.

Request from Jason: As the BPAC liaison, please notify Jason when committee chairs or members meet with WSDOT, WCOG or county staff.

## **6) Inspiration**

Car free streets video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIXNVnftaNs>

## **7) Announcements**

Sonja mentioned a proposal is before the city council to remove parking along some street segments to install bike lanes (Eldridge, W Illinois, Meridian, Gerard, Cornwall) and many residents of Eldridge were opposed. Sonja suggested those that live in the City may write to the Council before Oct 24<sup>th</sup> with their views.

## **8) Adjourn**

Sonja adjourned the meeting at 7:52pm