

Whatcom County Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee

October 16, 2019

Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm

Members present: Eileen Kadesh (Chair), Sunny Beaver, Jason Ardt (Public Works), Stephen Zylstra, Gary Malick, Patrick Alesse, Sonja Max, Kyle Morris, Alec Howard, Chris Elder (Public Works), Gary (reporter from the Western Front)

The minutes from the September 18, 2019 meeting were approved.

Report on Snohomish County Active Pathways Workshop

- Eileen and Stephen attended the workshop, which was a brainstorming session with county staff soliciting input from public stakeholders
- Learned that Snohomish County has at least one Public Works FTE who spends at least 50% of his time on active transportation projects. (It was subsequently pointed out that the population of Snohomish County is 3 ½ times the population of Whatcom County.)
- Eileen talked with Terry Terry of the Whatcom Council of Governments' Citizen's Transportation Advisory Committee

Report on Whatcom County Pedestrian-Bicycle Plan Update meeting (Stephen)

- On September 30th, a small group met to brainstorm about updating the Bike-Ped Plan
- The group determined that we might need to re-visit the responsibilities of the committee as outlined in the ordinance establishing the committee. This could ultimately include changing the language of the ordinance.
- Gary stressed the need for public input and for the use of data that is already available, i.e. Strava heat maps and COG's bike map. In other words, does the committee need to maintain a map when one already exists?
- The group agreed that collaboration with the County and non-governmental stakeholders was a key component in the plan update.
- Patrick mentioned that the County has funds in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for small bike/ped projects, \$50,000 or less. Gary wondered if these funds could be used for educational campaigns.
- Main questions moving forward: How do we best influence the County? What about the possibility of starting from scratch on the written plan? What about designating trails as linear parks, which might make them eligible for the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funds.
- Discussed the possibility of another focused retreat to determine how to proceed.

Presentation on Planning Policies and Considerations by Chris Elder, Public Works Watershed Planning

- Eileen: Are developers required to create trails or pay impact fees? Levels of Service for trails within parks are outlined in the comprehensive plan; however, since there is no

adopted plan for trails outside of parks, there is no legal mechanism to make demands on developers or property owners. The County does not currently have impact fees for bike-ped projects.

- Chris Elder recommends that the bike-ped plan be updated and to make sure that it refers back to adopted sections of the Comprehensive and Parks/Open Space Plans.
- The next scheduled update of the Comprehensive Plan is in 2024, but the County Council can approve interim amendments. The plan is used to establish all development and planning codes.
- The County Planning Department might be able to help the committee with GIS support on small projects.
- Stephen asked about the biggest challenges for getting the Nooksack Loop Trail completed. Chris Elder answered that it was mostly missed opportunities to purchase railroad rights-of-way in the 1980s.
- Chris recommended a Conservation Levy at the County level; also recommended that a BPAC member attend the meetings of the Climate Impact Advisory Committee. They are currently working on an updated Climate Action Plan and the BPAC can provide input on the update as well as inform the committee on transportation-related climate issues.

Bike Count Update

- Eileen mentioned that the first counts of bicyclists and pedestrians were done by BPAC members at four locations the last week of September. The locations were Marine Drive at Bennett, Lakeway Dr. at Oriental, Airport Rd. at Airport Way, and Northshore Drive at the County line. This is baseline information, and the intention is to conduct a count at even more locations on an annual basis as part of the Statewide bike/ped count.

Other Business

- Eileen announced her intention to resign as committee chair; an election to choose a new chair will be held at the November, 2019 meeting.
- Matt Paskus is moving out of the area and resigned from the committee.
- Airport Trail: there is a small amount of funding for design in 2020.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.