

Whatcom County Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee

November 18, 2020

Minutes

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

Members Excused: Stephen Zylstra

Staff present: Jason Ardt (Public Works)

Public present: none as of start

Sonja Max called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm.

1. There were no public comments.
2. Eileen moved to approve the minutes of the October BPAC meeting. Patrick seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.
3. Sonja announced that Kyle has resigned from the committee due to a busy schedule.
4. Sonja asked for a Marine drive update since the speed reduction has been implemented. Jason said all the new speed limit signs have been installed. Gary mentioned he has observed a calmer traffic flow overall. Gary thanked the committee and Jason Ardt for all the support in getting this speed reduction in place. It was mentioned that there is not currently any additional signage to bring the reduced speed signs into the public's attention. Jason said he would investigate this; Eileen suggested flags.
5. Sonja and Stephen are working on a project to create a fund for multimodal transportation projects. It was suggested the idea of requiring future development projects in the county be required to pay a fee to support these projects based on the impact of said projects on the transportation infrastructure. Jason mentioned that the county does not currently have this type of fee in place. This will require further analysis. Discussion continued on this subject involving urban growth areas and more urbanized areas such as Birch Bay.
6. Alec gave an update on the committee he is serving on with the county's climate action task force. He is developing a list of suggested actions to reduce emissions caused by transportation. He is refining the list to and will present to the BPAC at a later date.
7. Gary addressed the subject of bike lane maintenance. His concerns are that debris builds up in the bike lanes if not properly cleaned on a regular basis. As a result, cyclists will move into the roadway and cause issues with vehicles. Jason provided information relating to the current schedule the county has in place for cleaning of the bike lanes. Gary mentioned the book "Joy Ride" by Mia Birk as a good reference for the BPAC. Other members mentioned concerns on roads such as Chuckanut Drive. Sonja suggested the BPAC have a workday for cleaning of some of the existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Jason will provide further information on contacts that can be used to report issues with bike lanes.
8. Eileen and Pete gave an update on the status of Safe Routes to School plans in Whatcom County School districts. They gave an update on the work they have been doing to reach out to the schools in the county to ascertain what they are doing to address Safe Routes to Schools for their students. Pete concentrated on the Bellingham public schools. He read a letter he received from Chris Comeau with City of Bellingham public works department. Eileen contacted the outlying schools. See the attached document for further details. Sonja asked if the county has ever applied for a Safe Routes to school grant. Jason replied no, not to his knowledge.

9. Sonja shared a video from the state of Utah on some inspirational ideas to further bicycle and pedestrian projects in local communities. The group agreed looking to these successful endeavors is a good idea to further the committee's work.

10. Sonja adjourned the meeting at 6:42 pm.

Status of Safe Routes to School Plans in Whatcom County Schools

Bellingham School District (22 schools)

- Pete will address this.

Ferndale School District (9 schools) 360-383-9239

- Spoke first with Tammy Frost in Transportation & then with Paul Rosser, Transportation Director
- Indicated that all the schools have a Safe Routes to School Plan since it's a requirement
- A lot of their roads have ditches and the school buses have to go all the way to a student's house since they can't walk to a bus stop. Need a 6 ft shoulder on both sides and more flashing crosswalks.
- Will check with individual schools to see if they have their SRTS plans in writing.
- 12/16 UPDATE: NONE of the Ferndale Public Schools have a SRTS plan.

Meridian School District (3 schools) 360-398-7111

- Left message for District Superintendent

Nooksack School District (5 schools) 360-966-2311

- Spoke with Chris Hogan in Transportation
- Indicated that Sumas and the middle school are the only ones that are appropriate since the kids don't have to cross State highways. Don't actually designate safe walking and biking routes, but there are quite a few kids that walk and bike to Sumas Elementary. A few bike and walk to the middle school.
- Also analyze areas that are within one mile of the other schools and subtract kids that live within that one mile radius from their bus transportation numbers.

Blaine School District (5 schools) 360-332-0700

- Spoke with Rachel Hrutfiord, Transportation Director
- All of the schools have SRTS plans
- Plans are in process of being put on the school district's website
- Plans are updated every two years

Lynden School District (6 schools) 360-354-4443

- Spoke with Karen in Administration
- Do not have any Safe Routes to School plans
- Have partnered with City of Lynden for bike lanes

Mt. Baker School District (7 schools) 360-383-2060

- No Safe Routes to School plans
- Their schools not walkable since the locations are too rural
- Acme might be the only school where this could apply