

Whatcom County Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee

December 18, 2018

Members in attendance:

Eileen Kadesh, Chair
Sunny Beaver
Gary Malick
Tara Satushek
Mark Owings
Daniel Tepper

Staff attending:

Jason Ardt, Public Works
Christ Thomsen, Parks

Eileen Kadesh called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

Daniel made a motion to approve the minutes of the November meeting, as corrected by Jason. Gary seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously.

Priority projects

The next item on the agenda was the continued presentation of priority project research.

Blue Canyon Connector – Presentation by Mark Owings, with assistance from Sunny.

Daniel indicated that this project is one of the highest rated projects by the community. The County had an opportunity to buy the Hague family property some years ago, but passed this up. If it becomes available again, there will be a lot of pressure on the County to buy it. RCO money could be available to help with the purchase.

It's about one mile from the Hertz Trail to Blue Canyon Rd.

Christ Thomsen confirmed that the Blue Canyon Connector is the project about which Parks gets the most questions. In fact, this is the Executive's only high priority project for Parks. The project would benefit hikers and long-distance runners.

Tara pointed out that there are no bus routes out to this area, so it would be difficult to get there without a car.

Nooksack Loop Trail – Bellingham to Ferndale – Presentation by Daniel Tepper

Jack Louws is committed to completing this section of the Nooksack Loop Trail.

Originally, the route was going to come up the river; there is currently an informal trail along the dikes. The dikes are under public ownership. The section of the trail from Slater to Ferndale already exists.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife supports the trail. Richard Kessler is the land manager for DFW.

For transportation purposes, a more direct alignment is needed. Recently, the Airport Trail has been discussed as an option. From Kope Rd to Ferndale, there are several options for the alignment.

Point Roberts Trail – Presentation by Eileen Kadesh

Jason indicated there is a 25 mph speed limit in Point Roberts.

This trail is a fairly low priority. The primary benefit would be connecting the four parks in Point Roberts.

Blaine/Birch Bay Trail Project – Presentation by Eileen Kadesh

This is one of the highest priority projects, based on safety considerations, opportunities for funding, land acquisition and the work already being done by the Blaine/Birch Bay Trail committee.

Eileen indicated that there may be a couple of projects which have not yet been rated. She offered to work with Jason to wrap this up.

Eileen asked the group what they believe the next steps should be once we finalize the priority project ranking exercise. She proposed inviting Jon Hutchings to our January, 2019 meeting to discuss with the committee how we might best advocate for implementation of these projects.

Jason suggested that the BPAC put the **Birch Bay Berm** back on the project list. In case it doesn't get built and money is lost, it needs to be on the list. The Birch Bay Berm is fully funded and was supposed to be built in fall of 2018. It is now scheduled for Fall, 2019. The berm is intended to protect the road from storm surges. The path on top of the berm is supposed to be 6 feet wide. There was concern that this is not wide enough for pedestrians and two directions of bicycle traffic. Jason said that maybe it is intended to serve only pedestrians.

Daniel indicated that we may need to amend the 2011 Bike/Ped Plan in order to reflect our priority project ranking. There are procedures we would need to go through to amend the plan. Chris Elder might have information about what procedures we need to follow.

There was some discussion about how the BPAC interacts with the public. Tara suggested that education of the public could be an important role of the committee.

Daniel encouraged Public Works to keep the bigger picture in mind and think about opportunities for trails to connect. Jason said the point of having our group is for us to come up with a vision and give our comments to Public Works.

Trail Summit

Daniel reported that the Trail Summit is scheduled for Thursday, February 28 from 10 am to 2 pm in the Ferndale WECU Conference Room. BPAC members will be invited, and lunch will be provided. About 40 – 50 people are expected to attend.

The objectives of the summit will be as follows:

1. Enhance communication between state and local governments regarding trail projects.
2. Examine existing trail networks.
3. Develop future priority trail lists.
4. Identify barriers.

Eileen asked the group to think about whether we should have another retreat this spring.

The group agreed that 1) we will have potluck dinners at future meetings, and 2) we will rotate note-taking at meetings, rather than elect a secretary.

The meeting was adjourned by Eileen at 7:25 pm.