

Whatcom Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes - October 20, 2021
Zoom Conference call

Members Present: Sonja Max (co-chair), Stephen Zylstra (co-chair), Patrick Alesse, Gary Malik, Robin Thomas, Pete Sharp, Kelly Kendall, Sunny Beaver, Sandy Phillips

Members Absent: Brian Johnson

Staff Present: Jason Ardt (Public Works liaison)

Guests Present: Stacy Walker (member of public)

1. Meeting was called to order by Sonja at 5:50PM
2. Gary moved to approve minutes from September meeting, Pete seconded motion, motion passed
3. Sonja and Stephen met with Jon Hutchings (Director, County Public Works) to present the county bike route map under development by BPAC. Jon suggested moving forward in the process to hire a consultant to perform a comprehensive analysis to ultimately generate suggestions related to most appropriate bike/ped routes and multi-modal infrastructure across the county. Doug Ranney was asked to develop a scope by January 2022. It is anticipated that a consultant may be hired in early 2022, if all approvals are acquired.
4. Steve Bowler, a member of the public living in the county near Bellingham's Birchwood neighborhood, contacted Sonja and Stephen to discuss the possibility of adding a new pedestrian crossing on Marine Drive, near Locust Ave. Jason noted there is already an unmarked crossing at that location. Lots of discussion ensued among the committee members about safety for peds and bikes at unmarked vs marked crossings, especially where cars are not otherwise slowing or stopping at that location. Steve Bowler will likely collect signatures from the neighborhood and formally present his request to the county council. BPAC agreed to provide a letter of endorsement, if needed.
5. Sandy and other BPAC members suggested there was a need in the county to educate both drivers and pedestrians about how to negotiate unmarked crossings. It was believed that many people do not understand the legal requirements or proper use of these crossings. Jason mentioned that the county could add some information on the county website to educate the public on this issue.
6. Sonja met with Kurt Baumgarten (Port of Bellingham) to discuss the proposed trail that runs off of Marine Drive and continues through the airport property. Kurt noted they are now referring to this as the Marine Drive Trail System (instead of the Airport Trail). He anticipates the trails closest to and roughly parallel with Marine Drive to be implemented first. He is

unsure about budgeting and approval for the trail heading north past the airport to Kope Rd. It was discussed that Sonja and Stephen could meet with Michael Shepard (Port Commissioner) to get the Port Commission behind the project, since staff does not feel they have adequate authority to increase the budget or advance the timeline on this project as it currently stands. Sonja & Stephen are following up with Michael.

7. Sonja met with Council of Governments (COG) staff to consider if any of COG's GIS layers (files) could be used to enhance the BPAC bike route map under development. It was noted that a COG survey of county residents last year showed that county residents valued multi-modal transportation infrastructure.
8. Sonja presented a current draft of the BPAC spreadsheet identifying county bike route segments and ranking criteria with their associated points. This was only an update on the process, no action was requested of the committee. Gary mentioned his concerns about safety in one segment at the crossing where Marine Dr. intersects old Marine Dr, if a person is traveling east. The committee members expected the county consultant's analysis to consider this particular concern.
9. Gary will be drafting a letter that will eventually be sent from the BPAC to the City of Ferndale, requesting that the city paints/highlights the bike box located on Rural Rd., where it crosses Slater Rd. Currently, it is unclear where northbound bike riders should stand when waiting for the stop light to turn green.
10. Brian was not on the meeting call so there was no update on the BPAC website development
11. Stephen noted that committee member Jae Heidenreich has resigned from the BPAC, effective immediately. The County Executive's office will be notified and asked to post the opening for a replacement
12. Meeting was adjourned at 7:10PM