



Whatcom County Bicycle- Pedestrian Advisory Committee Recommendations

PRESENTATION TO COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

AUGUST 7, 2019

Committee Goals

- ▶ Make it easier and safer for County residents to bike and walk for transportation and recreation
- ▶ Ensure County's Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan reflects current needs
- ▶ Speed up completion of priority bicycle/ped projects

What's New in 2019 Work Plan

- ▶ New priority project list
- ▶ Updating 2010 Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan
- ▶ Participating on ADA Study Team
- ▶ Proposal for Community Grant program
- ▶ Spot improvements idea
- ▶ Start tracking bicycle and pedestrian usage on County roads

Three Trail Proposals Deserve Special Attention

- ▶ Nooksack Loop Trail (Bellingham to Ferndale)
- ▶ Blaine/Birch Bay Trail
- ▶ Kendall Connectivity Trail (State Route 547 Trail)

Nooksack Loop Trail

- ▶ 45 mile trail connecting Bellingham, Ferndale, Lynden & Everson
- ▶ Over 100,000 people live within five miles of proposed trail corridor
- ▶ Whatcom County Parks & Rec Foundation has done work on this
- ▶ Existing opportunity for Port of Bellingham to open Airport Trail to public
- ▶ Lockwood property owned by City of Bellingham – could provide connection from end of existing trail to Airport Trail
- ▶ Kope Road to Ferndale section next priority

Nooksack Loop Trail



Blaine/Birch Bay Trail

- ▶ Would connect Birch Bay State Park and Peace Arch State Park (8.9 mi)
- ▶ No safe way to cycle or walk to local schools, parks, groceries, services
- ▶ Local trail committee has been working on this project
- ▶ Approved a park levy to fund trail development (70% voter approval)
- ▶ Have been purchasing easements and property for trail
- ▶ A few segments on County roadways, need support from Public Works
 - ▶ *Harborview Hill Road*
 - ▶ *Crossing of California Creek*

Kendall Connectivity Trail

- ▶ Officially called **State Route 547 Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Trail** (about 3 miles long); part of Bay-to-Baker Trail
- ▶ 57 accidents involving bikes and peds, including two bicycle fatalities
- ▶ Elementary school prohibits children from cycling/walking to school because it isn't safe to do so
- ▶ On State ROW
- ▶ Kendall-Columbia Valley community has been advocating for this trail since 2013; broad community support



Proposal: Community Grant (Small Projects) Program

- ▶ Encourage neighborhoods/community groups to make the case for small projects like crosswalks, short sections of bike lanes or sidewalks
- ▶ Reflect constantly changing needs
- ▶ Allow residents to have some ownership of the bicycle/pedestrian system
- ▶ Maximum project cost could be \$250K
- ▶ Select two or three projects for implementation each year
- ▶ Public Works would design and implement the projects

Spot Improvements

- ▶ Priority projects where right-of-way for a bike lane is lacking along much of the corridor (e.g., Northshore Drive)
- ▶ Funding the entire project may be prohibitive
- ▶ May have short stretches where a climbing lane or other type of improvement could increase safety
- ▶ Incremental improvements can make a difference



Bike/Ped Counts

- ▶ Bicycle and pedestrian usage on County roads not tracked
- ▶ No basis for comparing usage before and after improvements
- ▶ Propose to do an annual count on select County roads using volunteers
- ▶ Would be part of the WSDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project

Recommendations

- ▶ Hire an **Active Transportation Manager** in Public Works
- ▶ Decide which County department should have responsibility for trail development outside parks
- ▶ Speed up implementation of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure by including additional projects in the *Six Year TIP* and annual construction budget
- ▶ Make the Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan dynamic by creating an annual fund for small community projects