Changing the Climate of Mobility:
Bellingham’s Multimodal Transportation Networks

Presented by: Chris Comeau, Transportation Planner, Public Works

Climate Action Task Force
March 6, 2019
Bellingham is the Regional Center (Employment, Shopping, Education, Medical Services, etc.)

Disproportionate Number of Vehicle Trips In/Out of City

2015 Inflow/Outflow Job Counts: Bellingham City Limits

- Employed in the City of Bellingham, but Living Outside City Limits: 28,349
- Living in the City of Bellingham, but Employed Outside City Limits: 15,274
- Employed & Living within Bellingham City Limits: 18,969

*2015 Data from U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application, Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics Program. http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/
Heavy Influence by Visitors in Automobiles from Lower Mainland B.C., Canada

U.S. Border Crossing Rank
- Peace Arch (SR 543) #3
- Sumas (SR 9) #7
- Lynden (SR 539) #14
**Who Are We Planning For in Bellingham?**

**BALANCE:**
All mobility needs for all modes must be carefully considered, balanced, and implemented so that the citywide multimodal transportation system continues to work for everyone.
What Are We Planning For?

Long-Term Transportation Mode Shift Goals

Tracked each year in the Transportation Report on Annual Mobility (TRAM)
Bellingham’s Active Transportation Plans

Pedestrian Master Plan (2012)
- 260-mile pedestrian network
- ~ 171.5 miles (66%) complete
- Prioritized 343 improvements

Bicycle Master Plan (2014)
- 164-mile bicycle network
- ~ 73 miles (44%) complete
- Prioritized 186 improvements

Multiuse Greenways Trails (1990 x4)
- Extensive citywide trail system
- 73 miles existing multiuse trails
- 40 miles (55%) = secondary transportation
Approved August 2012
(Adopted PMP into Comprehensive Plan November 2016)

In 8 years (2013 - 2020) City Council approved construction and funding in 6-Year TIP* for:

- **43** PMP sidewalk network links
- **31** PMP pedestrian crossings
- **74** total pedestrian improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedestrian Sidewalk Improvements</th>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Completed</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects Completed</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects Not Yet Completed</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sidewalk Projects</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>357*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some sidewalk projects divided into pieces for funding and constructability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedestrian Crossing Improvements</th>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Completed</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects Completed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects Not Yet Completed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Crossing Projects</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25*</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1 crossing at SR 539/Tremont eliminated as not feasible

*2020 Pedestrian projects not yet completely programmed in 6-year TIP
Approved October 2014
(Adopted BMP into Comprehensive Plan November 2016)

In 6 years (2015 - 2020) City Council approved construction and funding in 6-Year TIP* for:

- **80** BMP bicycle network links
- **19** BMP bicycle crossings
- **99** total bicycle improvements

**Bicycle Network Links**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Completed</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects Completed</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects Not Yet Completed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Bike Projects</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>113**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes "Further Study Needed" Links
**2 links eliminated; determined as not feasible

**Bicycle Crossing Improvements**

| Percent Completed | 79% |
| Projects Completed | 19 |
| Projects Not Yet Completed | 5 |
| Total Crossing Projects | 24* |

*2 at Meridian/I-5 interchange not feasible

*2020 Bicycle projects not yet completely programmed in 6-year TIP
Strategically Maximizing Transportation Funding

- There is always more need than funding
- 6-Year TIP is strategic to leverage additional funding
- Documented transportation improvement needs
- High priorities in adopted City plans
- Good, competitive grant funding candidates
- Timing of various grant funding cycles
- Public-Private Partnership Opportunities
- Growth-related: Where is development happening?
- Ideally, all of the above
Bellingham Transportation Funding 2010 - 2020

Granary-Laurel Waterfront
$6.7 million federal earmark

Orchard-Birchwood Connector
$10 million state gas tax
split over 2 state budget cycles

TBD expires 12/31/2020
unless reapproved by voters in November 2020

2019 Multimodal TIF
How to Build Bicycle Network Connectivity At Relatively Low Cost by Using Existing Arterial Street Space

• **Road Diets** (multi-lane streets)
  – Removing excess vehicle lane(s) to add bike lanes

• **Rechannelization**
  – Reorganize / narrow lane markings to add bike lanes

• **Resurfacing & Repair**
  – Add bike lanes via normal repair and maintenance
  – Utility repair funding extended to install bikeways on surface

• **Removal of Parking**
  – On-street parking utilization studies
  – Remove low use parking on one side to add bike lanes
Road Diet
5 lanes reduced to 3 lanes with installation of buffer-protected bike lanes
Public Works Plan for Short-Term (2017-2020) and Long-Term (2021+)

Connectivity of Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities between Barkley Village & Downtown

- Mobility Barriers
- Existing bicycle facilities 2014
- 2015 - 2017 bicycle improvements
- Green bike boxes
- 2018 bicycle improvements
- Intersection improvements
- 2019 - 2020 improvements
- Intersection improvements (if funded)
- Future unfunded links & Intersection improvements
Public Works Plan for Short-Term (2017-2020) and Long-Term (2021+)

Connectivity of Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities between Puget Neighborhood and Downtown Bellingham

- Mobility Barriers
- Existing bicycle facilities 2014
- 2015-2017 bicycle improvements
- Green bike boxes
- 2018 bicycle improvements
- Intersection improvements
- 2019-2020 improvements
- Intersection improvements (if funded)
- Future unfunded links
Public Works Plan for Short-Term (2017-2020) and Long-Term (2021+)

Connectivity of Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities between Alderwood, Birchwood, & Columbia Neighborhoods

- Mobility Barriers
- Existing bicycle facilities 2014
- 2015 - 2017 bicycle improvements
- 2018 bicycle improvements
  - Intersection improvements
- 2019 - 2020 improvements
  - Intersection improvements (if funded)
- Future unfunded links & Intersection improvements
Public Works Plan for
Short-Term (2017-2020) and
Long-Term (2021+)

Connectivity of Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities between Cordata, W Bakerview & Meridian Bellingham
Data Collection: Installing Permanent Bicycle Counters (Cascade Bike Club + WSDOT Grant)

2008 - 2018
18 Bike Count Locations ← Requires Volunteers

2018 - 2 Permanent Bike Counters installed
- Illinois/I-5 Bike Bridge
- Dupont/F Street

2019 – 7 Permanent Bike Counters being installed
See map locations →

Future – Perhaps More Permanent Counters
Transportation Education and Outreach
(Needs to be on-going, long-term commitment)

Bellingham’s “Travel With Care” Public Education Campaign
https://www.cob.org/services/transportation/Pages/Travel-with-Care.aspx

Bellingham Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs and Facilities
https://www.cob.org/services/transportation/pages/biking.aspx

Whatcom Smart Trips (Whatcom Council of Governments - WCOG)
https://www.whatcomsmarttrips.org/
Brief Recap of Regional Transportation Realities

- Bellingham is the regional center for many trip purposes
- Economy depends on Regional travel → Purchase of goods → Sales tax $
- Regional trips primarily by automobile (>95%) or public transit (<5%)
- Public transit doesn’t compete well with auto for convenience or bulk goods
Opportunities to Affect Local Transportation Mode Shares

- Given the regional travel and economic realities, what can Bellingham do to reduce local auto mode share while increasing walking, biking, and transit?

Some Local Options:

- Ask voters to renew Transportation Benefit District (TBD) November 2020
- Continue to implement Bicycle & Pedestrian Plans, including crossings of I-5
- Manage privately-funded dockless bicycle share in public right-of-way
- Implement higher-density Transit-Oriented Development along WTA GO Lines
- Expand auto parking management areas and increase metered parking rates
- Recruit employers, create jobs with salaries based on local cost of living
- Require affordable (inclusionary) housing for local wage workers
- Work with Smart Trips to educate and encourage non-auto trips
Bellingham’s Multimodal Transportation Networks

Chris Comeau, AICP-CTP, Transportation Planner
Public Works Engineering
360.778.7946  ccomeau@cob.org