Interview: Western Washington University (WWU) Administrative Staff

Online Meeting: Monday, July 11, 2022 – 1:00pm to 2:00pm

➢ Rick Benner, University Architect & Senior Director of Capital Planning and Development
➢ Jillian Trinkaus, Commute Options and Transportation Planning Manager
➢ Chris Roselli, Director of Community Relations
➢ Chris Comeau, Transportation Planner, City of Bellingham Public Works

Guiding Questions for WWU staff about the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan Updates

1.) How does WWU support biking and walking into the work your agency/organization does?
   - There is a Commute Options and Transportation Planning Manager position on staff
   - Designated as a pedestrian campus in our Institutional Master Plan
   - Sustainability Action Plan has a Transportation Chapter which outlines goals for increasing the mode share for pedestrians and bicyclists
   - Designated as a League of American Bicyclists Silver level Bicycle Friendly University
   - Have safe and pleasant walking paths
   - Universal bus pass for students and a subsidized bus pass for employees – supports both pedestrians and bicyclists
   - Offer bicycle classes and bike rides
   - Low-cost bicycle rentals and bench fees for bike repairs at the AS Outdoor Center
   - Two bicycle challenges each year – Bike Everywhere Month in May and Ride in the Rain Challenge in November
   - Lockers and showers are available on campus
   - Provide ample bicycle parking spots many of which are covered
   - Traffic calming measures on East College Way to increase comfort and safety of pedestrians and bicyclists

2.) Are there any specific things that WWU hopes to get out of these plan updates?
   - Prioritization of improvements for specific locations and intersections that affect people walking and rolling on the streets and sidewalks near WWU

3.) What do you see as the primary needs or concerns for WWU employees and students?
   - See attached list

4.) Does WWU have any particular goals for these plan updates?
   - Improved accessibility, comfort, and safety of people walking and rolling on the streets and sidewalks near WWU.

5.) Does current active transportation infrastructure work well for WWU?
   - In some areas it does. There are trouble spots that need improvement.

6.) How do you think biking and walking can be made safer around WWU?
   - Reduce vehicle speeds on roads near campus
Improvements to pedestrian crossings at intersections near campus

See attached list

7.) Can you identify feasible improvements that could be made for walking and biking to WWU?

See attached list

WWU Staff Requested Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements Surrounding Campus

Comments in red are from City staff. Comments in blue are from WWU staff.

Adjacent to Campus

Bill McDonald Pkwy at West College Way

- Connect the bike lanes to the entrance on campus at Wade King Rec Center with green striping and add wayfinding signs.
- No right turns on red at this intersection.
- Prioritize pedestrians at this intersection by timing the lights for a pedestrian scramble or a leading pedestrian interval.

West College Way

- Between Bill MacDonald Pkwy and S College Dr remove the right turn lane from the eastbound lane on W College Way. This should be included in the WWU South College Drive project scheduled in 2022.
- Install bike lanes on both sides of W College Way between Bill McDonald Pkwy and S College Dr. This should be included in the WWU South College Drive project scheduled in 2022.
- Improve the intersection of the access road behind the Wade King Student Rec Center where it meets W College Way for pedestrian safety.

Bill McDonald Pkwy and 21st Street

- Shorten the light cycle when pedestrian has hit the cross button; this is a long light, and it is often a low vehicle traffic area. People do not wait for the crossing signal when there is no traffic and cross on red.
- Add leading pedestrian interval on signal

Bill McDonald Pkwy

- Reduce 35 mph speed limit to 25 mph from S Samish Way to Ferry Ave.
- Improve the pedestrian crossing across Bill McDonald Pkwy at S College Dr. with a RRFB crossing light. Is This should be included in the WWU South College Drive project scheduled in 2022.

West Campus Way, North Garden Street, and Cedar Street

- This intersection does not provide adequate routes for bikes and pedestrians. Look at ways it can be redesigned to be safer for all road users.
- Frequent near misses between vehicles where the northbound lane of N Garden St meets W Campus Way.
- Drivers in the northbound lane on N Garden St frequently turn right into the lane that is marked as Do Not Enter at the top of Cedar St to access W Campus Way and N Garden St.
North Garden Street and East Pine Street

- Add crosswalks at this intersection.

North Garden Street and East Oak Street

- Add crosswalks at this intersection.

High Street at East Oak Street

- Bicyclists traveling south are forced into the oncoming traffic to go around the gate at Nash Hall. Add a bike lane on the west side of High St from E Oak St. to the Viking Commons with an opening for the bike lane on the west side of the gate at Nash. Connect this new bike lane to the one that disappears at the top of Billy Frank Jr St.
- From High St make E Oak St one way east into 5G, 7G, and 3R. Remove the exit from 7G that opens onto Billy Frank Jr St. The angle at which this driveway enters Billy Frank Jr St makes it hard for drivers to see pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles traveling on Billy Frank Jr St. Cars would leave these lots and the parking at Edens Hall using E Ivy St. **This is a change to circulation into/out of a WWU parking lot - is WWU willing to fund this?**

Billy Frank Junior Street

- Enforce no parking in the bike lane along Billy Frank Junior Street.

East Laurel Street

- From Jersey St to High St improve this pedestrian corridor between downtown and the Sehome Neighborhood with sidewalks - **Not identified in 2012 PMP, but could be in 2022 PMP**
- Pedestrian crossing at E Laurel St and Billy Frank Jr St to improve access to two bus stops and Laurel Park - **Not identified in 2012 PMP, but could be in 2022 PMP**

Happy Valley

21\textsuperscript{st} Street

- Traffic calming to lower speeds of southbound vehicles – 21\textsuperscript{st} Street is a secondary arterial street and hosts WTA Route 14 with transit bus service every 30 minutes. The City does not install physical traffic calming obstacles on arterial streets.
- Add a bike lane to the northbound lane. - 21\textsuperscript{st} Street is 30 feet wide curb to curb and has high-demand on-street parking on the east side, which does not allow physical space to add 5-foot marked bike lanes. **Unless the parking is removed.** Bellingham arterial street standards require 11-foot vehicle lanes, which does not allow enough space for two 5-foot-wide marked bicycle lanes. If high-demand parking were removed and vehicle lanes were reduced to 10-feet wide, then 5-foot bike lanes would be possible, but this creates a scenario referred to as “multiple minimums,” which elevates risks to all user groups (bicyclists, buses, vehicles) in that with less space, the margin for error is significantly reduced.
- Build sidewalks to connect the existing sidewalks on the west side of the street. – These are identified in the 2012 PMP but are very expensive because excavation into steep hillside and significant retaining walls are required along the west side of 21\textsuperscript{st} Street.
Trails between 22nd Street, 23rd Street, and Douglas Ave

- Curb cut for bicycles and strollers where the trail meets Douglas Ave

South Samish Way

- On the existing bridge over the freeway widen sidewalks and/or add protected, separated, or buffered bike lanes, or – Neither of these requests are physically feasible unless vehicle travel lanes are removed, which would create vehicle queues and traffic signal gridlock at I-5/36th Street and N. Samish/Byron.
- Build a pedestrian and bike bridge over I-5 at Consolidation Ave – This is not financially feasible. Our last cost estimate in 2021 as part of Lincoln-Lakeway Study was $22 million prior to the recent supply chain and inflation events. In 2022, it’s probably $25 to $30 million. There are no car free crossings of I-5 south of the Whatcom Creek Trail at Meador Ave. This would provide an important car free corridor between Lincoln St and S Samish Way. A significant amount of housing has been built and continues to be built on and near Lincoln St and S Samish Way. Providing safe and convenient access to people who are walking and rolling to the urban village on S Samish Way and the Lincoln/Lakeway shopping area would make both areas more vibrant and reduce the need to drive over the freeway to access the businesses in each area. Buses traveling to and from Lincoln St from Bill MacDonald Pkwy/S Samish Way lose time due to the large amount of traffic on the I-5 overpass on S Samish Way. Building a bus, bike, pedestrian bridge would allow for a funding partnership between the City of Bellingham, WTA, and Western. It could be planned in conjunction with improvements to the Lincoln Creek Parking Lot. A pedestrian-bike bridge over I-5 is estimate at $25 million, but a bridge that would support heavy transit buses would likely cost $50 million, or more, and would have to be approved by WSDOT and FHWA and then funded by a combination of grants and legislative funding sources.

32nd Street

- Add traffic calming, bike lanes, and pedestrian crossings where possible. - 32nd Street is a secondary arterial street and hosts WTA bus route 105 with hourly service and the City does not install physical traffic calming obstacles on arterial streets. Installing bike lanes would be possible if high-demand parking is removed on at least one side of the street.
- Improve accessibility of sidewalks (telephone poles and mailboxes are in the sidewalks)
- Add street trees – Typically, street trees would be located in a landscape strip or in 4’ x 4’ tree wells between the curb and the sidewalks, but along 32nd Street there is not enough ROW behind sidewalks to allow either of these treatments.

Intersection of Fielding Avenue and 32nd Street

- On the east side of 32nd St at the intersection with Fielding Ave bulb out the corners and add a crosswalk.

Intersection of Ferry Avenue and 32nd Street

- Add sidewalk on south side of Ferry – A developer is required to do this; construction is underway.
- Add a sidewalk on west side of 32nd St between Ferry Ave and Fielding Ave – This would require major excavation of the steep hillside along the west side of 32nd Street. Extremely expensive.
- Add crosswalks on Ferry Ave and across 32nd St – A developer is required to construct a crosswalk across 32nd Street at the southwest corner of Ferry; construction is underway.