

# Bicycle / Pedestrian Advisory Committee

December 10,

## 2002 Committee Summary as of year end 2002

### **Bike/Ped Committee Purpose**

The Whatcom County Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee was chartered by our County Council in May 2001 to *Advise the county on a system of bikeways and walkways and to promote their safe use.*

The citizen volunteers on this committee are serving our community because of their dedication to:

- Provide healthy and enjoyable daily opportunities to bike and walk on shorter commutes, to reduce the serious public health epidemic of sedentary lifestyles,
- Expand quality recreational opportunities for families and individuals,
- Promote tourism by creating scenic trails, which leverage our beautiful locale as a diversified and sustainable source of income for the community,
- Preserve our air and water quality, reduce road congestion and reduce our reliance on foreign oil by reducing demand for single-occupancy-motor-vehicle use.

Essentially, our goal is to bring the non-motorized transportation infrastructure up to par with our infrastructure for automobiles, to improve the health of all citizens (whether they utilize bicycles or not).

### **Accomplishments to Date**

- Worked with the County Planning Commission to add bikelanes and trails to the County Comprehensive Plan,
- Prioritized road construction projects to focus Public Works on the most critical enhancement needs,
- Developed detailed county map for planning and eventual public distribution,
- Conducted bike rodeos to educate youth on safe riding practices,
- Collected public input at various venues such as the county Fair and committee Open House, also via our web site and survey cards,

### **Current Infrastructure Enhancement Goals**

- Bikelanes to be painted and signed in 2003 on Hannegan, Birch Bay/Lynden roads and the Mt. Baker Highway to mile 14,
- Future bikelanes on Portal Way, East Bakerview and roadway segments of the Coast Millennium Trail following shoulder width improvement projects,
- Conceptual plans for trails in the Bay to Baker and Nooksack river corridors,
- Implement policy of providing safe walkways around all community centers in the county that are adjacent to residential areas.

### **Development and Promotional Goals**

- Complete a comprehensive County Bike Plan document and present to all key stakeholders,
- Distribute a map of the new bikelanes and trail projects to the public,
- Develop partnerships with incorporated towns, schools, building and health professions, WTA & WLT,
- Encourage creation of a funded Trail Planner position for the county,
- Continue community outreach by expanding programs for bike rodeos, Bike to Work and School Day, and encouraging biking and walking activities in our public schools

### **Commentary**

Although these goals seem very challenging for a small group of volunteers, we have already made some significant progress since the inception of the committee.

Fortunately, there is also increasing recognition among elected officials and health and planning professionals that we must address these issues now in response to the health crises identified by the CDC and the physical limits of over-reliance on our automobile infrastructure as our county grows at its current alarming rate.

We are in a fortunate position to learn from other areas in the country that are experiencing traffic gridlock, road rage and alarming increases on health care demand. Its not too late for us!

If we work together, we *can* steer our community towards a healthier and more enjoyable lifestyle, for us and for future generations.

***Happy 2003!***

The Whatcom County Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee