

B.I.K.E.S. Meeting Minutes

Thursday January 10, 2008, 7pm – 9pm

In attendance: Bill Weber, Bob Nyberg, Doug Andrews, Gordon Black Exec Director BAW, Kristi Knodell, Kristin Kinnamon, Mary Andrews, Mike Dahlstrom, Sharon Andrews, Steve Thomsen Public Works Director Snohomish County, Tim Wise, Warren Bare, Wendell Hultman.

Introductions: Speakers #1 Gordon Black BAW Executive Director, and #2 Steve Thomsen, Director Snohomish County Public Works

Gordon Black's main points follow:

- The Bicycle Alliance of Washington's (BAW) success depends on club participation and feedback for BAW. BAW employs a part time lobbyist in Olympia, Michael Temple, who also participates on the BAW Legislative Committee.
- Year 2008 is an off budget year, and will produce little legislation

The BAW's legislative agenda consists of at least 6 major goals. These are:

1. **Transportation Education for Kids:** Too many kids are driven to school by parents, Eileen Hyatt of Spokane has initiated bike education in 2 or 3 schools there. Successful, we want to see more. Some \$75k is budgeted for this project.
2. **Safeguarding Federal funds distribution:** Let's not let the money for trail enhancement be subverted by Governor and Legislature, as has happened in the past.
3. **Recycling Bill:** Event organizers will be required to manage recycling of trash at all public events, rides, fairs etc.
4. **Road Tolling:** SR520 and SR167 are being considered for tolling. New Tacoma Narrows has tolls. BAW supports tolls because they create flexibility, congestion pricing, emphasis on moving people and freight, not cars. Surplus income from tolling could be used for pedestrian, bicycling and transit projects.
5. **Climate change/Sustainability:** Reducing carbon emission by reducing the "vehicle miles traveled", or VMT. BAW supports state and local efforts to do this.
6. **Safe Passing Law amendment:** BAW wants to make the current law more specific by adding "3 feet" as the minimum safe passing distance, from the widest part of the vehicle.

Gordon discussed licensing bikes, dismissing it as impractical and unnecessary. Many cyclists own cars and pay fees already. Bikes do not damage streets nor pollute therefore create no significant costs.

January 29 is Advocacy Day in Olympia. Flex cars are available in Seattle for anyone wanting to carpool from Seattle. This is an opportunity to talk to legislators about transportation issues.

Gordon mentioned the "Complete Streets" and its "multiple uses" concept and the "environment of ignorance" that surrounds it. Complete streets include bike lanes on all new or improved roads and highways. This is often misunderstood and lampooned by ignorant public and private authorities.

He believes Proposition 1 was too large and a future effort should be an “incremental” process, taking it in smaller pieces over time. The money may not be there, but the need remains. Voters may likely want separate propositions, one transit and one for roads.

Speaker #2, Steve Thomsen

Thomsen is Director of Public Works, and has been with Snohomish County since 1986. He outlined his responsibilities, which include Transportation. He oversees 1660 roads, 200 bridges, solid waste disposal, surface water and water sheds, and fleet vehicles.

He has helped implement projects such as the Interurban trail, Centennial trail and the S. Everett 124th Street pedestrian and bike bridge. The latter was delayed many years due to jurisdiction disputes and land acquisition. However, it will open for use in spring 2008.

He strongly suggested we must lobby our County Council representatives and State representatives to achieve results. He said the past Council slowed “non motorized” projects. The current Comprehensive Plan contains plans for non motorized enhancements but he said we must lobby to ensure support for them.

He explained that of each County tax dollar, \$.06 cents is for roads. We can review the Comp Plan on the County’s web site.

We asked him about our “voice” in the county government. He said Will Hall of Planning and Development Services could be contacted. The county needs to hear from the bicycling community more often. Persistence, or ‘squeaky wheel’ is important.

Of the 450 million dollar planning budget, there is 10 million for non motorized projects. Bike lanes are part of any road enhancement. Also the new concept of “community centered projects” was discussed, which involves neighborhoods, schools and residents providing their input for improvements.

News: The Snohomish River Road will be widened from the Hwy 9 bridge underpass, to Airport Way. He mentioned that County’s goal is to connect the Interurban Trail to the Centennial.

He suggested we (BIKES) prioritize our wants and needs for Snohomish County and present them to County officials to be included in the Comp Plan and Capital Improvement plans.

The club asked Steve about providing a dedicated Bike and Pedestrian person at the County. We need someone advocating for us, but he said we need to do our own advocating. The County needs to hear from the cycling community. He did say the county was looking to hire a public works staff person in support of “transportation demand management” – transit, bicycling, and ridesharing.

Wendell Hultman made some points about how the Europeans evolved and solved some of their transportation and cycling issues.

Steve concluded by discussing “Mode Shift”, a goal of the county. That is getting people out of their vehicles and on to public transportation, walking and bikes. More park and rides are needed, and more of the smaller satellites of same.

The meeting concluded at 9pm.