



City Council Agenda Bill

20370
Bill Number

Subject: Public Hearing on the Alabama Corridor Safety Improvements

Summary Statement: Public Works will present the multi-agency recommendations for safety improvements to the Alabama Street corridor from Cornwall Avenue to St. Clair Street as a result of the year-long Phase 1 study of feasible alternatives. The Phase 2 construction of safety improvements on Alabama Street must be clearly defined for federal grant funding purposes with construction completed by September 30, 2015. Public Works is seeking approval from City Council to move forward with the design and engineering of the multi-agency recommendations for safety improvements.

Previous Council Action: Adoption of "Alabama Street Corridor, Phase 2 Multimodal Safety Improvements" project in the 2013-2018 TIP and the 2014-2019 TIP.

Fiscal Impact: \$1,461,824

Funding Source: Federal Safety Grant Funds

Attachments: Staff Report w/ TC Resolution and Letters of Support
Resolution w/ Exhibit A

Meeting Activity	Meeting Date	Staff Recommendation	Presented By	Time
Public Hearing Vote Requested	4/7/2014	Pass Resolution	Ted Carlson, Public Works Director	30 minutes

Recommended Motion: .

Council Committee:
Public Works and Public Safety Committee

Agenda Bill Contact:
Chris Comeau, Transportation Planner 778-7946

Reviewed By	Department	Date
<i>Ted A. Carlson</i>	Public Works	03/27/2014
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.	.	.
<i>Matthew T. Stamps</i>	Legal	03/28/2014
<i>Kelli J. Linville</i>	Executive	04/01/2014

CITY OF BELLINGHAM STAFF REPORT FOR CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Topic:	Multi-Agency Recommendation for Safety Improvements to Alabama Street.
For:	April 7, 2014 City Council work session
Staff Contact:	Chris Comeau, AICP, Transportation Planner (360) 778-7946 or ccomeau@cob.org

The Alabama Street Corridor Multimodal Safety Improvements project emerged as a top priority for the City of Bellingham in 2011 after WSDOT identified Alabama Street as having the second highest number of vehicle collisions in all of Whatcom County from 2006-2011. During this short time period, there were 262 total vehicle collisions, including 93 injury-related collisions. Neighborhood residents have also repeatedly identified Alabama Street as a major mobility barrier and a negative impact on neighborhood quality of life. The Bellingham Pedestrian Master Plan, approved by City Council in August 2012, specifically recommended "Alabama Corridor - Feasibility Study for Road Diet and Pedestrian Safety Improvements."

The City worked with WSDOT and FHWA officials and determined the most responsible approach to reducing vehicle collisions and improving safety for all users of the corridor was to study a range of alternatives, document which would provide the greatest safety improvement without negatively affecting vehicle or transit operations, and then construct the most beneficial improvements. In May 2012 Bellingham was awarded \$1,461,824 to fund the project.

After more than a year of technical study (October 2012 through February 2014) that included several inter-agency meetings and coordination, five neighborhood association meetings (August through December 2012), two public open house events on the Alabama Corridor (February 2013 and March 2014), two public open house events for the inter-related citywide Bicycle Master Plan (April 2013 and February 2014), and presentation of the results to the Bellingham Transportation Commission (November 12, 2013 and March 11, 2014), the alternatives analysis has been completed and a unified multi-agency recommendation for safety improvements on the Alabama corridor is presented here.

The recommended safety improvements for Alabama Street are consistent with the Transportation Element of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, the Bellingham Pedestrian Master Plan, and the Draft Bellingham Bicycle Master Plan and have been endorsed by the Bellingham Transportation Commission, Whatcom Transportation Authority, Whatcom Council of Governments (See below), and Bellingham Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments.

The Bellingham Transportation Commission Resolution 2014-02 approving the recommended safety improvements for Alabama Street also requests that the "funding requirements and source of funds for the recommended project should be clearly spelled out." Project Engineer Freeman Anthony has provided cost estimates for the safety improvements as follows:

Recommended Safety Improvements	\$1,345,575 (10% contingency included)
Arterial Resurfacing (Cornwall to St. Clair)	<u>\$1,108,195</u> (10% contingency included)
	\$2,453,770

The federal safety grant award is for \$1,461,824, which means that the remaining \$116,249 in federal safety funds can be applied to arterial resurfacing as long as it is clearly tied to safety improvements. This will help to off-set some of Bellingham's local contribution toward arterial resurfacing and reduce local funding to \$991,946. Alabama is due for arterial resurfacing from a pavement rating standpoint and a fresh new arterial surface will provide safety benefit for pedestrian, bicyclists, transit riders, and drivers on Alabama Street.

Ultimately, the safety improvements need to be clearly defined as the scope of construction for the Phase 2 Alabama Street Multimodal Safety Improvements (ES-466) project adopted in Bellingham's 2015-2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in June 2014. Public Works requested a public hearing before the City Council so that questions about this specific project can be answered and the approval of the project scope can be settled before the annual public process begins for the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program in May-June 2014.

The \$1,461,824 federal funding, awarded in May 2012, requires that Phase 2 Alabama Street Multimodal Safety Improvements (ES-466) must be completed by September 30, 2015. If City Council approves the project and once Council adopts the 2015-2020 TIP, there are several additional steps that must be completed before the recommended safety improvements can be constructed on Alabama Street.

Staff proposes the following project schedule moving forward to complete the project:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| • City Council approval of project scope | April 2014 |
| • City Council adoption of 2015-2020 TIP | June 2014 |
| • Federal NEPA requirements completed | September 2014 |
| • Project design and engineering completed | December 2014 |
| • Obligation of construction funds | January 2015 |
| • Advertisement and bids | February 2015 |
| • Contract awarded | March 2015 |
| • Construction Begins | June 2015 |
| • Construction complete | September 30, 2015 |

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that Council move to approve the attached Resolution approving the multi-agency recommended safety improvements as the defined scope of the "Alabama Street Corridor, Phase 2 Multimodal Safety Improvements (ES-466)" to be constructed in 2015.

RESOLUTION NO.2014-02

A RESOLUTION BY THE BELLINGHAM TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE ALABAMA STREET CORRIDOR FEASIBILITY STUDY AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

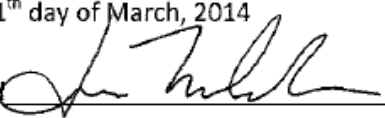
The Transportation Commission (TC) has previously noted the high collision rate on Alabama Street in its 2011 recommendations on the initial bike and pedestrian projects to be funded by the Transportation Benefit District. The current Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program grant provides a good opportunity to address many of the Alabama Street corridor safety issues.

Overall, the TC supports the recommended hybrid 4-to-3-lane "Road Diet" on parts of the Alabama corridor, where feasible, with "C-curb" median and turn lanes on other parts. The project also provides an opportunity to include several of the recommended crossing/intersection improvements included in the recent Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans.

The TC has the following additional comments:

- The funding requirements and source of funds for the recommended project should be clearly spelled out.
- City staff should continue to work with residents of the affected neighborhoods to update neighborhood plans to reflect current conditions and future opportunities to improve multimodal transportation circulation in the neighborhoods.
- The TC encourages the use of street side amenities to soften the pedestrian environment on the corridor.

PASSED by the City of Bellingham Transportation Commission
this 11th day of March, 2014

Signed 
Chair, City of Bellingham Transportation Commission



4111 Bakerview Spur Road, Bellingham, WA 98226

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February 27, 2014

City of Bellingham
Public Works Department
210 Lottie St.
Bellingham, WA. 98225

RE: Alabama Street Corridor Safety Improvement Project

Dear City of Bellingham:

The Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) supports the *Alabama Street Corridor Safety Improvement Project*. The project as envisioned would improve safety along a 1.7 mile stretch of Alabama by limiting turning movements that aren't at an intersection, adding right turn lane "pockets" at key locations and add a number of pedestrian crossings. These actions should help to reduce the number of accidents and improve pedestrian safety to and from WTA bus stops.

WTA staff have reviewed the 'Draft Alternatives Analysis Report (December 2013)' and have agreed to move and consolidate selected bus stops to better serve the future pedestrian crossings. All told WTA does not see this project noticeably affecting on-time performance of route 331 along this corridor.

WTA appreciates the excellent working relationship we have with the City of Bellingham and our involvement with the design review committee for this project.

Sincerely,

Pete Stark
General Manager



whatcom council of governments

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March 5, 2014

Mr. Chris Comeau, AICP, Transportation Planner
City of Bellingham Public Works Department
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, Washington 98225

RE: **Alabama Street Corridor Safety Improvement Feasibility Study**

Dear Mr. Comeau:

The Whatcom Council of Governments is pleased to provide this letter in support of the *Alabama Street Corridor Safety Improvement Feasibility Study* that the City of Bellingham has prepared to address the significant problem of vehicle collisions in the 1.75-mile section of the Alabama Street corridor between Cornwall Avenue and St. Clair Street. The Washington State Department of Transportation has identified that section as having the second-highest number of vehicle collisions in Whatcom County over the five-year period ending in 2010.

The simulation modeling performed by Principal Planner Andrés Gomez of my staff revealed that implementation of the so-called "Hybrid Road Diet" – whereby only the eastern and western ends of the corridor would be reduced from four lanes to three, in conjunction with other treatments in the corridor's central section – would not adversely impact travel times to a significant degree on this heavily-used arterial road. The Hybrid Road Diet is WCOG's preferred alternative for addressing the documented safety issues in the Alabama Street corridor while maintaining the current level of mobility for the thousands of people who travel through it daily.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. H. Wilson".

Robert H. Wilson, AICP
Executive Director

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON
APPROVING THE MULTI-AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFETY
IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ALABAMA STREET CORRIDOR.**

WHEREAS, the 2011 Bellingham Pedestrian Master Plan recommended a "Feasibility Study for a Road Diet and Pedestrian Safety Improvements" for Alabama Street; and

WHEREAS, in 2011 WSDOT documented Alabama Street as having 262 total collisions, including 93 injury-related collisions between 2006-2011, making it the only corridor in Bellingham eligible for federal grant funding for safety improvements; and

WHEREAS, in October 2011, Bellingham submitted a grant application to conduct a Phase 1 Feasibility Study for a Road Diet and Safety Improvements, consistent with the recommendations in the Pedestrian Master Plan, and subsequent Phase 2 Implementation of the Recommended Alternative from the Feasibility Study; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) committed \$5,000 toward the Phase 1 Feasibility Study to ensure that any recommendations for safety improvements considered the possible effects on transit route 331, the Gold GO Line, on Alabama Street, which is the most productive route in the entire WTA system; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) committed staff resources and the regional travel demand model to support the Phase 1 Feasibility Study for a Road Diet; and

WHEREAS, in May 2012, Bellingham was awarded \$1,461,824 in federal grant funds administered through the WSDOT Target Zero Safety Program to reduce vehicle collisions and make safety improvements to Alabama Street for all transportation users; and

WHEREAS, in June 2012, the "Alabama Street Corridor Phase 2 Multimodal Safety Improvements" project was adopted in the 2013-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by Bellingham City Council Resolution 2012-16 as a Phase 1 Feasibility Study and subsequent Phase 2 Construction of the Recommended Alternative in 2015; and

WHEREAS, in September 2012, Public Works contracted with Fehr & Peers transportation consultants based in Seattle, WA to assist City, WTA, and WCOG staff with the Phase 1 Feasibility Study for a Road Diet and Pedestrian Safety Improvements; and

WHEREAS, in October 2012, Public Works formed a multi-agency working group to inform the Phase 1 Feasibility Study with staff representatives from Bellingham Public Works Engineering, Operations, Police, Fire, and EMS; WTA; WCOG; and Fehr & Peers; and

WHEREAS, between August and December 2012, Public Works transportation planners presented the Phase 1 Feasibility Study for a Road Diet and Pedestrian Safety Improvements to the Lettered Streets, Sunnyland, Roosevelt, Alabama Hill, and Silver Beach Neighborhood Associations and asked neighborhood residents for public input; and

WHEREAS, on the evening of February 12, 2013, Public Works hosted a public Open House event for the Phase 1 Feasibility Study for a Road Diet and Pedestrian Safety Improvements at Roosevelt Elementary School and asked for public input on 10 alternatives that were proposed for study; and

WHEREAS, on the evenings of April 23, 2013 and February 20, 2014, Public Works hosted public Open House events at Whatcom Middle School for the city-wide Bicycle Master Plan, which integrates recommendations for safety improvements on Alabama Street, including multiple crossing signals in support of recommended "bicycle boulevards"; and

WHEREAS, on the evening of March 5, 2014, Public Works hosted a second public Open House event to present the findings of the Phase 1 Feasibility Study and the multi-agency recommendation for safety improvements at Roosevelt Elementary School and asked for public input on 10 alternatives that were proposed for study; and

WHEREAS, on the evening of March 11, 2014, the Bellingham Transportation Commission voted to pass Resolution 2014-02 recommending approval of the multi-agency recommendation for safety improvements on Alabama Street; and

WHEREAS, on the evening of April 7, 2014, Public Works presented the multi-agency recommendation for safety improvements on Alabama Street at a public hearing before the Bellingham City Council; and

WHEREAS, the Bellingham City Council heard public testimony and deliberated over the multi-agency recommendation for safety improvements on Alabama Street.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM:

That the recommendation for safety improvements on Alabama Street, attached to this Resolution as Exhibit A "Summary of multi-agency recommended safety improvements" and by reference made a part hereof, be and the same is hereby approved as the defined scope of the "Alabama Street Corridor, Phase 2 Multimodal Safety Improvements (ES-466)" to be constructed in 2015; and

Specific improvements to the three sections of the corridor will be:

- West end, Dean Street to Iron Street, a "4 to 3" lane conversion with enhanced crossings
- Central section, Iron Street to Superior Street, access management with raised center curbing and enhanced pedestrian crossings.
- East end, Superior Street to St. Clair Street, extending existing lane configuration from the east.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of said summary of multi-agency recommended safety improvements on Alabama Street be filed with the Washington State Department of Transportation.

PASSED by the Council this _____ day of _____, 2014.

Council President

APPROVED by me this _____ day of _____, 2014.

_____ Mayor

ATTEST: _____ Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Office of the City Attorney

EXHIBIT A

Alabama Street Corridor Feasibility Study & Safety Improvements



SUMMARY OF MULTI-AGENCY RECOMMENDED SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

March 2014



MULTI-AGENCY RECOMMENDATION

The safety improvements recommended below are the result of a multi-year, multi-agency, and public effort to weave citywide Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans, neighborhood plans, Whatcom Transportation Authority service plans, and City emergency response plans together. The safety improvements are also consistent with the goals of the Washington State Target Zero priorities to improve safety on transportation facilities.

Existing Condition/No Action

Taking no action and leaving Alabama in its existing condition will not reduce the high number of vehicle collisions documented by WSDOT, nor will it improve the pedestrian, bicycle, and transit rider safety issues identified by the public in the 2012 Pedestrian and the 2014 Bicycle Master Plan. This alternative will not achieve the stated purpose and outcome of the project, as described in the grant application and for which the grant funding was specifically awarded to the City of Bellingham. The \$1,467,824 federal grant funds are specifically for constructing safety improvements by September 2015 to solve the documented vehicle collision problems on Alabama Street.

- Taking no action is not a solution and is not recommended.

Road Diet and Rechannelization

While a complete 4-to-3-lane “road diet” (Section 6.2) is not supportable in the central portion of the Alabama corridor between James Street and Yew Street, the following road diet and rechannelization improvements are recommended:

- Implement a 4-to-3-lane conversion with bike lanes added between Iron Street and Dean Avenue on the west end of the Alabama corridor. The turn and through lanes at both Cornwall Avenue and James Street will be retained in their existing configuration to accommodate long-term transit and transportation needs. The left-turn lane on the eastbound approach at Alabama/James will be lengthened by removing the existing large median and replacing it with 6-inch c-curb median. This will add vehicle storage capacity and will help to relieve eastbound traffic congestion at the busiest times of the day.
- Implement a hybrid “road diet” by extending the existing lane configuration on Alabama Hill (2 lanes eastbound, 2-way center lane, 1 lane westbound) from St. Clair Street to Superior Street. There are heavier pm peak (evening rush hour) traffic volumes from Woburn eastbound up the Alabama Hill and having a second eastbound lane going up the hill allows vehicle traveling at posted speed to maneuver around slower moving vehicles safely. Lighter am peak (morning rush hour) traffic volumes do not require two travel lanes between St Clair Street and Superior Street, which allows the inside westbound lane to be converted to a center turn lane.

These changes to lane channelization on the east and west ends of Alabama Street will not create negative impacts to vehicle traffic, WTA transit, or fire/emergency response operations, but will allow a two-way center left-turn lane to help reduce vehicle collisions on each end of the corridor, as well as allow for center lane refuges at crossing locations identified in Pedestrian Master Plan, the Bicycle Master Plan, neighborhood plans, and at WTA bus stop locations. The bike lanes between Iron Street and Dean Avenue will also help to connect bicycle boulevards parallel and perpendicular to Alabama that are identified and prioritized in the Bicycle Master Plan and will provide separation between moving vehicle traffic and pedestrians walking along Alabama.

Pedestrian, Transit, Bicycle Crossings

New and enhanced crossing improvements are recommended from west to east along the Alabama corridor in strategic locations, consistent with the Pedestrian Master Plan, the Bicycle Master Plan, neighborhood plans, and at relocated and consolidated WTA bus stop locations, as listed below.

- **Ellis:** Move the existing St. Paul pedestrian-activated flashing crosswalk to Ellis and install a center lane with a new crosswalk and a concrete refuge on the east side of the intersection (supports Ellis bike blvd)
- **Grant:** Install a center lane and a concrete refuge in the existing pedestrian-activated flashing crosswalk on the west side of the intersection (supports Grant bike blvd)
- **Moore:** Install new pedestrian-activated High Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signal for pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists to cross 4-lanes of traffic with no center lane refuge (supports Moore bike blvd)
- **St. Paul:** Move existing pedestrian-activated flashing crosswalk to Ellis, widen intersection and install a fully automated traffic signal with left-turn lanes and marked crosswalks on all four intersection approaches for pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists to cross 4-lanes of traffic with no center lane refuge (supports St. Paul bike blvd)
- **Undine:** Install new pedestrian-activated High Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signal and crosswalk on east side of intersection for pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists to cross 4-lanes of traffic with no center lane refuge (supports Undine bike blvd)
- **Michigan:** Install new pedestrian-activated High Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signal and crosswalk with a concrete center lane refuge on the east side of the intersection for pedestrians, transit riders, and bicyclists to cross 3-lanes of traffic (supports Michigan bike blvd)

The 6 new and enhanced crossing locations listed above are in addition to the 6 existing signalized crossings of the Alabama corridor in the following locations:

- **Cornwall:** Existing Traffic signal and marked crosswalks on all four intersection approaches
- **James:** Traffic signal and marked crosswalks on all four intersection approaches
- **Orleans:** Traffic signal and marked crosswalks on all four intersection approaches
- **Pacific:** Traffic signal and marked crosswalks on all four intersection approaches
- **Woburn:** Traffic signal and marked crosswalks on all four intersection approaches
- **Yew:** Traffic signal and marked crosswalks on all four intersection approaches

Transit Enhancements and Relocation/Consolidation of Bus Stops

The new and enhanced crossing locations listed above will improve access to WTA bus stops and will help transit riders cross Alabama to get to WTA bus stops on time, but WTA will also relocate and consolidating some westbound bus stops that experience heavier boardings/departures, as follows:

- Consolidate the existing bus stops on the east side of St. Paul and mid-block between Racine and Queen into one bus stop on the west side of St. Paul.
- Consolidate the existing bus stops between Orleans and Pacific and between Moore and Nevada into one bus stop on the west side of Orleans.
- Consolidate the existing bus stops between Iron and Humboldt and between Ellis and Franklin into one bus stop on the west side of Grant.

Over time, WTA could also enhance existing transit stops at all of the crossing locations above by converting signed bus stops into more comfortable and convenient covered bus shelters with the Gold GO Line branding scheme. This would make waiting for WTA busses more pleasant for riders, especially in inclement weather, and would also help to clear up the pedestrian environment by providing a separate space for transit riders to wait out of the main through-way portion of the sidewalks.

Access Management, Turning Restrictions, and New Turn Lanes

On the center section of the Alabama corridor between James Street and Woburn Street where installation of a center turn lane to reduce vehicle collisions has been determined not to be feasible by this alternatives analysis, the installation of 6-inch high yellow c-curb median at high-collision locations is recommended to prevent vehicles from turning across two lanes of on-coming traffic and risking side-impact collisions. Restricting turns in these locations will also reduce rear-end vehicle collisions, because the cars will no longer be stopped in the travel lane waiting to turn left. This recommendation for c-curb median has been reached in consultation with the Bellingham Police and Fire Departments to ensure that adequate gaps in median installations will be provided to avoid negative impacts for police, fire engine, and ambulance access into neighborhoods. The City recognizes that this creates inconvenience to residents living on the north side of Alabama, but alternative routes to homes and garages are available with fairly minimal travel time increases.

There are some locations where new left-turn lanes are recommended instead of installing c-curb median, including St. Paul, Verona, Valencia, and Woburn.

St. Paul: The intersection of St. Paul/Alabama is recommended to be widened to install new left-turn lanes on both the eastbound and westbound approaches, and a full traffic signal is recommended with marked crosswalks and protected crossing time for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

Verona, Valencia, and Woburn: The section of Alabama between Woburn to the alley between Verona and Undine is recommended to be widened to install a continuous center left-turn lane, which will double as an extended left-turn lane for the high volume of pm peak hour left-turns from eastbound Alabama to northbound Woburn. This will reduce traffic congestion and reduce travel delay for WTA transit Route 331, which turns from Alabama north onto Woburn.

Arterial Resurfacing and Rechannelization

The 1.75-mile Alabama corridor between Cornwall Avenue and St. Clair Street has been steadily moving up the City's priority list of arterial streets that require asphalt resurfacing and, coincidentally, it appears that Alabama can be included as the top priority in Bellingham's 2015 overlay program. Grinding and resurfacing the arterial street provides safety advantages for all users, including:

- Smooth and even surfaces for ADA compliance at all signals, curb ramps, and crosswalks;
- Clear demarcation of vehicle travel lanes, center turn lanes, bicycle lanes (west end), center lane refuges, and crosswalks;
- Clear demarcation of new lane widths at intersections to maximize vehicle capacity in turn lanes; and
- Installation of all new retro-reflective lane delineators for increased visibility at night and in dark winter months.

Federal funding not used for new HAWK signals, intersection widening, and installation of c-curb median can be used for arterial resurfacing for safety improvements. This will help to extend the City's local funding for arterial resurfacing in 2015.



BELLINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, Washington 98225

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BELLINGHAM CITY COUNCIL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Bellingham City Council will hold a public hearing on **April 7, 2014, @ 7:00 PM**, or as soon thereafter as possible, in the **City Council Chambers, City Hall, 210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, Washington**, to take public comment on the following:

Public Works will present the multi-agency recommendations for safety improvements to the Alabama Street corridor from Cornwall Avenue to St. Clair Street as a result of the year-long Phase 1 study of feasible alternatives. The Phase 2 construction of safety improvements on Alabama Street must be clearly defined for federal grant funding purposes with construction completed by September 30, 2015. Public Works is seeking direction from City Council to move forward with the design and engineering of the multi-agency recommendations for safety improvements.

The multi-agency recommendation for safety improvements and more detailed information can be found on the project website at: <http://www.cob.org/services/planning/transportation/alabama-corridor-study.aspx>

Staff Contact: Chris Comeau, AICP, Transportation Planner, (360) 778-7946 or ccomeau@cob.org

Anyone wishing to comment on this topic is invited to attend; or if unable to attend, to send your comments, in writing to the Council Office, 210 Lottie Street, or email to cemail@cob.org, or fax to 778-8101, to be received prior to 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, April 2, to be included in the agenda packet. Comment received after that time will be distributed to Council but not included in the published meeting materials.

FOR OUR CITIZENS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, the Council Chambers is fully accessible. Elevator access to the second floor is available at City Hall's west entrance. Hearing assistance is available and a receiver may be checked out through the clerk prior to the evening session. For additional accommodations, persons are asked to contact the Legislative Assistant at 778-8200 in advance of the meeting. Thank you.

Publication date: 3/13/14

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Thomas, Kendra L.

From: Anonymous@cob.org on behalf of J_Matthew_Yorkston@cob.org
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2014 2:36 PM
To: CC - Shared Department
Subject: Alabama Street Diet jmatty@yorkstonoil.com
Attachments: Alabama Street Letter.doc

I have driven Alabama Street at least twice daily for over 15 years from Northshore to Squalicum Harbor, (home to work and back). I believe this to be a very bad idea. First off Alabama Street is an arterial. All neighboring streets feed on to Alabama Street keeping the neighborhood streets clear of major traffic. Changing Alabama Street to single lane will only send traffic on to those neighborhood streets and to Lakeway Drive, Iowa Street and Barkly Blvd. This is not the way to get Alabama Street re surfaced.

In the name of Safety, it would be a much better idea to drop the speed to 25 or 30 MPH and add a few more crosswalks

Thomas, Kendra L.

From: Jon Soine <jon@jonsoine.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 7:51 PM
To: Ken Mann
Cc: CC - Shared Department
Subject: Alabama Street Corridor Multimodal Safety Improvements COMMENTS

Hi Ken,

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. From your comments below, I would suggest that your comments propose that you *do* have an opinion, as you described your thoughts further in the email.

I am sorry if any of my comments were taken offensively, as they were not intended to be so! Many of your voting public find bikers very offensive when plans such as these are proposed, that give bikers and automobiles an *equal billing* for the gas tax for Hiway that we automobile drivers pay for with gas tax's and sales taxes on their auto's as well as for their and the public's safety.

YES equal billing, "TWO bike lanes and TWO car lanes, (plus a turn)" is not an equal expenditure considering the traffic on a major road. Car's far out-number bikes on any city/state roads, and Alabama is a main thorough fare. More lanes and higher speed are what **SAFELY** moves more traffic thru an area, and is why on our highway system, we have done this very thing to smooth out traffic flow for many years.

This study is a 50 year step back in traffic flow and safety and would be a disaster for those of us using the road daily and live off Alabama Hill area!

Even the City of Bellingham recent Mayor's survey suggested that only 4% of those surveyed felt that the city was doing an excellent job in planning. **THIS** is an example of **WHY!** Current Parks and Trails by the other hand had a 90% favorable rating if you care to read the Mayor's report!

I have been involved in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition for almost 25 years, and before that I served almost 10 years on the Whatcom County Parks board. I have favored building trails exclusively for bikers and hikers from Mt Baker to Seattle (the interurban trail was one of the many miles of trails prospered by our Chairmen Bill Dietrich). The Waterfront Trail on the old railroad right of way around Boulevard Park is another. As a member of the WWRC executive board, I have dedicated many of these same parks and trails **STATE WIDE**. WWRC has contributed \$3 million for the boulevard park waterfront trail for an example.

On a positive note, WWRC is in the grant writing process now, where if you have an interest in bike trails, it is time to propose these thought for the next grant cycle that begins in the next few months! See Mayor Kelli for help in the process.

WE DO NOT need to mix cars and bikes on these main highways and thruways. That is a safety issue. Bikes have their own trail system thru and around Bellingham and for theirs and the drivers of auto's SAFETY we do not need to mix this as "oil and water".

The points that I made were those expressed by the many concerned neighbors and citizens that I heard expressing at the Roosevelt School meeting that were in the audience and asking questions of each other.

As a Councilman, it is extremely offensive to me that you are NOT listening to ALL your voting public as well as your blatant sarcasm!!!

As a member of the Council, I thought that your presence was important at the Roosevelt School presentation so that your public could ask you questions. We were favored by several other council members who were listening to their constituents which I thought was part of the purpose of the meeting.

I TOO have ridden a bike in my youth, including on Alabama and Cornwall, as well as North Shore Drive having attended the original Washington School as well as Whatcom Middle school and later Bellingham High, while growing up on Sunset Drive and later on North Shore Drive.

Today, I would want my granddaughter (who attends Roosevelt School) to ride her bike on the sidewalk for her safety (as well as my peace of mind). Last week's bike accident on NW in a bike lane should explain this visually to those of you that risk your and your families limb (s). It is not fair that those of us automobile drivers have lasting emotions when we hit a biker, and the memories that stay with us for the rest of their lives.

We cannot legislate common sense, but those of us that have had to take a flat blade shovel and scrap a person off the side of your car and off the road, putting the remains in a cardboard box, carry this memory the rest of our lives. The body in this state is just so many pounds of "ground round". I had to do this in Chula Vista, CA in 1963 so I know what I am talking about!!!

I stand by the comments that BIKERS pay no HIWAY nor road taxes, and that is pretty evident if you take the time to read the state, county or city transportation budget. YES we all pay taxes for a lot "things". BIKER's pay no tax!

I think that the majority of the people (non-bikers) that you are elected to serve deserve to be listened to!

I hope that you can understand why YOUR comments that you have made are so very offensive to them!

Very respectfully,

Jon

Jon Soine, CRS, GRI, SRES

Washington REALTORS 2012 Presidents Service Award
Washington Governor's 2011 Citation for Service
Washington REALTORS 2009 VP of Government Affairs
Washington REALTORS 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award
Whatcom County Association of REALTORS 2007 President

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515 West Bakerview Road
Bellingham, WA 98226

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Email: Jon@JonSoine.com
Website: <http://www.JonSoine.com>

"Your Personal REALTOR. ."

-----Original Message-----

From: Ken Mann [<mailto:kmann@co.whatcom.wa.us>]
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 4:49 PM
To: Jon Soine; Tim Cornwell
Cc: Perry Eskridge; Larry Farr; Mayor Kelli Linville
Subject: RE: Alabama Street Corridor Multimodal Safety Improvement COMMENTS

Jon - I have no opinion on the merits or conclusions of the COB study.

However, the talking point that "bikes pay no road tax nor contribute to the payment" is offensive.

I ride bikes - a lot. I commute by bike to work - a lot. My wife and kids travel via bicycle - a lot.

We pay taxes - a lot. We own three vehicles. We own multiple residential and commercial properties in Bellingham. We shop in Bellingham.

I support bike lanes and so do my taxes.

Ken Mann

Whatcom County Councilmember
(360) 676-6690 (office)
(360) 483-6020 (mobile)
kmann@co.whatcom.wa.us
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ken-Mann-Whatcom/77546362394>

Thomas, Kendra L.

From: myronlw@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2014 8:32 AM
To: CC - Shared Department
Subject: Alabama Street Improvements

MYRON L WLAZNAK
PO Box 28425
BELLINGHAM, WA 98228-0425
1-360-671-9969

March 20, 2014

City Council
City of Bellingham
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Council Members:

The purpose of this letter is to raise issues and concerns not covered in the presentation to the public in regards to safety improvements to the Alabama travel corridor.

1. Street lighting is a serious issue. The current lights do not adequately light the roadway and also diminish (dilute) the effectiveness of vehicle headlights. On a rainy night it is extremely difficult to see the lane markers. In addition the road patches (filling in the cracks) look like lane markers. Striping the lanes in addition to the reflective bumps would certainly help keep cars in their lane.
2. Alleys drain water into the street. During the winter ice formed along the right lane as you reached the bottom of Alabama going west bound creating a serious hazard.
3. There are four entrances/exits to the mini mall located on Alabama and Yew Street. Two of these are located right at the intersection of Yew and Alabama creating a hazard that could be avoided if these entrances/exits were consolidated into larger ones further down Yew and Alabama.
4. The surface of Alabama is in need of resurfacing and drainage along the westbound lanes needs to be improved. Puddles spread out into the travel lanes with only a medium rainfall.
5. The street light at Yew needs to be synched with the light at Woburn for those traveling along Alabama. It makes no sense to have a red light at Yew when heavy traffic is flowing past Woburn. Likewise the light at Pacific and Orleans need to work better in conjunction with the main traffic flow. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to the settings.
6. Bicycle traffic should not be allowed on Alabama and signs should be posted to that effect. Better use of empty side streets for bicycle traffic would make traffic safer for both drivers and bicyclist. Improvements should be made to side streets to insure safety and ease of travel for bicyclists. Iowa would be a good choice for expanding bike lanes for through traffic to downtown. Mixing vehicle and bike traffic on the heavily traveled

roadways should be kept to a minimum. As bike traffic increases more accidents will occur. Better to move bike traffic away from heavy vehicle traffic areas. Some bike lane lanes are effectively half the size marked by the white strip because the curb line bisects the travel lane creating an unsafe crack in the middle of the lane pushing bicyclist toward the vehicle lane.

7. There is little active enforcement of traffic regulations on Alabama. Perhaps some passive measures can be taken (signage, periodic flashing traffic speed signs) along with routine active enforcement.

8. There are a great number of turning options on/off of Alabama (30 streets, 43 alleys and 82 driveways in these 2.4 miles of roadway). Reducing this number would certainly provide safety benefits.

Please review these suggestions as you deliberate the safety recommendations presented by staff.

Regards,

Myron L Wlaznak

Thomas, Kendra L.

From: Anonymous@cob.org on behalf of Peter_James@cob.org
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2014 3:59 PM
To: CC - Shared Department
Subject: Alabama Street project pjames9@gmail

I reside at 2724 Undine Place, a dead end street on the north side of Alabama St. I have seen the tentative plans for the project and understand that no left turns will be allowed either way or even no lefts to even get on Alabama. The only lefts allowed will be at the lighted intersections. This would be unfair not only to my street but many others along the north side of Alabama that are dead ends. We have no other access or exit to use. What use to be a simple trip to say Haggan off Woburn now becomes going around blocks of unneeded travel. Also I don't like the idea of unfettered lanes because no one can turn left. Seems to me that is inviting people to go faster no matter what the posted speed limit. I was under the assumption for some reason that this study was for mediating traffic flow. This seems to invite more traffic to come through here. To sum, I do not want the c-curb plan to be implemented as do other neighbors that I have talked to about it. I favor the option of the middle turn lane with lanes on either side for directional travel with no bike lanes. I would not like the extra light at St. Paul as I think that was planned to appease all the people who would have to make one of the last lefts legally in order to run the maze around to be on the correct side of Alabama to get home. I hope you will consider these ideas in the upcoming council meeting on April the 7th. Thank you.

March 6, 2014

Subject: Alabama St. Corridor Multimodal Safety Improvements

Dear Bellingham City Council Member – Jack Weiss
Lottie Street
Bellingham, Washington

I have major concerns on changes of traffic flow for Alabama St. ! I agree our roads need to be as safe as possible. This does not preclude the usage of the vast majority of people who use this for entering or leaving the core of our City, by that I mean the cars, trucks and buses that require efficient use of Alabama St. corridor.

After reviewing the data published for the Open House of March 5, 2014, and considering that six (6) injury accidents per million miles driven is statistically insignificant, 0.0006%. Looking at the cause of those accidents, speed, texting or cell phone use, DUI, or inattentive driving are possible to which a traffic flow change on Alabama St. will not likely change. A flow change would likely shift some traffic to other areas not capable of handling an additional volume of traffic, thus creating an unsafe area that currently does not have such and was not designed to handle additional volumes.

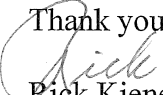
Probable addition of a marked crosswalk between Pacific St. and Woburn St. might be considered with the reevaluation of how the traffic light at Pacific is used and the left turn use. The timing of lights between Woburn and Orleans with any crosswalk improvements is needed if any changes are made. Noting that the 6 injury accidents did not have a fatality, at least it wasn't noted in the data.

What I did not see in the data presented was:

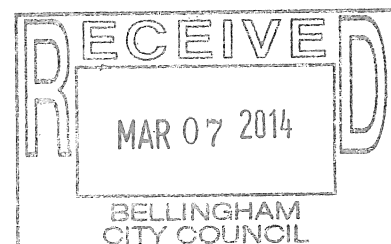
- the daily volume of traffic numbers
- the type of injury accident
- if a fatality occurred
 - fortunately, I am pleased this has not occurred, at least according to the data offered here, not minimizing those who suffered injuries.
- The occurrence of police response for traffic accidents

Therefore I would request that Alabama St. corridor from Cornwall to Electric remain two (2) lanes of traffic in both directions!

Thank you for your consideration.


Rick Kiene
4933 Lewis Ave.
Bellingham, WA

P.S. I use this corridor daily!



Thomas, Kendra L.

From: frank black <frankdoonanblack@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2014 4:18 PM
To: CC - Shared Department
Subject: Alabama st. Project

Council members,

I am writing to oppose the proposed changes to Alabama street in Roosevelt neighborhood. I live on Alabama street and am concerned about the unsightly nature of the "C" curb. These curbs are acceptable in industrial areas but when placed in a residential setting are ugly. I don't understand why the City of Bellingham would spend our resources to make the city less attractive. I also oppose the project on the grounds that you will be taking land from me in the process of making my neighborhood uglier. I would incur significant expenses moving landscaping as well as suffering a double blow to my property values. The cumulative effect of the change would put me underwater on my home mortgage and make it nearly imposable to sell my home (no one wants to buy a house with a freeway running through the living room).

All of this is unnecessary. Instead of installing the curb install the road diet without the bike lanes. Leaving out the bike lanes would allow room for a bus to pull partway out of traffic to drop off and pick up passengers while allowing the cars to use the left turn lane to go around the bus, minimizing the impact on the WTA and traffic behind the bus. Leaving the bike lanes out will have little impact on the bicycling community as bicycling on Alabama street is not something I would recommend even to the most experienced and confident cyclist, and the bicycle master plan has Texas street as a "bike boulevard" removing the need for bike lanes on Alabama street.

The difference in impact between the two projects cannot be overstated. The current proposal greatly reduces the quality of life for a thousand people with potentially devastating economic impacts as well. The road diet without bike lanes increases the quality of life for the entire Roosevelt neighborhood and the Bellingham as a whole. I implore you to not make Bellingham ugly. Do not approve this plan.

Frank Black