

**Infrastructure Ballot Measure Task Force
Non-Motorized Transportation Subcommittee
Report and Recommendations
May 2, 2018**

Executive Summary

Progress toward implementing City’s non-motorized transportation plans has been quite limited over the past fifteen years due to a lack of sufficient funding. The objective of this subcommittee was to evaluate how funding from a ballot measure that produced \$15 million in incremental funding for non-motorized transportation improvements could best be used to implement the vision for Bainbridge Island’s transportation system reflected in the Comprehensive Plan. The subcommittee built on the prior work by the Multi-modal Transportation Advisory Committee (MTAC) and City staff to identify and prioritize projects in a range of categories, including: shoulder improvements, safe routes to school, sidewalk improvements in downtown Winslow, the Sound to Olympics regional trail, intra-island trails, and connecting pathways. We held a series of subcommittee meetings, multiple joint meetings with MTAC, and two public workshops since the Task Force was convened in September 2017. In addition, the subcommittee reviewed the results of the survey on walking and biking recently conducted by the Bainbridge Mobility Alliance (BMA) in March 2018 to understand citizen views and priorities for transportation improvements.

After completing this process, the subcommittee has developed the following proposed recommendations for submission to City Council:

1. Council should **proceed to place a funding measure for transportation safety improvements on the ballot this November.**
2. The ballot measure should **raise \$15 million in incremental funding over a seven-year period¹** (over and above the City’s current annual “run rate” for spending on non-motorized transportation improvements); the specific structure of the fees and taxes to be included in the ballot measure should be determined by Council based on the options presented by the Infrastructure Ballot Measure Task Force (IBMTF) Finance subcommittee.
3. The incremental funding produced by the ballot measure should be **utilized as follows:**
 - a. **50% of the funding** should be used for **shoulder improvements** on major island roads – this will amount to approximately \$10 million in funds available for shoulder improvements during the seven-year period, assuming continued success in attracting grant funds for these types of projects. These improvements are widely regarded as important by island residents, and they will improve safety for drivers as well as people walking and biking along these roadways.
 - b. **20% of the funding** should be devoted to **safe routes to school projects** and other off-road trail/pathway projects, including intra-island trails and connecting pathways. Many of these facilities serve multiple purposes, and trails projects that connect

¹ This incremental City funding is assumed to be supplemented by \$4-6 million in external grant funds during the seven-year period – consistent with the City’s success in attracting state and federal grant funding over the past decade.

neighborhoods to schools, commercial centers and parks using existing rights of way should be prioritized.

- c. **15% of the funding** should be used for **pedestrian improvements in the Winslow core**, with priority given to projects that leverage existing infrastructure and provide connections to schools.
- d. **5% of the funding** (\$750,000) should be used as **matching funds** to pursue external grants having a 13.5% City match **for expansion of the Sound to Olympics trail**. This level of matching funds could leverage several million dollars in grant funds during this period. The subcommittee believes the STO trail is an important facility that can serve a wide range of users, but that City funds for the ballot measure should be devoted primarily to other important transportation safety improvements.
- e. **10% of the funding** from the ballot measure (\$1.5 million) should be set aside to take advantage of **opportunities** that arise during the seven-year period to complete important projects on the project list (e.g., unanticipated grant of easements, leveraging developer improvements, matching funds for new grant opportunities, etc.).

Background and Process

The Non-Motorized Transportation subcommittee was formed after the initial meeting of the Infrastructure Ballot Measure Task Force in September 2017. The task of the subcommittee was to focus on infrastructure improvements that would serve people walking and biking and to recommend a package of investments that could be funded through a funding measure that would provide \$15 million in incremental funding for this category of infrastructure. Subcommittee members included Demi Allen (Chair), Lief Horwitz (MTAC Chair), Kelly Muldrow, Greg Geehan and Lucille Fox (until she dropped off the Task Force). The subcommittee met separately several times and participated in joint meeting with MTAC to discuss project prioritization. In addition, the subcommittee and MTAC jointly held two public workshops focused on the potential ballot measure – one on December 4, 2017, and the other on March 19, 2018. Each of the workshops was well-attended with more than 20 members of the public attending each meeting in addition to committee members and City staff. The December workshop was focused on discussing allocation of funding among the various infrastructure “buckets” and the March workshop was focused on discussing optimal design for shoulder improvements as well as discussing priority projects within the Walkable Winslow, Safe Routes to School, and Trails/Pathways categories. In addition to these meetings, the subcommittee had the benefit of results from a survey on walking and biking completed in March, 2018 by more than 1,500 island residents with a demographic make-up that was representative of the island as a whole. Subcommittee members had the opportunity to provide input on the structure of the survey, and it addressed several issues of importance to the subcommittee’s work.

Review of Comprehensive Plan

The subcommittee’s work started with a review of the relevant sections from the [Transportation Element](#) of Bainbridge Island’s 2016 Comprehensive Plan, in order to understand the shared vision for non-motorized transportation that we are working toward. **Goal TR-1** from the Transportation Element calls for the development of an integrated **multimodal** transportation system that gives people a **range of safe transportation alternatives** and **maximizes the use of non-motorized options** and public transit. **Goal TR-2** is to “[p]rovide a **non-motorized transportation system** that is a planned and **coordinated**

network of shoulders, sidewalks, trails, footpaths, bikeways and multi- purpose trails that connect neighborhoods with parks, schools, the shoreline, the ferry terminal and commercial areas” (emphasis added). **Policy TR 2.1** indicates that the City will “[p]rovide a non-motorized transportation system that **effectively serves the needs of people of all ages and abilities** who walk, bike, or ride horses, or use wheel chairs; **encourages nonmotorized travel**; and **provides continuous networks** of safe, efficient and attractive shoulders, sidewalks, pathways (footpaths), and multi-purpose trails throughout the Island that are also connecting to regional systems.” Policy TR 2.1 also states that “The non-motorized system should allow for students at all Bainbridge Island schools of all ages to safely bike to and from school,” and Policy TR 2.3 expands on the importance of safe facilities for walking and biking in the vicinity of schools. Other policies in this section address the creation of networks of trails for a variety of uses (coordinating with Parks), sidewalk facilities within designated centers (with priority given to Winslow), and an integrated network of shoulder facilities for walking and biking along major island roadways. These are our stated goals for the island’s non-motorized transportation system as reflected in our Comprehensive Plan. Unfortunately, there is an **enormous gap** between the current reality and the vision reflected in these goals and policies, and substantial investment in transportation infrastructure will be required to close that gap.

December 2017 Public Workshop

The public workshop on December 4, 2017 was held at City Hall and was focused on how to best allocate funding from a potential ballot measure among the various infrastructure categories that had been previously identified by MTAC. A slide deck providing a summary of the meeting is available on the IBMTF page on the City’s website. Background information was presented by Demi Allen and Chris Hammer, and the attendees were broken up into three groups at three separate tables to discuss the optimal allocation by category and what might be accomplished within each category. Two of the three tables came to a similar conclusion on the appropriate allocation, while the third table felt more information and analysis was needed. Areas of apparent consensus included the need for significant investment in shoulder improvements, some investment in each major category, and modest investment in matching funds to leverage grant funding for the Sound to Olympics Trail. The two groups that reached a conclusion on priorities for shoulder improvements suggested that priority be given to connecting Winslow to Lynwood Center and to completion of shoulders throughout the Miller/Fletcher Bay Road corridor connecting Lynwood Center to Island Center, with some attention to climbing lanes on adjacent roads.

March 2018 Public Workshop

The public workshop on March 19, 2018 was also held at City Hall, and it focused on optimal design for shoulder improvements on major roads and on prioritization of pedestrian improvement in downtown Winslow and trail/pathway improvements around the island. While some of the attendees at the March workshop had also attended the December workshop, there were several (8-10) new participants in the March workshop. Background information was again presented by Demi Allen and Chris Hammer, followed by open discussion of the agenda items. The discussion was open and wide-ranging, and all attendees offered thoughts and comments at some point during the evening. Regarding optimal design for shoulder improvements on major island roads, there seemed to be broad agreement that visual buffers should be provided where possible on roads with relatively high speeds and volumes, and that road treatments should be context-specific, with less need for visual buffers on roads with

lower volumes and speeds. The group discussed and generally endorsed the priorities identified by MTAC with respect to pedestrian improvements in downtown Winslow, and for Safe Routes to School projects. It was agreed that more analysis and community input was needed to identify priorities for other local trails and connecting pathways

Survey by Bainbridge Mobility Alliance

The Bainbridge Mobility Alliance² conducted a survey of island residents on issues related to walking and biking during March, 2018. The survey was completed by more than 1,500 Bainbridge residents reflecting a demographic make-up similar to that of the island as a whole. The major findings of the survey relevant to the work of the subcommittee included the following:

- 48% of respondents rated the infrastructure for **walking in the vicinity of their home** as bad or very bad – however, more than 80% of respondents residing in downtown Winslow rated the pedestrian environment near their homes as okay (46%) or very good (35%)
- 71% of respondents rated the **biking environment** on Bainbridge as somewhat or very unsafe
- 71% of those who do not bike or would like to bike more identified **inadequate bike infrastructure** as a barrier
- Men currently feel safer than women biking on island roads (this translates directly to a gender imbalance in biking activity that does not exist in places with good infrastructure)
- 73.4% of parents with school-aged kids (n=540) said a lack of safe infrastructure is a significant barrier to their kids walking or biking to school
- 64% of these parents said their kids would walk or bike to school more often if there were safe infrastructure between home and school
- **Shoulder improvements** on major island roads were rated as the most important action to improve conditions for walking and biking (**88%** rated as important or very important)
- The second most important action was building **paths/trails to enable kids to walk or bike to school** separated from traffic (**76%** rated as important or very Important)
- 74% of respondents said they would be likely or very likely to support a described funding measure³ – support was high across a range of demographic subgroups

² The Bainbridge Mobility Alliance includes representatives of Sustainable Bainbridge, Squeaky Wheels, Bainbridge Parks Foundation, MTAC, Climate Action Bainbridge, and other interested citizens. The survey was created by a working group of BMA with input from a variety of stakeholders and volunteers.

³ The survey question regarding the funding measure was phrased as follows: “Without additional tax revenue, it will take more than 30 years for Bainbridge to complete connected networks for walking and biking on the island. How likely would you be to support a modest increase in taxes (average cost of about \$19 per household per month) to support construction of safe facilities for walking and biking on the island within a significantly shorter time?” The stated average household impact is based on \$15 million over seven years (84 months) divided by the number of households on the island according to most recent Census figures (9,600).

- Of the likely supporters, almost 60% indicated they would support a larger funding measure to further accelerate the construction of facilities for walking and biking

The survey results clearly support the need for action to improve infrastructure for biking on the island and validate shoulder improvements as the most important category of infrastructure improvements. They make it clear that many residents feel they do not have a real choice to take trips by bike due to lack of safe infrastructure, and this is especially true of women. They also show that the pedestrian infrastructure in downtown Winslow is perceived to be fairly good, while pedestrian infrastructure in other parts of the island is lacking, and that safe routes to school should be prioritized when seeking to improve the pedestrian environment. Finally, they show a very high level of support for a reasonable funding measure to accelerate the pace of improvements for walking and biking on the island.⁴

Meeting with Trail Advocates

On April 11, 2018, the subcommittee held a meeting with a number of citizens who have worked on trail and pathway-related issues on the island over the years, to discuss opportunities for trail connections and how these trail projects should be prioritized. This was a very informative meeting, and it reinforced the opportunity that exists to build on the existing trail facilities to create a connected network that gives residents great options to get around on foot or by bike. The significant prior work done by MTAC, Parks District, and others to identify trail opportunities was noted. The group strongly endorsed the focus on safe routes to schools and provided ideas about potential trail connections in the vicinity of each of the school campuses. We noted the wide variety of trail facilities that exist and are possible to build (from simple “goat paths” to relatively wide paved facilities); for purposes of this discussion, trails/pathways includes all facilities for walking and biking that are separated from roadways and does not include sidewalks of the Sound to Olympics trail (a shared-used path that is a unique facility).⁵ We discussed the need to balance functionality and connectivity with cost considerations in developing these facilities. In general, the group seemed to favor opening up as much connectivity as possible with low-cost approaches and enhancing widely-used facilities over time. The group agreed that additional work should be done over the next several months to identify additional trail opportunities, analyze them based on in-field observations, and prioritize among them.

Rationale for the Stated Priorities

The subcommittee spent a good amount of time determining how to prioritize among the various “buckets” of infrastructure categories. We developed a set of principles for allocation of funds from a ballot measure, and they are described in the update presentations to the Task Force and Council (found on the [IBMTF web page](#)). The principles provide that funds from a ballot measure should be used by the City to achieve the following objectives:

- Provide connections to neighborhood service centers, schools and parks;
- Provide immediate safety improvements for large numbers of users and potential users;
- Serve a range of different users, for a range of different types of trips;

⁴ Detailed information regarding the survey questions, findings and free text responses can be found at the [Resources page](#) on the BMA website.

⁵ Trail networks can include low-volume, low-speed roads that are relatively safe and comfortable for walking and biking.

- Leverage prior investments in infrastructure in specific corridors;
- Coordinate with current and planned trail facilities developed by the Parks and Recreation District; and
- Provide geographic equity as much as possible while meeting other goals.

Using these criteria, shoulder improvements on major island roads merit the lion's share of investment for several reasons. They improve safety for all users of the roads – drivers as well as people riding bikes or walking. In several cases, the current roadways are substandard for the speeds and volumes of car and truck traffic they are handling, regardless of people biking and walking. For example, the Miller/Fletcher Bay Road corridor handles more than 4,600 vehicles per day, with speeds that often exceed 40 mph,⁶ yet the road completely lacks paved shoulders in many areas. Shoulder improvements are needed in this area just to bring the road up to current safety standards for drivers. The fact that the shoulders will also provide a place for people to safely walk or bike enables us to improve conditions for multiple user types simultaneously.⁷ They also provide connections to major destinations, including commercial centers and parks.

Shoulder improvements have been part of the city's transportation plan for several years, but progress has been painfully slow due to funding limitations⁸. Advocates have pressed for action on shoulder improvements for years, and **88%** of island residents who participated in the recent survey conducted by Bainbridge Mobility Alliance rated shoulder improvements as important or very important.

Other observations from the BMA survey impact the subcommittee's view of appropriate priorities. In particular, the second most highly rated category of infrastructure improvements was trails/paths that enable school kids to walk or bike to school separate from car traffic – 76% of survey respondents rated this category as important or very important. Further, more than 80% of respondents living in downtown Winslow rated the pedestrian environment in the immediate vicinity of their homes as either okay or very good, compared to 38% of North Island residents. These findings suggest that improvements to provide safe routes to school and enable people to safely walk their dogs or get to a park under their own power should be prioritized over further improvements to the pedestrian environment in downtown Winslow. In addition, the City will likely be able to continue attracting grant funding for some critical improvements in downtown Winslow, whereas grant funding is less likely to be available for pathways outside the Winslow core.

Priority Investments by Category

The following sections lay out the proposed approach to prioritizing investments in each infrastructure category, using the percent allocations described previously. This prioritization is informed by a substantial amount of prior work done by MTAC, by the IBMTF subcommittee, and through discussions in the two public workshops.

⁶ Data from a 2012 Traffic Study commissioned by the City, available on the MTAC web page.

⁷ When we build shoulders on major roads, the survey results indicate we should build high-quality facilities in order to serve a range of users – nearly 70% of “Interested but concerned” cyclists indicated they want something more than a 5' shoulder with a standard fog line.

⁸ The “Core 40” shoulder improvement initiative – constructing high-quality paved shoulders on 40 miles of heavily-traveled island roadways – was first conceived by the City's Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee in 2003. Only a small portion of the Core 40 projects have been completed in the 15 years since.

Shoulder Improvements

Shoulder improvements should focus on highly-trafficked routes that serve large numbers of users and have the potential to serve even larger numbers once safe facilities exist. Many hours of analysis by City staff, advocates and volunteers have produced a fairly strong consensus regarding the top priorities for shoulder improvements. The “Core 40” concept envisions shoulder improvements along 40 miles of heavily-used island roadways, many of which are obligate paths for many people wanting to travel between their homes and key island destinations. In 2012, the City’s Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee worked with Squeaky Wheels to develop a “Safe Roads Initiative” that identified a “Top 5” list of shoulder improvements to be completed by 2016. Most of those projects still have not been completed, though some progress limited progress has been made. These projects should be among the first to be completed with funding from a ballot measure for transportation safety. Priorities for shoulder improvements should include the following projects, among others:

- Fletcher Bay Road from Lynwood Center Road to New Brooklyn, and Miller Road from New Brooklyn to Day Road – this is a major north-south corridor for travel on the west side of the island, and it is the most heavily-travelled secondary arterial on the island – it connects Island Center to Lynwood Center and to the commercial center at Day Road, and serves as an access point for the Grand Forest
- “Head of the Harbor” – the section of Eagle Harbor Drive between the west end of Wyatt Way and the base of Bucklin Hill, at the head of Eagle Harbor
- Bucklin Hill/Lynwood Center Road from Blakely Avenue to Fletcher Bay Road – this roadway section includes a blind curve with no shoulders on the main route to the south end of the island

Walkable Winslow

Several significant projects have been completed in downtown Winslow over the past decade, and the pedestrian environment in the downtown area is relatively good. However, some of the sidewalks in the Winslow core are outdated and substandard, and there are no pedestrian facilities at all in some densely populated areas quite close to the core. Some of these issues are currently being addressed through grant-funded projects, and others are expected to be addressed in the near term. Complete streets projects⁹ in downtown Winslow can compete successfully for grant funds, and City staff will continue to pursue these opportunities as they have in the past. The subcommittee believes funds from the ballot measure should largely be devoted to other priorities, but we think a few projects in Winslow should be included in the package. The following projects have been identified as high-priority projects to improve the pedestrian environment in downtown Winslow:

- The “Grow Avenue Greenway” project – this project combines a series of traffic-calming measures with enhanced pedestrian facilities on this road that connects neighborhoods to the central schools’ campus and is currently lacking in pedestrian facilities
- Sidewalk on Grow Avenue from Winslow Way to Wyatt Way (east side of street) – this section of sidewalk would provide a comfortable pedestrian facility for residents along the south end of Grow Ave, connecting with the Shepherd Way trail and working in tandem with

⁹ “Complete streets” projects are infrastructure projects that are designed to ensure that an urban street is safe and functional for all users, including people of all ages and abilities driving, walking, biking and using transit; the needs of all such users are considered and addressed in these projects.

the Grow Avenue Greenway project to significantly improve conditions for people walking in this area

Safe Routes to School

While there is significant overlap between Safe Routes to School projects and other trail/pathways projects, it's important to focus on this category separately. Projects that improve conditions for biking and walking in areas adjacent to schools serve a variety of users and purposes, **and** they provide a safe way for kids to walk or bike to school. Providing facilities that enable kids to safely walk or bike to school will have several public benefits, including improved health and school performance, reduction in traffic congestion around schools, and addressing transportation challenges for BISD. In the recent citizen survey conducted by Bainbridge Mobility Alliance, 73.4% of parents of school-aged kids (n=540) said that lack of safe infrastructure is a barrier to their kids walking or biking to school. 64% of parents said their kids would walk or bike to school more often if there were safe infrastructure between home and school. Overall in the survey, trails/pathways that provide safe routes to school were rated as the second most important category of infrastructure improvements to implement on the island. The subcommittee proposes placing a high priority on projects that enhance the safety of non-motorized transportation to and from schools, including projects such as the following:

- The “Grow Avenue Greenway” project described previously
- A trail running from New Brooklyn and Sportsman’s Club Road behind Woodward and Sakai Schools and connecting with Bucsit Lane/Wardwell
- A trail within the Day Road right-of-way connecting the north end of Kallgren Road to Wilkes School
- A trail within the Blakely Avenue right-of-way connecting the recently opened trail running from Old Mill along the north end the Islandwood property with Blakely School

Connecting Pathways and Intra-island Trails

In addition to the trail projects mentioned above under Safe Routes to School, there are many trail opportunities within existing city rights-of-way or easements that could improve permeability and create opportunities for people to walk or bike for transportation or recreation separate from roadways. Constructing these trails would leverage an already extensive network of City and Parks District trails and would make it possible for more people to get to important destinations without getting in their cars. MTAC and City staff have worked with interested volunteers to develop an extensive list of trail project opportunities, and we believe there should be continued public outreach to help identify priorities for investment, using criteria previously established by MTAC. Some money should be set aside to acquire limited easements where necessary to complete important trail connections. This category of projects is exciting because of the opportunity to give island residents great options for safe and comfortable walking and biking, and we believe it warrants significant investment. Examples of high-priority connecting pathways/trail projects include:

- The Lost Valley intra-island trail, on existing city-owned land from Carmella Lane to Ridge Lane
- A trail within the Valley Road RoW connecting the south end of Kallgren Road with the Rolling Bay neighborhood service center

Sound to Olympics Trail

The Sound to Olympics (STO) Trail is envisioned as a shared used-path¹⁰ running along the Highway 305 right-of-way from the Eagle Harbor ferry terminal to Agate Pass bridge. The STO trail would be a unique facility on Bainbridge Island when completed – the only place on the island where residents could enjoy a relatively flat bike ride of approximately 7 miles on way on a smooth surface completely separated from car traffic. In addition, it would provide a safe facility for people to walk to a destination or for recreation or exercise. The STO can be expected to serve a wide range of island residents for a variety of purposes, including bike commuters, recreational and family bikers, long-distance touring riders, and people walking for exercise or leisure or to a destination.¹¹ As a regional trail, the STO trail can attract grant funding from sources that would not be available for other non-motorized transportation facilities on the island; some of these grant programs have a 13.5% City match associated with them, meaning that the grant funding covers 86.5% of project costs. We recommend funding continued development of the STO trail through these grant programs and devoting approximately \$750,000 from the ballot measure to matching funds to attract grant dollars for the STO trail over the next seven years. This level of matching funds could leverage several million dollars in external grant funds for extension of the trail (perhaps as far north as Sportsmans' Club Road/North Madison) during this period.

Summary/Conclusion

To summarize, the subcommittee believes this is the right time to proceed with a ballot measure to fund long-delayed and critical improvements to the walking and biking infrastructure on the island. Shoulder improvements on secondary arterials, which improve safety for all users of the roadways and bring the roadways up to standard for drivers, should be the top priority, followed by Safe Routes to Schools and other trails and connecting pathways that enable people to safely walk or bike for recreation or to reach key destinations. A few important improvements to the pedestrian environment in downtown Winslow should also be funded. Finally, a modest amount of matching funds should be provided to leverage significant grant funding to extend the Sound to Olympics Trail. With these investments, the City can significantly improve safety and expand transportation and recreation choices for people across the island.

Respectfully submitted,

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Infrastructure Ballot Measure Task Force

¹⁰ "A **shared use path** provides a travel area separate from motorized traffic for bicyclists, pedestrians, strollers, wheelchair users, joggers, and other users. Shared use paths can provide a low-stress experience for a variety of users using the network for transportation or recreation" – from the FHWA [Small Town and Rural Areas Design Guide](#).

¹¹ See the [STO Trail Vision/FAQ](#) document on the Sound to Olympics Trail project page for more information and context.