

# **SAN JUAN ISLAND TRAILS COMMITTEE**

## **Bike Trails Outreach**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**October 27, 2008**

**Present:** Joanruth Baumann, Scott Boye, Dick Coffey, Shannon Dean , David Dehlendorf, Rachel Dietzman, Louise Dustrude, Tim Dustrude, Eric Eisenhardt, Kathleen Foley, Wayne Helgoth, Deborah Hopkins, Liz Illg, Marc Islam, John Lackey, Kyle Loring, Doug McCutchen, Judy Packard, Sandy Rabinowitz, Tracy Roberson, Karla Sabin, Theresa Simendinger.

#### **Meeting Goals**

Tracy Roberson opened by sharing the meeting goals: Provide an opportunity for people to share views and ideas about bicycle safety, network with other bicycle enthusiasts, explore the potential for reducing local dependence on autos with the possibility of developing a network of multi-use trails, and create a bike trails sub-committee.

#### **Current Status of Bike Trails**

Tracy reported that the SJI Trails Committee has been making incredible progress on foot trails and there are currently lots of exciting projects in the works, unfortunately bicyclists are missing out on most of the great things that are happening because we are currently not adequately represented. Historically the main interest of the majority of active trails committee members has been walking trails or foot paths therefore this has been the main focus. If bicyclists want to be represented by the trails committee, we need to create a voice, become active and present our needs. Bicycle safety on our roadways has become a growing concern. We need to unite with clear and common goals so that our voice is heard consistently and repeatedly, and we need members willing to attend meetings, write letters and take action. Obviously funding for bicycle projects is a huge obstacle, however before the funding discussion can even take place, it is necessary to create a PLAN. Hopefully as a result of this (and future) meeting(s) we will establish goals and create a plan with a list of action items for members of this group to pursue.

#### **Interests of Meeting Attendees**

The following is a list of the interests and ideas brought up by each person as we went around the room for introductions:

- Interest in safer bicycling on the Town to American Camp route
- Trails for people who live here, not just for visitors
- Town bike routes or trails
- General fear of riding on the roads because of traffic, fog, and other visibility conflicts
- Interest in commuter trails near town
- Better and safer routes for cyclists
- Continued mountain bike access and trails for recreation
- Safe routes for children
- More bicycle commuting, incentive programs around town to reward cycling
- Classes to encourage bicycling
- Improved signage on roads
- Safety education for bicycles and motorists

- Increasing general bicycle awareness and creating a unified base
- More bike parking in town and less car parking to encourage cycling
- Improving bicycle etiquette on existing trails (stewardship and safety)

### **SJ Island Trails Committee Funding Status**

David Dehlendorf, Chair of the SJI Trails Committee, stated that County Parks has eliminated the Trails Committee from its preliminary 2009 budget. The final 2009 County Parks budget is expected to be approved by the County Council in December after a lengthy public review process. Therefore, Trails is exploring a new administrative home for bookkeeping and liability purposes and is confident we will find an agency that is a great fit. Trails still receives funding from Island Rec, this has not been cut. Rachel Dietzman also confirmed that SJ County Public Works still has funding for individual non-motorized trail projects, this has not been cut from the budget.

### **Scenic Byways**

San Juan County has recently been accepted as the State's newest Scenic Byway. This means that there may be State funding available for projects that meet the program criteria. Liz Illg, the SJC Scenic Byways Coordinator, reported that we are currently in the early organizational phase. It is important to recognize that recreational biking and biking as transportation are very different in terms of funding. Scenic Byways routes embrace users to enhance enjoyment of routes and provide connectivity between places of interest. The next step in the process is to create a Corridor Management Plan which determines how we want to develop our byway. Our plan will probably include some of the following items:

- Provide off-road routes or separated trails within the ROW, wherever possible
- Provide signed bike lanes, paved shoulders or widened curb lanes for bicycle commuters and faster cyclists
- Minimize street crossings for bike/ped paths
- Create a minimum 5'-wide planting area between separated trails and roadway
- Provide alternate signed routes for bicyclists, to lessen conflicts and make accessible greater scenic variety
- Establish a "Share the Road" Campaign that educates residents, visitors, bus drivers and others about bicyclists using the roadway.
- Provide signage with area maps and location finders.

The Wa. State Scenic Byway coordinator is very supportive of off road paths. Grant winners receive must provide 20% matched funding for selected projects, and all funded projects must meet state safety standards.

### **Creating a Shared Vision**

Based on the introductory statements of each meeting attendee, many different interests were represented such as road condition improvement, multi-use trails, mountain bike access, and expanding education. Bicycle safety seemed to be the underlying concern. Our challenge will be to create a plan that represents the shared vision of the group, with clear goals to work towards. This vision may evolve over the next couple of meetings.

Since this meeting is an outreach of the Trails committee, Tracy pointed out that her main focus for this meeting would be on improving bicycle representation in relationship to trails. She introduced the idea of multi-use off road trails on the major roadways for the first 3-5 miles from Town as a

long term goal that she would like to see accomplished. National statistics show that over 60% of our bicycle population does not currently ride because of lack of convenient routes and fears about safety. This is consistent with the concerns of local parents and elderly community members. If we want to get more people choosing to bike instead of drive cars we need to provide safer alternatives for this group of people. There was discussion about the Trails Committee's proposed Pipeline, Ball fields and Airport trails and how each of these could create links to town.

### **General Brainstorming**

There was further discussion about the Scenic Byway and how bicycle improvements could qualify for funding. Liz Illg noted that the scenic byway funding would not be available for all roads, but rather those that have been identified as part of the scenic byway corridor here on San Juan Island. Funding can come from multiple and varied sources. We are not limited to the County and Scenic Byways. One other example could include Safe Routes to School. There are likely to be other State, Federal and private funding sources to investigate once we have created a plan. Many grants are more likely to succeed when we can demonstrate broad support and multiple matching fund partners.

### **Land Bank/Preservation Trust Role**

The newly purchased Sundstrom property in San Juan Valley was discussed since it borders a section of the proposed Pipeline Trail route. The Land Bank has been very supportive of trails projects on their properties, their mandate calls for 'low impact' access, and the question of paved trails fitting under that description was brought up. The SJ Preservation Trust will eventually become the owners of this property and there is still a lot to be worked out as far as how this property will be managed. Wetlands near the county road and compatibility concerns between livestock grazing and trail access are also issues.

### **County Public Works Role**

Rachel Dietzman Senior Project Engineer with SJC Public Works stated that upcoming improvements to the section of the road between Douglas Rd and Strawberry Ln do not include road widening, shoulders or trails.

Public Works is guided by both the Non-motorized plan and Scenic Roads manual and is "restrained to transportation pathways only". She noted that for path surface material gravel paths are difficult to maintain because of weed and grading problems. Currently there is a Pervious concrete footpath that public works is constructing on Lopez. Pervious concrete is considered as 'low impact' as a more environmentally friendly option for a paved surface (not suitable for auto traffic). However it is very expensive to construct (around \$9.50 per square foot) for a variety of reasons including no local certified installers. The Lopez project is funded through a recreation funding grant.

### **Road Safety Concerns**

There was discussion about lack of road shoulders and general bicycle access in town, and whether it was legal to remove parking, and create a one way bike lane on one side of the street, for example going uphill only. This idea raised concern that a novice cyclist would drive the wrong way in this lane. Another idea was that Nash Street (one way for vehicles) could allow for two way bicycle traffic. It is a popular route to the elementary school, for cyclists avoiding the hill and traffic on Argyle. There is also concern about the general lack of awareness by motor vehicles towards cyclists, the need to recognize bicycles as vehicles and educate motorists and cyclists on safer etiquette. Over the past couple years, in her discussions with concerned bicyclists, Tracy noted that the most frequent complaints are about Cattle Point Road and Roche Harbor Road, surprising since

these are the two roads on the island with the widest shoulders for bike lanes. The group speculated that these were perceived to be the most dangerous due to the relatively high speed of traffic, and enforcement of speed limits could improve safety.

### **Narrowing our Focus**

With the overwhelming amount of bicycle safety improvements to be made, it was suggested that we pick one route to focus on rather than trying to solve a multitude of problems at the same time. The next meeting we will attempt to prioritize and come up with clear goals.

It was agreed that organizing regular group ride events would be a great way for us to share ideas, create visibility, raise awareness of motorists about bicyclists and their rights, educate as well as recruit a larger following. Rides will be scheduled monthly, or perhaps more frequently on Saturdays, and possibly also on Friday afternoons. The concept of Critical Mass type events, scheduled during heavy traffic times, to raise attention and cause disruption was also talked about as a way to raise awareness.

### **Action Items:**

**Everyone** for the next meeting:

1. To help refine our goals please bring a one sentence specific priority trail or improvement that you would like this group to focus on.
2. If you haven't already done so, please review the SJC Scenic Roads Manual: <http://www.sanjuanco.com/publicworks/scenicrdmanual.aspx>, SJ County Non-motorized Plan (and maps): Attached, and the SJI Trails plan at [www.sanjuanislandtrails.org/TrailsPlan.pdf](http://www.sanjuanislandtrails.org/TrailsPlan.pdf)

**Scott Boye** (next meeting) will present the idea of attending key meetings at appropriate times and leaving cards as reminders of our needs.

**Liz Illg**, will alert us when appropriate to attend meetings or write letters concerning **Town Bike** issues.

**Marc Islam** will investigate the potential for Nash street (one way street) to allow 2 way bike travel

**John Lackey** offered exposure on his website [www.sanjuanisland.com](http://www.sanjuanisland.com) for announcements of meetings and activities

**Judy Packard**, Certified League of American Cyclists instructor offered to teach classes for Adults and Children on Bicycle Safety

**Tracy Roberson** will send out minutes and print island maps for the next meeting to help with prioritizing.

### **Notices of Upcoming Events:**

1. **Monthly group Bike rides** – First ride set for **Saturday November 1, 11 am**  
Next ride TBA at meeting
2. **SJI Trails Committee Meetings** (open to Public) –**Wednesday November 12, 5pm**  
WhidbeyIsland Bank Community Meeting room, bicyclists are encouraged to attend.
3. **SJITC Bike Trails Outreach** – Next meeting **Monday November 17, 5pm** Whidbey Island BankCommunity meeting room