

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Program
Grant Application Form**



Project Title, Location and Date:

Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facility Project, Birch Bay, WA, June 29th, 2012

Lead Agency and Project Manager (Name, address, phone & fax number, email address)

Whatcom County Public Works
Roland Middleton, LEG
Special Projects Manager
Whatcom County Public Works
322 North Commercial Street, Suite 210
Bellingham, WA 98225

Phone: (360) 676-6876
Fax: (360) 738-4561
Email: rmiddlet@co.whatcom.wa.us

Total Grant Request Amount: (Provide the total grant request amount and identify how the funds will be divided for each of the project components: project development, right-of-way acquisition, engineering)

Construction: \$3,000,000

Legislative District:

42nd State Legislative District- Sen. Doug Ericksen, Rep. Jason Overstreet, Rep. Vincent Buys
1st Congressional District- U.S. Senator Patty Murray, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell, U.S. Representative Rick Larsen

Project Summary (Describe the project specifically in 4 to 5 sentences, be sure to address each element included in the project.)

The Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facilities Project is a 25 year comprehensive community and environmental legacy project. The project goal is to enhance a critical 2-mile shoreline for the tourists and residents of the unincorporated community of Birch Bay, WA. The elements of the project are as follows:

- Replacement of seawalls and hardened shore forms with soft shore beach berm along Birch Bay Drive;
- Construct section of Coast Millennium Trail with pedestrian promenade on top of beach berm and extend pedestrian facility along northern portion of Birch Bay Drive;
- Construct marked bike lanes along roadway following local and federal development standards;
- Improve coastal access by constructing ADA accessible access points along beach promenade;
- Replace and retrofit substandard stormwater facilities and out falls to improve water quality;
- Mitigate coastal flood hazards by constructing beach berm to 100 yr flood elevation;
- Improve shoreline aesthetics by undergrounding existing utilities;
- Restore ecosystem function by re-establishing the beach profile;
- Sustain and preserve the community character advocated by residents through numerous public input processes.

Recent Progress (Describe any efforts or portions of the project that have been completed or are underway)

The first recommendation for beach reconstruction along Birch Bay Drive was in September 1975 by renowned coastal hydrogeologic engineer, Wolf Bauer. Mr. Bauer provided a shoreline analysis with preliminary design elements for the Whatcom County Planning Commission. Whatcom County constructed a portion of the project in 1986. The continuation of the project has been an ongoing request of the community. The request was formalized in the 2004 Birch Bay Subarea Plan, adopted by the Whatcom County Council as a part of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. The Subarea plan includes the Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facility Project as one of the top projects for the Subarea. It is described as the Beachfront Promenade.

Additional efforts include:

- Birch Bay Shoreline Improvement Conceptual Design Plan (COG, 2002)
- Whatcom County Walkability & Livability Audits (Dan Burden, 2005)
- Birch Bay Shoreline Enhancement Feasibility Study Phase 1: Community Charrette (PWA, 2006)
- Birch Bay Design Guidelines for Commercial Development (Whatcom County, 2007)
- Phase 2a: Birch Bay Drive Conceptual Cost Estimate (PWA, 2007)
- Shoreline Master Plan (Whatcom County, 2008)
- Birch Bay Community Tourism Strategy (Port of Bellingham, 2011)

PROJECT SCHEDULE AND COST SUMMARY SECTION

Project Milestones		Funds Administered by WSDOT (WSDOT use only) Source: _____ Source: _____ Amount: _____ Amount: _____ Source: _____ Source: _____ Amount: _____ Amount: _____	
Project Element	Scheduled	Amount	
Project Development	9/1/12	\$200,000	
Project Definition (agreement signed)	10/1/13		
Begin PE	10/1/13	\$1,600,000	
Environmental Docs Approved	12/30/15	\$200,000	
ROW Complete (certification)	12/30/15	\$500,000	
Contract Advertised	3/01/16	\$7,500,000	
Open to Public (operationally complete)	8/31/17		
Project Cost Summary	Dollars in thousands	2013-15 Cash Flow (expenditures billed to WSDOT):	
Note applicable costs			<u>Date</u> <u>Planned</u>
Project Development	\$250,000	9/13	\$ _____
		12/13	\$ _____
Engineering:		3/14	\$ _____
Preliminary Engineering	\$1,750,000	6/14	\$ _____
Right-of-Way	\$500,000	9/14	\$ _____
Construction	\$7,500,000	12/14	\$ _____
Operations/Services	\$0	3/15	\$ _____
		6/15	\$ _____
Evaluation	\$0	Total 13-15	\$ _____
Total Grant Request:	\$3,000,000	<i>Est. Re-appropriation</i>	\$ <u>3,000,000</u>
		<i>Future Biennium</i>	\$ _____
Match Amount (if applicable):	\$7,000,000	TOTAL	\$ <u>3,000,000</u>
Total Project Cost:	\$10,000,000		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SECTION

Current Conditions. Describe the current conditions (e.g., existing roadway conditions, speed, risk factors).

While not classified as a major arterial, Birch Bay Drive is a major route of interest for tourism and recreation, serving as the main access point to the Birch Bay shoreline. The road surface here is smooth and lane width is standard, but shoulders are generally very narrow. There are two transit stops that serve this section of Birch Bay Drive: the first at the intersection of Alderson and Birch Bay Drive and the second midway between Harborview Rd and Alderson Rd. Though the operating speeds are relatively low (28 mph versus a posted limit of 25 mph), substantial congestion, particularly during summer months, worsens traffic conditions. Pedestrians and cyclists are forced to share the narrow shoulder, where it exists, with parked cars, and in many places the alternative to walking outside of the traffic lane is a one-foot-wide dirt track immediately adjacent to the roadway. There is also considerable opportunity for vehicular conflicts between pedestrians crossing the roadway and motorists traveling along the Drive, as no marked pedestrian crossings exist along the 1.1 miles of Birch Bay Drive between Harborview Road and Alderson Road.

Between 2008 and 2011, there were two bicycle/pedestrian injury collisions on Birch Bay Drive, one of which was a fatality.

Project Impact. How will the project meet the four goals?

(a) Promoting healthy communities by encouraging walking, bicycling and using public transportation

The completed project will provide a linear park roughly two miles in length that will invite visitors and residents to recreate in the newly-restored beach environment by affording safer and substantially enhanced access for walking, bicycling and transit. In contrast to current conditions, the separated pedestrian facility atop the beach berm and bicycle lanes on either side of the roadway will provide a dedicated, safe space that will encourage these types of physical activity. Local residents and tourists will further benefit from better connections to services located along the Drive made more fully accessible to users on foot or bike. Improvements will also serve to complete a key section of the Coast Millennium Trail, offering the ability to walk or bike safely the 16 miles from the Peace Arch border crossing to Birch Bay State Park, another important recreation site located approximately one mile south of the seaside center. New design elements will also allow transit users better access to the two transit stops along Birch Bay Drive.

(b) Improving safety by designing major arterials to include features such as wider sidewalks, dedicated bicycle facilities, medians, and pedestrian streetscape features, including trees where appropriate.

Completion of this project will drastically enhance the safety, and enhance the mobility, of all pedestrian and bicycle users. Specifically, conflicts between various types of users will be alleviated by better roadway design, including dedicated bicycle lanes and a fully separated pedestrian facility along the shoreline. This is particularly important given that several typical users of the space are at-risk groups, including families with small children, aging local residents, and tourists unfamiliar with area. Marked crosswalks will direct pedestrians to safe crossing points, which currently do not exist anywhere along this section of the Drive.

(c) Protecting the environment and reducing congestion by providing safe alternatives to single occupancy driving

Birch Bay has historically been a recreation destination for tourists and local citizens. Shoreline improvements will only enhance the attraction of the area, and it is likely that increased economic development will occur along Birch Bay Drive as a result. Redevelopment and reuse of existing building stock is consistent with the Birch Bay Community Plan's goals for land use density. The Birch Bay Design Guidelines, developed interactively with local citizens, further outline specifics of the community's vision that future shoreline designs promote viable commercial and residential redevelopment and "strengthen the relationship of those frontages to the pedestrian promenade, the bay shoreline, and the upland Town Center". Pedestrian and bicycle improvements along Birch Bay Drive will encourage visitors and residents to use active forms of transportation to access both the shoreline and services located along the Drive and at a nearby neighborhood commercial node. Birch Bay is also a strategic area of service growth for the Whatcom Transportation Authority, and improved transit stops will further encourage the use of alternatives to single occupancy driving for commuting and recreational purposes.

(d) Preserving community character by involving local citizens and stakeholders to participate in planning and design decisions.

The active engagement of Birch Bay citizens in this project's development over the past decades cannot be overstated and has set a strong precedent for continued, ongoing and dynamic community engagement in further planning and design decisions. Several past community processes, such as the development of project objectives (described in the recent progress section), the Birch Bay Community Plan (2004), Birch Bay Design Guidelines for Commercial Development (2007) and Whatcom Council of Government's walkability audits (2005), and the Birch Bay Community Tourism Strategy (2011) have made clear two relevant themes. The first is the need for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure safety enhancements. The second is the community's desire to preserve the seaside character of the community and its attraction as a tourist destination, as well as the distinct character of Birch Bay's composite residential neighborhoods. Future community input on the details of realizing this vision will be gathered through established channels, such as the Birch Bay Community Plan Steering Committee, using processes previously identified by community members and required by the Birch Bay Community Plan. Planning and design decisions will also take into account the design intentions for public art and shoreline development expressed by the community in the Birch Bay Design Guidelines.

Whatcom County is committed to documenting both the rich history and further development of the project, a process that will provide additional opportunity for community engagement.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SECTION (continued)	Nationally designated Main Street Community <u>No</u>	Posted Travel Speed <u>25</u> MPH
Distance from major housing, commercial attraction, transit station or other bicycle or pedestrian generator. Distance (miles) <u>0</u> Comments: Project is adjacent to the Resort Commercial district of Birch Bay	National Main Street Affiliate <u>No</u> National Historic District <u>No</u>	If operating speed differs, please provide operating speed: <u>28</u> MPH
Prior traffic collision involving bicyclist/pedestrian at location within past three years. Total pedestrian/bicyclists involved crashes <u>2</u> Comments: One fatality	Signalized Intersection Spacing or Distance to Alternate Crossing Facility. Distance (feet) <u>more than 1 mile</u> Comments: Crosswalks currently at Harborview & Alderson; Additional crossing are planned; locations assigned through the public outreach process.	
Width of Roadway Number of Lanes (include turn lanes) <u>2</u> Comments:	Existing Traffic Volumes. Volume (Average Daily Traffic) <u>4343</u> Number of people biking/walking <u>N/A</u> Comments: Although a specific number is not available, the area is a significant use area for residential and tourism biking and walking.	
Describe supportive policies, ordinances, standards, and practices in place to help ensure project success. To ensure success the Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facility the project is intentionally consistent with supportive local plans. These plans include: Whatcom County Transportation Improvement Program (current and 2013-2018 TIP); Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and the Birch Bay Sub-Area Plan (2004); Whatcom Transportation Plan (2012); Birch Bay Transportation Planning Study (2008); Birch Bay Comprehensive Stormwater Plan (2006); Birch Bay Community Tourism Strategy (2011) and the Whatcom Transit Authority Strategic Plan (2004). The project will also coordinate with the following inter-agency plans, practices and studies designed to demonstrate the need and desire for active living environments, economic revitalization and/or shoreline restoration: Whatcom County's Healthy & Active Living Plan (WCHD, 2009), Birch Bay Design Guidelines for Commercial Development (2007), Birch Bay Shoreline Enhancement Feasibility Study Phase 1: Community Charrette (PWA, 2006) and Phase 2a: Conceptual Cost Estimate (PWA, 2007); Shoreline Master Plan (2008); Whatcom County Walkability & Livability Audits (Dan Burden, 2005); Birch Bay Shoreline Improvement Conceptual Design Plan (2002); Coast Millennium Trail Plan (2000); and the Shore Resource Analysis: Birch Bay (Wolf Bauer, 1975). In addition, the Whatcom County Health Department has identified Birch Bay as a Community Transformation Grant (2012-2017) priority community due to increasing rates of health disparities and the need for active community environments. Though Whatcom County has not yet adopted a Complete Streets ordinance, county planners and engineers have attended formal Complete Streets Coalition trainings and are supportive of the concepts.		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SECTION

(continued)

Implementation. Outline the project implementation plan or approach consistent with the previously documented milestones (i.e., project delivery status (planning, environmental review, right of way acquisition, construction plans), matching funds or services, consistency with community plans)

Project Timeline

Implementation of the Birch Bay Drive and Facilities Project will be a multi-step process for Whatcom County and the community driven Birch Bay Planning Steering Committee.

1. Project Development-*Currently On-going*
 - Including additional public meetings and continued formation of design criteria.
2. Engineering- *December 2015-August 2017*
 - Preliminary Engineering: Expected completion of design and environmental reviews is 12/15.
 - Right of Way: Expected completion of all additions and easements is 12/15.
 - Construction: To begin 3/16 and end 8/17.
 - Operations/Services: Maintenance and operational services for project will be provided by Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Department. Proposed Birch Bay Waterfront Improvement District is planned to provide maintenance funding. To begin 8/17.
3. Pedestrian and Bicycle Evaluation- *December 2013-August 2017*

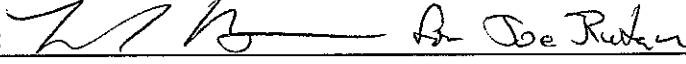
The Whatcom County Health Department has committed to aiding in project evaluation as it relates to pedestrian and bicycle user rates. This supports the agency's commitment to increasing physical activity and social connectedness among residents, especially among at-risk populations (young, aging, people with disabilities and low-income). Baseline counts will begin in 2013.

Principles of Liveability

The project aligns with the following federal principles of livability:

- Providing more transportation choices
- Enhancing economic competitiveness
- Supporting existing communities
- Coordinating policies and leverage investment
- Valuing communities and neighborhoods

Whatcom County's commitment to the project is complete, with the remaining stage to secure supplemental funds for all project elements.

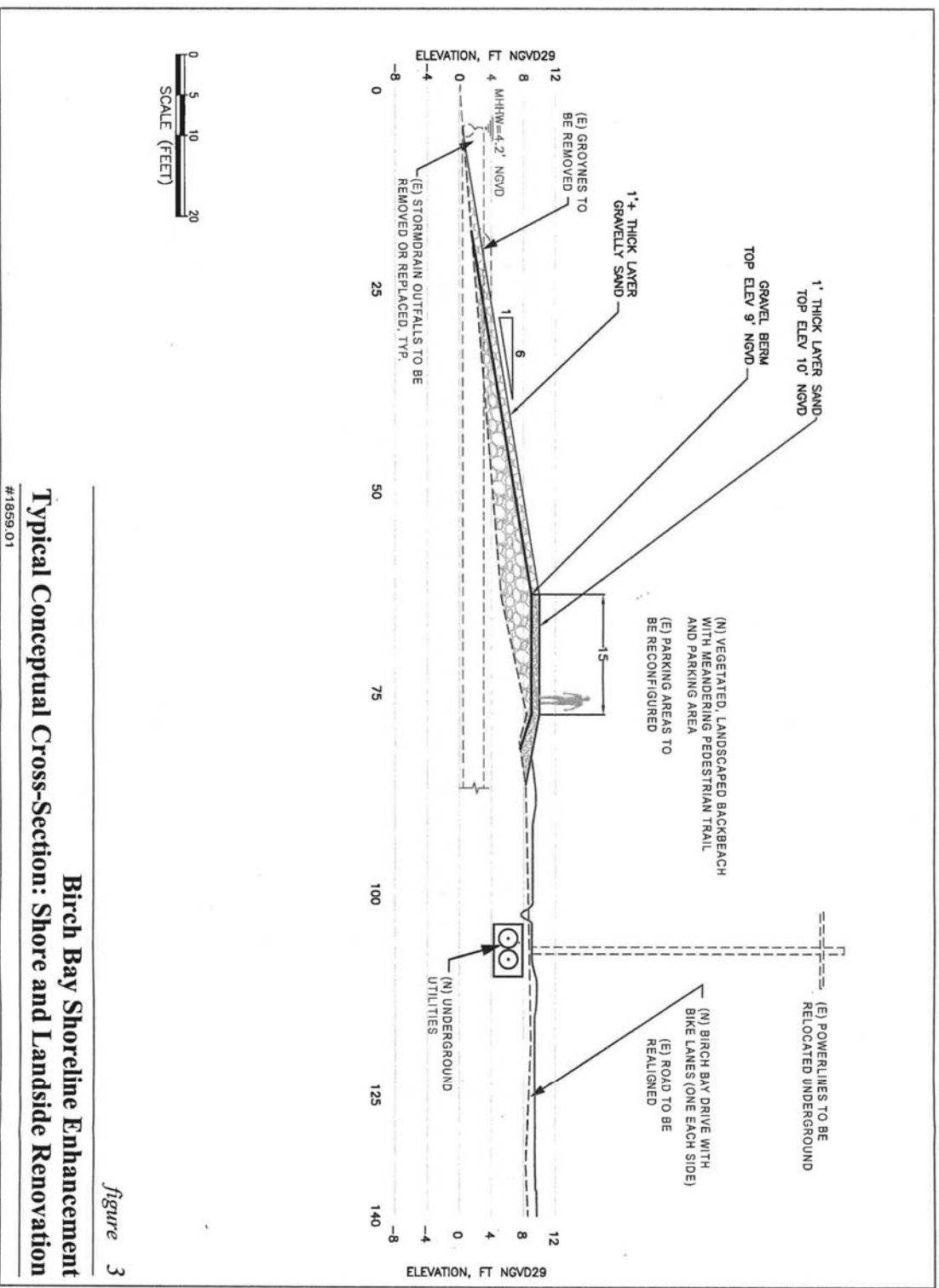
APPLICATION CONCURRENCE	
Transportation Agency Engineer, Traffic Engineer, or Director	
Name: Joe Rutan, PE Title: Assistant Director of Public Works; County Road Engineer Address: 322 N. Commercial Suite 310, Bellingham WA 98225 Email: jrutan@co.whatcom.wa.us Phone: (360) 715-7450 Signature: 	Date June 29, 2012
WSDOT Official (if project is on a State Highway)	
Name: Title: Address: Email: Phone:	Date



Birch Bay 2010
Pictometry Image Mosaic

1 inch = 250 feet





1. Gravel berm must match native material.

**Birch Bay Shoreline Enhancement
Typical Conceptual Cross-Section: Shore and Landside Renovation**

#1859.01