



# Public Works Department San Juan County

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## SAN JUAN COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

### MT. BAKER ROAD AND TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

#### July 26, 2010 Public Meeting

On July 26, 2010 San Juan Public Works Department held a public meeting to provide an update on the project. At the previous public meeting on April 14, 2010, the findings of the geotechnical report, a cultural resource study, and alternative cross sections were presented. Since the April meeting, the Wetland Delineation and Classification and Tree Condition Survey Studies and further refinement of the alignment have been completed. The County is proceeding with work on minimizing the impacts to wetlands, reducing the cost of stormwater treatment and detention, and developing construction cost estimates. The County plans on conducting the next public meeting in October 2010. Attendance by affected property owners as well as the community at large is encouraged to help vision and define the design goals for this project.

Listed below are comments and questions provided by the attendees at the July meeting. Attachment 1 is a list of the attendees. Note that the responses below include information provided at the meeting as well as additional clarifying comments added in preparation of this document.

### Public Comment or Question/*County Response*

#### GENERAL PROJECT SCOPE

***We don't fully know yet what the project will look like. That is why we continue to talk with the public. We need your input.***

- What is the impact if nothing is done?

***An obvious safety problem will be ignored. The Mt. Baker Road Improvements project is the highest ranked project in the County due to safety concerns for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Additionally, there are road bed and drainage problems that require continued expensive maintenance. While doing nothing is an option on the table, we must address the safety issues.***

- What if only the trail/sidewalk improvements and not the road improvements are completed?

***The ongoing maintenance costs due to the pavement condition and surface drainage would not be addressed.***

- Fix the pavement but do not widen the road and provide a trail. A path way is needed.

***The trail is currently not funded for construction. Funding will continue to be sought after.***

- Consider the safety of the bicyclist and pedestrians over widening the road.

***We are confident we can get money to complete the design and construction of the trail project***

- What I am hearing is that it is not really an option to do nothing to the roadway.
- Are there costs savings if the road and trail projects are constructed together?

**Generally, yes. If one project has federal funds, the projects may be bid separately since federal funds significantly increase the administrative project costs.**

- What is the current rough estimate for the road?

**Over \$3 million.**

- Is it realistic to assume the County can afford this project?

**The County has prioritized this project and other County projects have not been funded. We are counting on the meeting attendees to be our ambassadors to the community. This project may need to be scaled back.**

## TRAIL

- Did the County consider only installing a trail?

**Funding of the trail has been a challenge. The County has been actively seeking funding for the trail for 10 years. We have spent \$30,000 of county money on the trail design this year. We have made application for a Safe Routes to School grant that will be awarded this spring. We have hope of receiving that money for the project which is for the trail in the UGA area and is a cooperative project with the School and the Sherriff's Department. These grant programs for trails are very competitive but each year we get a little higher in the ranking. We have confidence that we will eventually get money to build the trail. The County currently has funding for road construction only.**

- Has the County considered a multiuse trail?

**A multiuse trail for pedestrians and cyclists would be 10 to 12 feet wide and shoulders would still be required. Installing shoulders and a 5-foot path requires less right-of-way.**

- Will the trail be placed along the right-of-way line? Recommend placing the sidewalk on the south side of the road; there is more shade on south side.

**The exact location of the trail has not been determined.**

**The County proposes installing 5-foot-wide impervious concrete sidewalks on both sides of the road within the UGA and a 5-foot-wide crushed rock trail on one side of the road outside the UGA. The County standards require 5-foot-wide concrete sidewalks within UGAs to meet ADA requirements and for lower maintenance costs. The County has applied for a \$405,000 grant for installation of sidewalks within the UGA.**

- Are there options for the trail other than crushed rock surfacing?

**Yes, punchions may be used on wet areas – these are boardwalks on pin piles – or boardwalks laid on the ground. Concrete will likely be used in the UGA**

- What is the general cost of the trail?

**The grant application is for \$405,000 which includes educational and enforcement items. Of that amount, \$300,000 is specifically for**

**construction of the trail inside the UGA. The County will provide the cost for outside the UGA at the next meeting.**

- May funding from the road project be used on the trail?

**The State funding the County has received is just for the road improvements. We could use local funds for the trail.**

- If the road is widened without the trail the public would be very unhappy.

**We concur. We will continue to aggressively work to get funding to design and construct the trail.**

## ROAD

- What is the proposed road section?

**The proposed section is 30 feet: two 11-foot travel lanes with 4-foot shoulders on both sides.**

- 30 years ago, a public meeting was held to use Mt. Baker Road as a bypass to minimize traffic going through Eastsound. At that time, the curves at Lovers Lane and Terrill Beach Road were improved to accommodate the trucks, but the part in-between was never done. It needs to get done. It is nothing short of miraculous that there haven't been accidents yet.

- Four-foot-wide shoulders are wider than any road shoulders on the island.

**That is not correct. See question and response directly below.**

- What roads are 30 feet in width and how are they striped?

**Orcas Road, from the ferry to Deer Harbor Road and from the golf course to Eastsound. Striping is typically an 11-foot travel lane with 4-foot shoulders. The stripe location tends to drift over time when they are repainted, especially on curves. Considering the width of the striping, the actual clear width of an 11-foot travel lane is 10'-4".**

- As a truck driver, I support the width of 30 feet. I am surprised at how many people go off the road on the straightaways. We are fortunate there haven't been more accidents on Mount Baker Road. Having a wider road does not encourage speeding. There are other roads on Orcas Island that are 30 feet in width; it is safer for motorists and cyclists.

- What is the purpose of the 4-foot shoulders?

**Shoulders provide space for vehicles to move partially off the road and for bicyclists. A marked bicycle lane alongside a travel lane must be five feet wide, but four feet is considered safe.**

- What improvements will be completed at the Mt. Baker/North Beach intersection? What about yellow flashing lights?

**The traffic analysis indicates that the two-way stop signs on North Beach will be maintained and left-turn pockets are not required on Mt. Baker Road. The vertical curve will be lowered. The County may evaluate intersection lighting, but not flashing lights, and placing a crosswalk on Mt. Baker Road, at another time.**

- The property in the northeast quadrant of Mt. Baker and North Beach may be higher density in the future and it will impact the sight distance on Mt. Baker.

***Building setback distance will come into play if this lot is developed. This should prevent impact to sight distance. Additionally, the road will be lowered a little here to help.***

- Does the grant require 30 feet pavement?

***We originally understood that the grant required a 30 foot pavement width. After further investigation, we discovered that we may be able to request a width reduction. We feel that 30 feet is the width required at this location for this level and type of traffic.***

- Are shoulders required?

***Yes. For safety as well as funding.***

## **SPEED**

- What is the proposed speed limit? What other calming devices/methods are being considered?

***The speed limit will remain as it is now; 25 mph in the UGA and 35 mph outside the UGA. The horizontal alignment will have curves at the cemetery and the Schifsky's property to preserve trees. Installing vegetation (other than grass) on the ditch backslopes to add character/interest along the alignment may help keep speeds down. Additionally, the vertical alignment will not be smoothed out except minimally at two hills.***

***Radar signs also help but are expensive to maintain as the battery needs to be changed every other day. The Safe Route to Schools grant application includes radar speed signs in the school zone.***

- The wider width will increase speed.
- Speeding is a serious problem.
- Widening the road will increase speeding.

***Based on the County's experience on Fisherman Bay Road the speed does not go up significantly. It is not speed limit signs that keep speeds down but enforcement. Shoulders provide space for vehicles to move partially off the road and for bicyclists.***

- But Fisherman's Bay Road is not a commercial road

***Fisherman's Bay Road does serve the commercial needs of Lopez Island from both the ferry landing and the barge landing.***

- How does the Sheriff know where speed enforcement is needed?

***Complaints from the public. When the County completes speed studies and the 85% speed is significantly greater than the posted speed, Public Works notifies the Sheriff.***

## **TREES**

- What defines high tree preservation value? The trees along the cemetery do not appear to have been evaluated.

***The County has completed a tree survey. Trees within 10 feet of the existing road surface were evaluated. Three categories for preservation value were defined – High, Medium, and Low. Based on the tree survey, the County has shifted the road 12 feet to the south in the area of the Schifsky***

***property to save two trees of high value. The trees in front of the cemetery were not evaluated because they were identified early on to be saved due to the proximity of the gravesites. The centerline of the road was shifted 5 to 6 feet to the north to provide clearance from the cemetery trees.***

## **STORM WATER / WETLANDS**

- We would like information on the stormwater?

***The project is divided into two basins. The water must be treated and detained (for flood control). The basins are divided at the UGA boundary. West of the UGA boundary, the runoff flows to the west and then heads north along the east side of the airport. The basin east of the UGA boundary contains four subbasins. The runoff flows to the northeast through ditches and natural swales to Bartel Road and flows through two 24-inch culverts to the sound. Infiltration and rain gardens are not viable due to the loamy soils. The County is considering bioswales for treatment and ponds for detention. The County may evaluate enhancing the wetlands for treatment and detention which would require a study to confirm the wetlands would not be negatively impacted.***

- The cemetery is wet.
- Where will the wetland mitigation occur?

***The County is looking for opportunities to enhance existing wetlands. We are interested in working with private land owners to enhance their properties as well as with the Land Bank. If property owners are interested in assisting in identifying properties for potential mitigation, please contact Dan Vekved.***

- Can detained runoff be used for irrigation purposes?

***Yes, the County implemented this solution on the Fisherman Bay Road Project.***

- What are the County's thoughts on the two ponds at the bridge?

***The County will be meeting with wetland and permitting specialists next week to discuss wetland mitigation enhancement versus creation.***

## **NEXT STEPS**

- What are the County's next steps?

***Complete the Predesign Report.***

***Public meeting in October or November with proposed alternatives and costs. The proposals will include data from the consultants as well as the public.***

***Select the preferred alternative.***

***Start right-of-way acquisition and permits.***

***Pursue additional funding for the road and trail. We need to have plans on the shelf for potential stimulus dollars which require construction within 90 to 120 days.***

***Construction in 2012.***

- Recommend a news release be provided in addition to the minutes being mailed out.

