

June 29, 2016

Comments on Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element

Dear Mayor Boudreau, Mount Vernon City Council, Planning Commission and Staff,

Neighborhood Walking Trails

I live at Maddox Creek and greatly appreciate the walking trails in and around our neighborhood. My daily walks with my dog give me a chance to interact with my neighbors and with other members of the Mount Vernon community who are using the city's trail system. The trail system improves community connections, promotes healthy recreation, and enhances property values.

The trail system extends through a forested ravine to ponds below the Maddox Creek neighborhood. In just a few minutes from my front door I can feel like I'm in the North Cascades National Park, it's that scenic and peaceful on that trail.

I'm hopeful that in the near future the trail system will connect from the Maddox Creek neighborhood to Little Mountain, which has become an outstanding parks facility, and also on up to Eaglemont.

Bicycling Facilities

During the summer I often ride my bike to work down on College Way. Parts of that ride are very comfortable for cycling—and parts are not.

I appreciate the sections of the road system where the city has narrowed the automobile travel lanes by repainting the white lane markers. This slows down car traffic to be more consistent with posted speed limits, and also gives bicyclists a wider and safer lane in which to ride.

This has been done on parts of East Section Street, as well as parts of North 18th Street.

However, there are a couple of places on North 18th on my route to work where it can be downright scary to ride a bike. This includes the section between East Division and East Fir (see photo 1), and also the section from East Fir running downhill to Roosevelt Ave (see photo 2).

I'd like to see these areas become high priorities for bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements in the near future.

As a driver, bike rider and pedestrian, I appreciate the 25 mph speed limits throughout much of Mount Vernon that help to promote automobile, bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Complete Streets Ordinance

I applaud city staff for adding a policy to the Transportation Element supporting adoption of a complete streets ordinance, and would like to see the Public Works Department work with the community over the next year to put that ordinance in place.

There are new state transportation dollars available to jurisdictions that have adopted complete streets ordinances, and I would like to see Mount Vernon able to compete for those funds.

Comprehensive Bicycle Master Plan

I would also like to see the city develop a comprehensive bicycle master plan, in close collaboration with the community.

The focus should be developing a seamless on and off street bicycling network that creates short distances between residential areas and popular destinations.

The overarching goal should be to encourage residents to bike more often for recreation and transportation.

Little Mountain Park

Although this is a little outside of the Transportation Element, I would like to acknowledge the work the city and civic groups, including the Mount Vernon Parks Foundation and Mount Vernon Trail Builders, have done to expand recreational opportunities at Little Mountain Park. I used to think Mount Vernon was under-parked relative to cities like Anacortes, but we've come a long way and I'd like to see the city continue to move in a positive direction with its park system.

Thanks for your work on behalf of the city.

Sincerely,

Kirk Johnson
Maddox Creek

North 18th Street, between East Division and East Fir
Minimal bike travel line next to a deep ditch



North 18th between East Fir and Roosevelt Ave
Minimal bike travel lane, typically lots of car traffic, and gravel on the road

