

The Bike Buzz in Pasco

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Mary Heather Ames is a Senior Transportation Engineer in the Pasco Public Works Department and a lead in the development of bicycle/pedestrian access in Pasco. Dave Beach, Layne Papenfuss and I caught up with her last May (5/8/2017) to talk about on-going improvements in Pasco for bike/pedestrian access. She pointed us to a list of projects already posted on the city's webpage <http://www.pasco-wa.gov/820/Bike-Ped-Master-Plan> and noted that the city is systematically working through these activities. Their goal is to make Pasco a community friendly to both cyclists and walkers. Some highlights of their plans and our discussion are given below.

But First, A Path Forward...

Mary suggested cyclists contact her (amesm@pasco-wa.gov) with comments about any of the projects included in the plan. She'd be particularly interested in ideas about how to prioritize or make minor changes to the projects already in their planning document. Unfortunately, with the need to allocate out-year resources well in advance, only projects already in this document are likely to receive immediate attention. But she noted that this doesn't mean other projects can't be included in the future.

In addition to communicating directly with Mary, she pointed out that cyclists can actively help the city with plans to revitalize downtown Pasco. The focus is a 4 block core area, around 4th and Lewis. Many cyclists use this area as a Saturday morning destination ride and the city wants to make it more attractive to not only our resident cyclists, but folks from out of town. Share your thoughts with the city at <http://www.pasco-wa.gov/forms.aspx?FID=178> . Do you want more and better bike racks? A stand-alone bike repair stand? Improved access through cycling pinch-points as you ride in from afar? Let the city know what you'd like!

The Projects...a few big ones

The big news this year for cyclists and walkers was Pasco City Council's decision to adopt a Complete Streets Policy (CSP). Resolution 3725 is an official endorsement by the city to design streets that are safe and convenient for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. Their formal resolution can be seen at <http://pasco-wa.gov/488/Traffic-Services> .

And in a spirit of healthy jurisdictional competition, Pasco claims to be the first of our local communities to adopt such a policy ... as does West Richland! The City Councils from both cities met the same night. So it comes down to the minute for which was first to adopt a CSP!

Another big improvement to facilitate cycling in the community is along the Cable Bridge. Multiple jurisdictions, including the Washington State Department of Transportation, Pasco and Kennewick are widening the lanes and adding painted bike lanes giving cyclists the option of not having to dodge pillars

along the sidewalks across the bridge. The new bike lanes will extend north to the 10th St. and Ainsworth intersection.

A major project now underway is the revision on 4th St, from Ainsworth north to Columbia St and downtown Pasco. Stripped bike lanes are being added and the intersections are being redesigned for greater bike and pedestrian safety. New traffic sensors are also being added that recognize not only cars but also cyclists. These new state-of-the-art sensors are being installed to facilitate signaling at the key intersections.

And 20th St should also be easier for cyclists and walkers to navigate with the installation of wider lanes and sidewalks. Non-motorized travelers will soon find a number of new 'HAWKS' throughout the city. These 'High-Intensity Activated crossWalk beacons' are manually activated lights designed to let pedestrians and cyclists safely cross between intersections along busy streets.

In the news...Tri-City Herald, June 25, 2017

Mary also directed cyclists to the June 25 2017 issue of the Tri-City Herald (<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/news/local/article158165189.html#storylink=cpy>). This article describes in detail work being done on new bike lanes in Pasco. Quoting from this article, "The new bike lane will extend from 500 feet south of Columbia Street, near the railroad tracks, to the bend just south of B Street, where the road widens before going under the Charles D. Kilbury overpass at Ainsworth Street. That means some designated parking areas will be removed from the east side of Fourth in that stretch, with parking only allowed on the west side of the street. "We wanted to try to provide as clear a safe (bike) path as we could," said [Pasco City Planner Dan] Ford. He noted that the city has been working with citizen groups to make Pasco more bike friendly.

Also in the works

- Bike Counter Installation: automated bike counters will be installed on the Pasco side for the bike on- and off-ramps on the I-82 Bridge, thus letting the city develop a data base to monitor the expansion of cycling in the community. Another counter will be located on the Sacajawea Trail, near Wade Park.
- Sidewalks will be added along Road 84, North of Court St.
- An ADA School Crossing will be added on 22nd Avenue, near Rowena Chess Elementary School.
- Traffic Signal Improvements are planned for various locations throughout the city. These are intended to facilitate pedestrian and bike access between intersections.
- The installation of cameras that can serve as detection units at intersections. These units are able to detect bicycles and change the stop lights accordingly.

And there's always more to be done....

We asked Mary about putting a bike lane along Powerline Rd so as to give cyclists an alternative to the busy auto traffic along Burden Rd and Sandifur Parkway. The city is aware of this wish from cyclists, but multiple easements and overlapping jurisdictional control make it a tough one to plan. Another item on

the bike/ped 'wish list' is to put a multi-use path over the Franklin County Irrigation District's underground pressurized canals that run along an east-west line between Argent Rd and I-82. Discussions are being held between the city and the Franklin County Irrigation District but no decision has yet been made. And the city is aware of maintenance needs along the Sacajawea Trail and the I-82 bike path, with plans to address both, although timing for these repairs is uncertain.

Mary's final words about bike/ped progress in Pasco: 'Stay tuned!'