

To:
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fw: Transportation Mailin - Fw: Fairhaven Merchant Petition against closing streets

----- Forwarded by Ted A Carlson/pw/cob on 03/16/2012 01:49 PM -----

From: "Robin Robertson" <robin@bellinghamtennis.com>
To: <klinville@cob.org>, <tcarlson@cob.org>
Cc: <jody@12thstreetshoes.com>, "Bill Geyer" <billgeyer@comcast.net>
Date: 03/16/2012 12:52 PM
Subject: Fairhaven Merchant Petition against closing streets

Dear Madame Mayor & Mr. Carlson,

On behalf of the Old Fairhaven Association and the many workers here in Fairhaven, I am sending to you a copy of the 120 signatures we collected from employees of businesses (plus a couple of outraged residents too) who oppose closing any streets for a pedestrian mall without a complete plan – especially for nearby parking to replace the lost on-street parking. To summarize, the overwhelming question I received when walking the petitions around to Fairhaven businesses was...Are they NUTS? WHY on earth would they close streets when parking is already an issue (not overfilled sidewalks).

I was not able to attend the Bellingham Transportation Commission meeting on Tuesday night to present the information (I was teaching a class here at the Club) and these signed petitions were presented to the Commission by Jodi Finnegan, OFA president and owner of 12th street shoes. She shared with me her perception of the meeting which included her shock that apparently none of the commissioners had asked any of the business owners if they thought closing streets was a beneficial thing. None of the commissioners could answer the question of "what problem does closing the streets solve?" The reality is that when we host events and close streets to do so, it adversely affects almost all regular businesses. Our own business closes on Ski to Sea Sunday because no one can get here – thus we lose money.

I am curious as to the qualifications of the commissioners – it doesn't seem to do anyone any good to have people commenting on plans if they have no real background on the subject. I would hope that the City cares more about its planning process to have real planners – those with planning training, experience, and backgrounds - do the job. The decisions made here can help or hurt how we do business. I hope the City wants to support a vibrant economic area that not only pays taxes to the City, but also employs hundreds, if not thousands, of locals.

Closing streets was not in the draft Fairhaven Urban Village Plan and I don't understand how or why it is even being considered at this point. There have been a handful of property and business owners who have participated through the many years of developing this Fairhaven Urban Village Plan. Many of us feel like no one in the planning departments really take into consideration our comments or that things like the recommendations to consider pedestrian only streets is a bomb somehow being thrown into the process. Most business owners do not have the time or energy for the planning process because they are simply trying to run their own business and that is hard enough.

Now you have the attention of 120 employees in Fairhaven (and I'm sure we would have more if we had more time). What now?

Committed to your Good Health,

Robin Robertson
OFA Planning Committee Chairperson

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Read our blog: [http://bellinghamtennisclub.blogspot.com/\[attachment \"Petition to oppose Transpo Commission resolutions 030512.pdf\" deleted by Heather M Aven/planning/cob\]](http://bellinghamtennisclub.blogspot.com/[attachment \)

Fairhaven Merchants Petition to the Mayor

March 7, 2012

Dear Mayor Linville,

We respectfully submit this petition in opposition to the Bellingham Transportation Commission’s proposed resolutions regarding the following:

“12. Explore best locations for pedestrian-only streets – building upon the experience of closing roads during special events.

13. One possibility to consider – Create a pedestrian-only zone at 10th/Mill to Village Green and around the entire block at 11th to Harris. Special surfaces and access could be designated for deliveries and Village Inn parking.”

We, the undersigned merchants of Fairhaven, care greatly about maintaining and improving the opportunity to operate successful businesses in the district. We cannot support the above resolutions as stand-alone proposals. No one will be well-served by a haphazard plan that suddenly drops pedestrian-only zones into the heart of the business district that already has parking issues.

Before we can in any way consider supporting street closures:

There must be a comprehensive parking-pedestrian-transportation plan that is tied in to the entire Tier One Urban Village plan. If street closures are proposed, then there must be a plan for the displaced parking nearby. No closures until the parking is in place.

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