



City Council Agenda Bill

20092

Bill Number

Subject: Padden Creek Daylighting - 20th Street Permanent Closure, EV-0004

Summary Statement: The Padden Creek Daylighting project will daylight the creek into a natural channel approximately 2,600 feet long of open channel habitat. The City of Bellingham proposes to permanently close the block of 20th Street between Wilson Avenue and Old Fairhaven Parkway. The land will become part of the new creek, riparian corridor and a bioretention swale for stormwater treatment. Permanent closure of this block will eliminate the need for a culvert bridge and assist in the channel placement of the natural watercourse. A public hearing has been scheduled for Monday, September 16, 2013.

Previous Council Action:

Fiscal Impact: Estimated savings of \$350,000 Culvert Bridge is eliminated.

Funding Source: Centennial Clean Water Grant, Pollution Control Revolving Fund Loan, local funds

Attachments: Vicinity Map
Staff Report
Written Comments Received by Staff
Ordinance
City Council Public Hearing Notice - written comment received by Council

Meeting Activity	Meeting Date	Staff Recommendation	Presented By	Time
Public Hearing Council Vote Requested	16-Sep-2013	Pass Ordinance	Ted Carlson, Public Works Director	10

Council Committee:

Agenda Bill Contact:

Craig Mueller, P.E. 360-778-7922

Committee Actions:

Reviewed By	Initials	Date
Ted Carlson, PW Director	TAC	9/10/13
Legal Mayor	MMS KL/DK	9/10/13 9/10/13

Council Action:



Padden Creek Daylighting 20th Street Closure Vicinity Map



Staff Report
20th Street Permanent Closure Between
Wilson Avenue and Old Fairhaven Parkway
Padden Creek Daylighting - EV-0004

City Council Hearing Date: September 16, 2013

Staff: Ted Carlson, Public Works Director
Craig Mueller, P.E., Project Engineer

Purpose:

Consideration of closing 20th Street between Wilson Avenue and Old Fairhaven Parkway to traffic in conjunction with the Padden Creek Daylighting Project.

Background:

Padden Creek is a perennial stream in the southerly portion of Bellingham. In the 1890's, a portion of the creek was enclosed in a 2,600-foot-long tunnel. The tunnel cross section is 4 feet by 6 feet and is egg shaped. The tunnel contributes to the degradation of Padden Creek's water quality by eliminating natural riparian buffers, the stream's interconnection to interflow and groundwater, and the stream's natural morphology and biological integrity as well as acting as a barrier to fish passage. Various species of fish, including steelhead, cutthroat trout, chinook salmon, coho salmon and chum salmon utilize Padden Creek. The daylighted channel will also serve as a continuous wildlife corridor through the residential area.

The project will daylight the creek into a natural channel approximately 2,600 feet long of open channel habitat and will leave the tunnel intact to protect the new channel from high erosive flows and allow the project to alleviate flooding upstream during extreme flow conditions. WSDOT is currently undertaking construction of the future creek crossing at SR11 (Old Fairhaven Parkway) with a bridge and temporarily closing this block of 20th Street due to placement of a traffic by-pass around the construction zone.

Permanent closure of this block of 20th Street will aid in the channel placement leaving a natural watercourse in place of a culvert bridge.

Review:

There are several issues that need to be examined when determining whether 20th Street should be closed to vehicular traffic between Wilson Avenue and Old Fairhaven Parkway.

Traffic Volumes

As 20th Street is a residential street, specific vehicle count information is not available, however, information is available for the surrounding principal and secondary routes. Recent traffic volume counts for this area show 24th Street in the block north of Old Fairhaven Parkway having 2,500 vehicles per day. Donovan Avenue to the north carries a volume of 1,400 vehicles per day, and 21st Street north of Donovan Avenue shows a traffic volume of 2,400 vehicles per day. For comparison, Old Fairhaven Parkway has a volume of 13,200 vehicles per day.

In addition to residential traffic, 24th Street, Donovan Avenue and 21st Street all carry considerable student and staff traffic as they are connections to Western Washington University, which increases their traffic volumes. 20th Street is not a direct collector route to the University, but could be used to access 21st Street from Old Fairhaven Parkway. However, traffic going to and from the interstate would logically use 24th Street or 22nd Street to access 21st Street.

Based on the available data from surrounding streets, a fair traffic volume estimate would be less than 1,000 vehicles per day utilizing 20th Street. 20th Street is a primary route from Old Fairhaven Parkway to approximately 41 residential homes.

Neighborhood Plan

The Happy Valley Neighborhood Plan (Plan) specifically addresses circulation and multi-modal traffic on neighborhood streets as well as the connection with the Padden Creek Daylighting project. The following goals and policies from the Plan are relevant to the closure of 20th Street.

Natural Areas, Parks, and Trails

Happy Valley Goal 1, page 5 - Provide, maintain, and enhance natural open space in the neighborhood.

Happy Valley Policy 9, page 8 - Wetlands should continue to be preserved, acquired, and enhanced in order to protect the many functions they serve, including wildlife habitat.

Happy Valley Policy 10, page 8 - The tunnel and other blockages to fish passage on Padden and Connelly Creeks should be targeted for correction as financial resources become available. If daylighting Padden Creek occurs, strict adherence to stream setbacks and floodplain

regulations are necessary for new development to protect resources and prevent flood damage.

Circulation

Happy Valley Goal 2, page 21 - Happy Valley Neighborhood will preserve its residential character and enhance its quality by discouraging through traffic and automobile usage on residential streets and encouraging a development pattern that is pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly.

Happy Valley Policy 27, page 30 - In low density areas, street improvements should focus on improving pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Utilities

Happy Valley Policy 41, page 36 - Identify specific areas in the neighborhood where drainage improvements are needed and find a funding source for them. Natural drainages such as Mill Creek west of Connelly Creek should be retained wherever possible, recognizing their stormwater treatment functions and importance to the neighborhood.

Happy Valley Policy 42, page 37 - Adopt new strategies that improve the way stormwater is managed and reduce impervious surfaces as a preventive measure. Identify lands that may be jointly purchased and developed for storm-water treatment purposes.

Cost

While cost will not be the overriding factor in analyzing the impacts closing 20th Street will have to the community, it is something that must be addressed as it has implications for the Padden Creek Daylighting project budget which is comprised of public funds. Should 20th Street remain open to vehicular traffic, a fish-passable culvert bridge would need to be constructed. A similar culvert bridge is proposed to be built at 22nd Street as part of the project. The dimensions of the culvert are 22 feet wide by 4 feet tall by 75 feet long with an estimated construction cost of \$238,000 based on the preliminary construction cost estimate. It can be assumed that the cost of a culvert bridge at 20th Street would be similar.

In addition to the culvert bridge, the sidewalk pedestrian curb ramps at the intersection with Old Fairhaven Parkway would be required to be brought to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Due to the slope of 20th Street, these ramps would be fairly significant and expensive. Should 20th Street be closed, the sidewalk along the

north side of Old Fairhaven Parkway would be extended across the 20th Street right of way, eliminating the need for expensive ramps. A conservative estimate for all-inclusive additional costs for 20th Street to remain open to vehicular traffic would be approximately \$350,000.

Safety

Past safety at the intersection of Old Fairhaven Parkway and 20th Street is not a significant consideration for closing 20th Street. In the past nine years, there has been only one accident recorded at the intersection. However, in conjunction with the Padden Creek Daylighting Project, WSDOT is building a bridge on Old Fairhaven Parkway to the west of the 20th Street intersection. The bridge guardrails may restrict sight distance for vehicles turning onto Old Fairhaven Parkway due to the slope of 20th Street.

The Bellingham Fire Department sees minimal impacts to response times for emergency vehicles. Fire and ambulance services would primarily respond from Station #2, which is located off of Harris Avenue, or would respond from their previous call, which could be anywhere in the area.

Public Input:

In preparation of the discussion to close 20th Street to vehicular traffic, an open house was held on June 4, 2013 to present the design to date to the community and to solicit comments and feedback about the design. Forty-one people were in attendance. In addition, 137 postcards were sent on August 20, 2013 to all property owners who are within a 500 foot distance from any portion of the Daylighting project, requesting feedback specifically on the 20th Street closure. As of September 3, 2013, twelve comments were received. Of those twelve, six were in favor of the closure, four were against it, and two requested additional information. The comments received are attached to this staff report.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

20th Street between Wilson Avenue and Old Fairhaven Parkway is a lightly used residential street that is used as a primary access to approximately 41 residential properties. Other access options to Old Fairhaven Parkway would route traffic less than ¼ mile to 22nd Street or to Donovan Avenue.

The closure of 20th Street to aid in the Padden Creek Daylighting Project is within the goals of the written Happy Valley Neighborhood Plan and the desires of the residents. The plan emphasis is on environmental preservation and expansion of habitat and

wetlands as well as stressing mode shift from vehicular transportation to bicycling, walking and public transit.

Where collisions are currently rare at this intersection, a reduction in sight distance from the guardrails of the new bridge may decrease the safety of this intersection. Maintaining 20th Street as it is now, will also substantially add to the cost of the Daylighting project.

Public Comment Tracker - Road Closure of 20th Street
Padden Creek Daylighting, EV-0004

Date	Method of Contact	Name	Contact Information	Public Comment	Yes Closure	No Closure
6/4/2013	Open House Comment Form	John Tuxill	john_tuxill@yahoo.com	I am strongly supportive of the proposed permanent closure of 20th Street at the junction with Old Fairhaven Parkway. I exit from 20th Street onto the Parkway all the time, and have always felt it is a relatively hazardous intersection due to poor visibility both east and west, especially given the speed of traffic oncoming on the Parkway. I am very concerned that railings and other structures associated with the new bridge over the creek on the Parkway would further reduce visibility looking west, leading to an even more hazardous intersection. Closing 20th Street avoids that hazard, and also adds many other amenity benefits for the neighborhood. I support a pedestrian/bicycle bridge at the 20th St. but also support the closure of 20th Street even if a pedestrian bridge is not built there.	1	
6/4/2013	Open House Comment Form	Analiiese Burns	analiiese@gmail.com	Thank you!! Re: 20th St. Closure - This street is heavily used by pedestrian & bicyclists, esp. those going to the neighborhood elementary schools. If you close to vehicles: 1. I strongly support a pedestrian/bike walkway on 20th, 2. I strongly urge you to consider moving lighted x-walk to 20th St=much higher use @ this location, 3. You might want to check sight distance at 22nd St. Intersection. To me, it seems more difficult to see when pulling out to Fairhaven Pkwy.	1	
6/4/2013	Open House Comment Form	Jule Dugger	girlnumber20@hotmail.com	I commute to work and run errands regularly by bicycle, often with a child aboard. I am pleased to hear that 20th St is being considered for a bicycle/pedestrian path with no access for cars over Old Fairhaven Parkway. As a bicyclist myself, I know that bike paths with few cars are valuable, and as a resident of 20th St., I know how important the street is for bicyclists and commuters travelling between WWU and the apartment complexes on the far side of the parkway, or between Happy Valley and Fairhaven Middle School. Please continue to encourage and plan for safe bicycle pedestrian routes!	1	
6/4/2013	Open House Comment Form	Joe and Anna Deeny	joe@ajdeeny.com	Put a lighted crosswalk across Old Fairhaven Parkway at 20th Street and improve/widen/add sidewalks along 24th Str from Old Fairhaven Parkway to Donovan.		
6/4/2013	Open House Comment Form	unsigned	No contact given	I'm generally in favor of closing streets to cars (20th) and allowing dedicated ped/bike routes. If there are no major downsides to closing 20th St., Then commit to it and make it happen!	1	

Public Comment Tracker - Road Closure of 20th Street
Padden Creek Daylighting, EV-0004

Date	Method of Contact	Name	Contact Information	Public Comment	Yes Closure	No Closure
8/30/2013	Mail	Patricia Combs Blake	360-676-0799	I would have no objection to the closure of 20th Street between Old Fairhaven Pkwy. And Wilson Avenue, PROVIDED that the street area north of Padden Creek was designated as auxillary parking for the "Parkway Gardens" development. The City has allowed developers to cram 12 houses, plus 12 garages, into a one block area. So far all the new residents have two or more vehicles with only one parking space at their house. Street parking on Wilson Avenue is already at a premium and will only get worse as more houses are occupied. Cutting the area off from access to the Parkway seems really unfair to a neighborhood who has had to endure two years of construction chaos and the loss of our formerly peaceful neighborhood.	1	
9/1/2013	e-mail	Clay Butler	butlers@juno.com	Closure of this section of 20th Street north of the Parkway will cut an important police, fire department and emergency service access from the Parkway to residents living north of the Parkway, including new residents of the 12-unit housing development currently under construction. This closure also eliminates a <u>quick</u> and <u>direct</u> route from the Harris Street firehouse to residents in the South Neighborhood, including the many residents of Padden Creek and Fairhaven Park apartment complexes. It is interesting to me that the City would even entertain such a closure when to City has always made providing police, fire and/or emergency services a top priority. Hence, I am opposed to the proposed closure of 20th Street.		1
9/3/2013	e-mail	Rose Nerad	rosebud@nas.com	Please don't permanently close 20th street. I live at 1710 Wilson. Those 12 new houses at that corner are going to have about 24 cars when it is done being built and I don't want them coming my direction to get to the parkway. Why are you putting this much money into the project and then get cheap at the end and cause these blockages. I don't understand the logic here.		1
8/30/2013	e-mail	Shawna Frolich	shana@craigkallen.com	I am in receipt of your letter regarding the proposed closure of 20th Street. I am not against the closure, but I do however have concerns. Concerns that I have been meaning to write to the city about already. I live at 1706 22nd Street and the speed of cars already coming down our street is a concern. There have been many times that I have almost been hit just crossing the street to my mail box. The cars turn off Fairhaven Parkway and "gas" it. I propose that if you are going to increase traffic on our street, which will increase the number of speeding cars, that you install speed bumps to slow traffic down. There are many people, including children, not to mention my disabled neighbor that use our street to walk to the nearby bus stops, and without sidewalks and with increased speeding traffic its just a matter of time before someone gets hit.		
8/29/2013	e-mail	Rob Buchholz	rbwood37@msn.com	This is one vote in favor of permanent closure of 20th between Wilson & the parkway. I was a member of the original Padden Creek Alliance and closing 20th in order to eliminate all culverts was always part of the daylighting plan.	1	

Public Comment Tracker - Road Closure of 20th Street
Padden Creek Daylighting, EV-0004

Date	Method of Contact	Name	Contact Information	Public Comment	Yes Closure	No Closure
8/22/2013	phone	Rachel Leedy		Closure of 20th Street would be inconvenient as this is their primary access to their home. She is opposed to the closure as it will mean an additional 3 blocks to access Old Fairhaven Parkway. She is in favor of the project, but not of the closure.		1
8/21/2013	e-mail	Leslie Conton	lesconton@comcast.net	<p>When the initial community hearings were had on the development at 20th St. and Old Fairhaven Pkwy, we were assured that 20th St. would remain open for traffic from that complex as access to Old Fairhaven Pkwy. We residents on Wilson St. bordering that complex expressed concern about the possibility of increased traffic from the complex adding noise, pollution, danger to children and pets, etc. on our formerly quiet street. The pedestrian pathway on the West side was supposed to remain intact (which it sort-of has) and without traffic (which it hasn't) , and a 20th Street exit would accomodate that traffic. As soon as I saw where they were constructing the driveways, I wondered what the hell had happened? So I was not surprised, but was quite disappointed, to hear at the public hearing about the daylighting of Padden Creek, at the Fairhaven Library a month or so ago, that suddenly, without any notice, 20th St. was now to become closed and the condo complex traffic would now be forced onto 19th St and 20th Streets between Wilson and Donovan. Who agreed to that? it was a done deal and we were never consulted about the change or the reasons for it. I am fully in support of the daylighting of the creek, have advocated for that for many years, and if closing that block is truly necessary, then so be it. But I am disappointed in the utter lack of communication, and perhaps strategic prevarication, that initially occurred in order to push that condo development through. Why hold a hearing if you don't intend to listen or act on community input? The other conundrum is WHY the pedestrian bridge is placed at 20th St when there is already a crossing one block West, where the trails meets the road and where most pedestrians cross. When someone at the Fairhaven Library meeting suggested this, one official said, "Great idea, that's the kind of creative suggestion we need," and the next day the building of the bridge began right where you proposed it. So much for creative suggestions and asking for input with sufficient time to amend your plans. Attending public hearings feels a bit like a farce; you don't really want creative input; it's already way too late for that...the project is already a done deal...but sometimes one learns startling facts about how business is actually done in this city. I don't fault you, personally, of course...and thought you did a good job disseminating information at the Fairhaven Library "hearing." I guess I always thought a "hearing" was for the officials to hear and consider the public's opinion prior to instigating a project, but now I understand it's the venue for us to hear about your done deals.</p>		1

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM RELATING TO THE PERMANENT CLOSURE OF 20TH STREET FROM WILSON AVENUE TO OLD FAIRHAVEN PARKWAY TO FACILITATE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PADDEN CREEK DAYLIGHTING PROJECT.

WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham is nearing the construction phase in its Padden Creek Daylighting Project, which will create a natural surface stream with a riparian buffer in place of an existing underground tunnel between 22nd Street and 18th Street along Old Fairhaven Parkway; and

WHEREAS, construction of the Padden Creek Daylighting Project will result in Padden Creek flowing through a segment of 20th Street, specifically from Wilson Avenue to Old Fairhaven Parkway, and therefore requires this segment of 20th Street to be permanently closed to motor vehicle traffic; and

WHEREAS, the segment of 20th Street proposed to be closed is a City street located entirely within a City-controlled public right-of-way; and

WHEREAS, the Padden Creek Daylighting Project is a priority for the City; and

WHEREAS, the Padden Creek Daylighting Project is a priority as described in the Happy Valley Neighborhood Plan; and

WHEREAS, City Council held a public hearing on the proposed permanent closure of 20th Street from Wilson Avenue to Old Fairhaven Parkway at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 16, 2013; and

WHEREAS, City Council has determined that the proposed permanent closure of 20th Street from Wilson Avenue to Old Fairhaven Parkway to facilitate construction of the Padden Creek Daylighting Project is in the best interest of the City and its citizens.

NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM DOES HEREBY ORDAIN:

To facilitate construction of the Padden Creek Daylighting Project, 20th Street between Wilson Avenue and Old Fairhaven Parkway will be permanently closed to motor vehicle traffic, effective 15 days after final passage of this ordinance.

PASSED by the Council this _____ day of _____, 2013.

Council President

City of Bellingham
City Attorney
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, Washington 98225
360-778-8270

APPROVED by me this _____ day of _____, 2013.

Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Office of the City Attorney

Published:



BELLINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, Washington 98225

Telephone (360) 778-8200 Fax (360)778-8101

Email: ccmail@cob.org Website: www.cob.org

BELLINGHAM CITY COUNCIL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Bellingham City Council will hold a public hearing on, **Monday, September 16, 2013 @ 7:00 PM**, or as soon thereafter as possible, in the **City Council Chambers, City Hall, 210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, Washington**, to take public comment on the following:

PERMANENT CLOSURE OF 20TH STREET BETWEEN WILSON AVENUE AND OLD FAIRHAVEN PARKWAY. THE LAND WILL BECOME PART OF A NEW CREEK RIPARIAN CORRIDOR AND BIORETENTION SWALE FOR STORMWATER TREATMENT.

Detailed information can be found at:

<http://www.cob.org/government/departments/pw/projects/padden-creek-daylighting.aspx>

Staff Contact: Craig Mueller, P.E., Project Engineer. City of Bellingham Public Works Department, 210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, WA 98225. (360) 778-7922. camueller@cob.org .

Anyone wishing to comment on this topic is invited to attend; or if unable to attend, to send your comments, in writing to the Council Office, 210 Lottie Street, or email to ccmail@cob.org, or fax to 778-8101, to be received prior to 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, September 11, to be included in the agenda packet. Comment received after that time will be distributed to Council but not included in the published meeting materials.

FOR OUR CITIZENS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, the Council Chambers is fully accessible. Elevator access to the second floor is available at City Hall's west entrance. Hearing assistance is available and a receiver may be checked out through the clerk prior to the evening session. For additional accommodations, persons are asked to contact the Legislative Assistant at 778-8200 in advance of the meeting. Thank you.

Publication date: Friday, September 6, 2013

JACK WEISS
Council Member
1st Ward
738-2103
JWeiss@cob.org

GENE KNUTSON
Council Member
2nd Ward
734-4686
GKnutson@cob.org

CATHY LEHMAN
Council Member
3rd Ward
224-8877
CLehman@cob.org

STAN SNAPP
Council Member
4th Ward
305-0607
SSnapp@cob.org

TERRY BORNEMANN
Council Member
5th Ward
305-0606
TBornemann@cob.org

MICHAEL LILLIQUIST
Council Member
6th Ward
920-1583
MLilliquist@cob.org

SETH FLEETWOOD
Council Member
At Large
671-3299
SFleetwood@cob.org

Walker, J Lynne L.

From: John Tuxill <johntuxill@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2013 11:23 PM
To: CC - Shared Department
Cc: Mueller, Craig A.
Subject: proposed permanent closure of 20th St between Wilson and Old Fairhaven Parkway

Dear City Officials,

I would like to express my strong support for the permanent closure of 20th Street between Wilson Ave. and Old Fairhaven Parkway. As a resident of the neighborhood, I can testify to the dramatic decrease in through traffic since the construction-related closure of 20th St. last spring. With fewer cars, the neighborhood is much quieter, making for a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and especially safer conditions for children when they are outdoors. The transformation of the 20th St. block in question will facilitate the restoration of a more natural riparian corridor and add valuable greenspace to the neighborhood. Overall, I view the permanent closure of 20th Street as a very positive development that supports the long-term master plan for the neighborhood.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Best regards,

John Tuxill
1604 20th St.
Bellingham, WA 98225