



MEMORANDUM

TO: BELLINGHAM PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

FROM: GINA AUSTIN, PARK PROJECT ENGINEER

CC: NICOLE OLIVER, PARK DIRECTOR; LAINE POTTER, PARK DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

SUBJECT: WHATCOM FALLS PARK TRESTLE INTERPRETIVE SIGN

DATE: APRIL 24, 2024

A permit condition for the Whatcom Falls Trestle Demolition project (permit # SEPA 2023-001) requires the installation of an interpretive sign to summarize the history of the railroad trestle and its local and regional significance.

Remnants of the abandoned railroad trestle were removed in September of 2023 for the safety of trail users and to improve water quality in Whatcom Creek. The project site is located along Whatcom Creek, just west of the intersection of Electric Avenue and Ohio Street, and north of the Derby Pond. All work is complete, except for the installation of an interpretive sign.

Park staff consulted with staff from the Whatcom Museum, Planning and Community Development Department, and Public Works Natural Resources Division to develop an interpretive sign for the trestle. Planning staff also assisted Parks with sending the sign to the Lummi Nation and Nooksack tribes for review and input.

Sign regulations are generally governed by Bellingham Municipal Code 20.12.040 with references to the Bellingham Arts Commission BMC 2.36.50. However, traffic, directional and wayfinding signs are listed as exempt from the code. The Bellingham Arts Commission (BAC) also provides an exemption for “freestanding markers” that are preapproved by the Parks and Recreation Board (BAC 2.36.050 D.2). Interpretive signs are categorized by BAC Planning staff as “free standing markers.”

More information about the project may be found at the City of Bellingham project page as follows: <https://cob.org/project/whatcom-creek-trail-trestle-demolition>