

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for May 12, 2021.

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Jefferson County Public Health reported one new COVID-19 case yesterday, making a total of four new cases so far this week. There are currently 9 cases in active isolation 69 test results still pending. The total number of cases since the start of the pandemic is at 406.

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The city council participated in a workshop meeting on Monday night where staff updated them on several large, ongoing projects. Public works staff Steve King and Laura Parsons presented the final design possibilities for the Discovery Road construction project. Discovery Road is one of two routes for drivers to come in or out of Port Townsend. In anticipation of future traffic volumes increasing, the city public works department has secured state and federal grant funds to create bicycle and pedestrian space on Discovery Road between the Rainier Street roundabout and Salish Coast Elementary School. Public works inspector Scott Studeman presented several design choices for the project – each of the designs envisioning a different set-up for the bike lane and pedestrian walkway. He also presented results from a citizen survey and outreach program that city staff embarked upon in April. Results from that, as well as from the stakeholder meetings, showed that the preferred designs included both a two-way bike lane, and sidewalks on both sides of the street. The city council will be making the final decision on the design for the project at their May 17 meeting. Final design and permitting for the project will take place this summer and fall, and construction is expected to begin in March of 2022.

The budget for this project is just over 5.3 million dollars. The city received \$435,000 in federal funding, \$1.4 million from Washington's Department of Transportation, and in November of 2020 the city was awarded a Transportation Improvement Board grant for \$2.6 million. Combined with city match funds, this makes the project budget large enough for public works to repave that section of the street in addition to adding sidewalks and bike lanes. To learn more about the project, go to the city's Engage PT site (<https://cityofpt.us/engagept/page/infrastructure>).

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King also updated the city council on the ongoing goal to cut the city's street lighting budget by one third. According to King, the city received a grant to replace all of the street lights in Port Townsend with LED bulbs. Right now, there are close to 600 street lights in Port Townsend. The city pays the PUD \$17.25 per month for each light. By changing to LED lights, the PUD has agreed to charge only \$9.81 per light per month. Not only will the switch to LEDs save energy and money, but it will also give the city the opportunity to dim the lights. In addition to wanting to save money, King said the city is also hoping to participate in the Dark Skies Initiative (<https://www.darksky.org/>). Dark Skies is a global initiative to preserve the night sky through the implementation and enforcement of quality lighting policies and dark-sky education. Cities can apply to be designated as a Dark Sky Community, by altering the lighting policies in town, including putting shields around street lamps and limiting the number of street lamps in town. King said the public works department is hoping the city council will create a new street lights policy that will reduce the number of street lights in Port Townsend and the intensity of the street lights. He said he hopes for this to be a public conversation – as removing street lights may prompt concern from residents about safety for pedestrians walking at night. The city council will be continuing the conversation on street lights at the May 17 council meeting, and city staff plans to hold stakeholder meetings about the issue and do community outreach.

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You can always learn more about city projects at the Engage PT site (<https://cityofpt.us/engagept/page/infrastructure>). To give public comment on an issue at a city council meeting, email [publiccomment@cityofpt.us](mailto:publiccomment@cityofpt.us) with your comment at least one hour before the meeting. You can also get involved in city business by joining a committee. The following Boards and Commissions have current and upcoming vacancies:

- Arts Commission
- Historic Preservation Committee
- Library Advisory Board
- Lodging Tax Advisory Committee
- Parks, Recreation and Tree Advisory Board
- Planning Commission
- Contact the city clerk's office for more information.

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And that's it for today's local news. KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). I'm Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.