
Statement of Problem
Lack of Progress on Bicycling Support by City of Olympia

For several years, the City of Olympia has been doing too little to facilitate active transportation. The greatest tangible evidence of this is that we will fail to meet our own 20-Year Bicycle Facilities Plan (adopted in 1997 and slated to be complete in 2016). The Olympia Planning Commission brought this to Council's attention in 2009; however, no constructive response has resulted. Instead, the City has reduced the amount of discretionary spending on cycling from \$100,000 per year to zero for the last several years.

The Concerns We Have:

We are not implementing our comprehensive plan goals, which emphasize bicycle and pedestrian transportation over vehicle travel.

The existing Comprehensive Plan and draft "Imagine Olympia" Plan contain extensive references to a bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly community. While Olympia made great progress between 1997 and 2009, the City of Olympia is currently doing too little to achieve these community desires and expectations. We will fail to meet our own Comprehensive Plan goals and policies, and our bicycle and pedestrian master plan objectives.

We are not being honest with our citizens as we put facilities in out years, which remain in out years even as the years advance.

For example, in three of the past four Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) budgets, the amount of funding for bicycle facilities has been zero in Year 1 while "out years" have shown expected funding. In 2012 a meager \$50,000 was included. For 2014, the City Manager's proposed CFP has no Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects. These documents show "out year" funding, but at a dramatically lower level than prior to 2010. This representation of future funding would reasonably lead citizens to expect eventual return to at least modest levels of funding for bicycle infrastructure. However, this funding continues to be pushed out beyond reach even as the years roll forward.

We don't have a way to assess where we are, and clearly prioritize or address easy fixes, except as part of motor vehicle projects, or ad-hoc projects at the staff level. In addition to the adopted bicycle and pedestrian facilities plans, there are also sometimes simple projects that can improve connectivity for both modes, but we do not have a plan in place, or funding, to make progress on quick, simple projects. In the past, the City funded bicycle "spot improvements" under the guidance of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). We also do not have a mechanism to revisit bicycle and pedestrian plans to assess progress and reprioritize.

Adopted comprehensive plan policies and city code are not being followed as buildings are constructed. Recent inventory work regarding bicycle parking code compliance for new construction has shown a continuing lack of attention by City staff to enforce requirements for important bicycle facilities at businesses, offices, and apartments.

What the City Council Needs to Do: The Council should renew Olympia's commitment to bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure as an important element in local and regional transportation planning by ensuring the following steps happen.

1. **Restore annual funding for non-motorized CFP Programs:** Bicycle Facilities (Program #0200), Pedestrian Crossing Improvements (Program #0122) and Sidewalk Construction (Program #0208). Restore CIP funding in the CFP for 2014 for bicycle projects to at least the \$100,000 per year level that was in the CFP from 1996 to 2009—ideally, indexed for inflation since 1996. This project funding description should include a provision that funds may be used for moving forward on small, easily achieved objectives, as identified by BPAC. This funding must be included in the 2014 year of the CFP, along with anticipated grant proceeds. These programs have been waiting a long time and, as the economy improves, should be in the first round of funding increases.
2. **Complete important bikeways and non-motorized routes in our *current* plans,** such as the West Bay Trail, which hasn't seen any progress in *almost ten years*.
3. **Identify and pursue other easy wins for active transportation** with completion of bikeways, important crossings and other easily achieved objectives, such as extending a bike lane on State Street to the Transit Center. Many of these opportunities have presented themselves since the adoption of both non-motorized transportation master plans and some, like neighborhood pathways, are being implemented. A good many are being missed; they should be identified and acted on.
4. **Council should emphasize to City staff that biking and walking are important,** and that objectives like project completion and inspection, accessibility, bicycle parking code enforcement in new construction, and end-of-trip facilities need attention and support.

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