

## Olympia Planning Commission

---

October 1, 2018

Olympia City Council  
PO Box 1967  
Olympia, WA 98507

Dear Mayor Selby and City Council Members:

The Olympia Planning Commission (OPC) is pleased to report on its annual review of the City of Olympia's 2019-2024 Draft Capital Facilities Plan and Financial Plan (Draft CFP). We commend City staff for producing a very well-organized document. We particularly like how clearly and thoroughly the first section describes the City's capital planning process and answers the many questions the public may have about financial planning for capital facilities.

All City departments, except for Public Works, which is currently working on its Transportation Master Plan, have produced plans that describe the projects they will be completing over a 20-year period to implement the Comprehensive Plan's policies and goals for their areas. These master plans also describe the financial strategies the departments will be pursuing to fund identified projects. These plans provide the strategic links between the Comprehensive Plan and the 6-year Capital Facilities Plans, which identify near-term projects.

The City's planning and budgeting processes are becoming well integrated, which makes the project detail even more transparent than in past years. We also note that the Draft CFP is now known as Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan, which underscores that it is derived from the Comprehensive Plan and designed to be consistent with it. We concur that projects identified in the CFP are consistent with Comprehensive Plan goals and policies.

OPC held a public hearing on the Draft CFP on September 17, 2018 and received no comment.

### **Parks, Arts and Recreation**

The Parks Department has completed many of its high priority projects from last year, including installation of a new sheet-pile bulkhead along Water Street and Fourth Avenue, replacement of old Priest Point Park facilities, and Isthmus Park interim improvements.

[Note: One item that was not clear is the relationship between the "West Bay Park Master Plan" and Stevens Field Ballfield improvements on page 34. A West Bay Trail alignment between West Bay Park and Deschutes Parkway to the South is noted on p. 46 with funding proposed in 2020.]

[Note: the following section was submitted by Joel Baxter for discussion with the Commission.]

*"One small concern identified in the Parks, Arts and Recreation Projects section is the Downtown Park Analysis under Community Park Development. While the \$30,000 earmarked for the analysis is very small in relation to the overall cost of the Capital Facilities Plan, the recent closure of Artesian Commons Park,*

due to frequent complaints of illicit activity occurring at the park and reported threats to park staff, may provide reason to delay funding this portion of the project. The Key Financial Principles found in the introduction portion of the CFP states "If the city cannot deliver a service well, the service will not be provided at all."

*"The commission recognizes the city's comprehensive plan has set target goals for adding additional parks everyone in the community can enjoy. However, given the difficulty the city has encountered in making Artesian Commons, downtown, a safe and welcoming place for all, perhaps the money set aside to provide analysis for adding additional downtown parks should be spent on finding a long-term solution to keeping its existing parks open and accessible to all Olympia residents. We urge you to consider delaying this portion of the recommendation, until this outcome can be consistently achieved."*

[My initial thoughts: Artesian Commons was an "accidental park." Something will need to be done with the now-closed Commons. The first question is whether it should remain a park "for all" or serve some other purpose, such as infill development. If it remains a park for all, then re-development will be needed at some point, as it's currently designed for the street-dependent population. The analysis as to downtown park needs (which, in my opinion, would be focused on "pocket parks" of a quarter block or so in size on existing City-owned surface parking lots), is to provide some rationale for the types of park or park-like amenities that would benefit downtown. Additionally, it appears there are no plans to create a new day-use facility downtown for the homeless. It appears the City is focusing instead on day- and night-use encampments.]

On page 38, the Parks Department notes that in order to meet existing Level of Service standards, it needs to increase the acreage and development of neighborhood parks and community parks – we are slightly below our LOS ratios – but does not note how much increase will be needed to meet the needs of the City's future population in 2034. While the ratio of open space to population appears adequate for now, the department notes that the Open Space inventory will need to be substantially increased to meet future needs.

In 2019, the Parks Department proposes to pay off the last installment of \$1 million owed for the acquisition of the Bentrige (LBA Woods) land acquisition, and to spend an additional \$11 million on acquiring additional lands in the subsequent five years. In 2016, the City Council approved the sale of \$10 million in Bond Anticipation Notes to pay for acquisitions. Voted and Non-Voted Utility Tax funds will be used to pay for the balance of funding needed for land acquisitions. We find this approach to be compliant with the Comprehensive Plan.

Although one section of Percival Landing has been replaced, no other sections are proposed for replacement at this time. The Parks Department proposes instead to continue annual inspections and to make any needed repairs in 2020. The CFP notes that maintenance reserve funds have been set aside in 2016, 2017, and 2018, and that these will be added to additional reserve funds collected in the next six years to make repairs identified in the Five-Year In-Depth Assessment. The source of these new reserve funds is the Olympia Metropolitan Parks District. **We suggest noting when the next Five-year In-Depth Assessment will take place and to schedule the scoping of Phase II of Percival Landing Replacement no later than 2020.** (p.49)

## **Transportation**

Transportation Master Plan (in development)

Sidewalks

## **General Capital Facilities**

## **Drinking Water**

## **Summary**

The Olympia Planning Commission appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments and recommendations on the 2019-2024 Draft Capital Facilities and Financial Plan. We hope the Council finds them useful in their budget deliberations. We will gladly answer any questions that may arise from this letter.

We also would like to express our appreciation for the work of all those who helped develop the Draft CFP. Many thanks to the members of the OPC's Finance Sub-committee, comprised of Joel Baxter, Rad Cunningham, Candis Millar, and Carole Richmond, as well as to Senior Planner Stacey Ray, who provided excellent support and to the City's department staff who generously provided of their time to answer questions.

Sincerely,

Rad Cunningham, Chair

Carole Richmond, Vice-Chair