

MEMORANDUM

TO: Olympia City Council

FROM: Anne Fritzel and Elaine Nelson, Co-Chairs
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

DATE:

SUBJECT: *Capital Facilities Plan* Comments

At our September 28, 2011 meeting, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) reviewed the Transportation Chapter of the preliminary *Capital Facilities Plan* (CFP) for 2012-2017.

We appreciate that there are numerous programs that support multimodal transportation in the proposed CFP, the majority plan to significantly leverage available CIP funding with grants from state and federal sources. We appreciate that this year's CFP reflects a continued emphasis on providing for the mobility of people and goods through supporting bus travel, bicycling, and walking. We value the recognition that providing the necessary infrastructure for these modes is a key element in encouraging people to use them. We like the priority on smart transit corridors, sidewalk construction, accessibility, and reconstruction of streets that have been significant barriers to the multimodal transportation system with new sidewalks and bike lanes.

We would like to voice special support for the new Neighborhood Pathways Program. This program has been a long time coming, and provides a way for Olympia to respond to neighborhood desires for public pathway improvements. A pilot program has been in place that allowed neighborhood groups to clear and plant two connections between neighborhoods. At this time, BPAC is recommending re-allocating existing pedestrian funding toward this program to allow this new program to move forward.

It seems that a majority of goals in the comprehensive plan are geared toward multi-modal transportation. We believe CFP funding should reflect the priorities that are evident in the comprehensive plan goals and policies. We have the following specific comments:

- At the current rate of funding, it is difficult to complete even one inexpensive project in the six-year period in most of the bike and pedestrian programs. The twenty-year sidewalk and bicycle facility plans are already constrained by addressing only arterial and collector streets. BPAC feels there should be more dedicated effort and funding to advance these programs which are cornerstones of the comprehensive plan.
- We note there is a huge investment projected for traffic signals downtown, which we perceive to serve primarily automobile traffic. We think this investment, may be out of

balance with the priority the comprehensive plan places on walking, bicycling and using transit in this area. We urge the City to explore other low cost improvements to these intersections that more directly meet comprehensive plan goals, specifically reducing dependence on automobile use. BPAC would be happy to be involved in this process.

- Year after year we have requested increased funding for the Pedestrian Crossing Improvement Program. Pedestrian crossing improvements encourage more people to make short walking trips by mitigating the physical and psychological barriers associated with the street crossings that connect sidewalks and public pathways. Currently the program is funded at \$30,000 or \$50,000 in alternating years. We are fortunate this year that the limited funding leveraged significant grant funding to accomplish a major crossing this year. As in past years, BPAC suggests raising funding to \$100,000 per year, every year. Increased funding would allow crossing improvements to be done on a regular basis, as well as when other street work is being done.

BPAC acknowledges the difficulty of determining budget priorities in tight economic times. As the City faces increasingly limited resources, so do our residents in their private and household budgeting. Many Olympia residents are using lower-cost forms of transportation, including biking, walking and transit for both commute and non-commute trips. Investing in support for these modes also supports state and local environmental and health goals. The Growth Management Act and the Olympia Comprehensive Plan both call for reducing the impacts of automobile use, promoting density and encouraging walking. Safe street crossings are fundamental to achieving livability in urban densities.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our recommendations in the course of your CFP review process. Please feel free to contact Anne Fritzel by telephone at 360-753-9606 or bicyclegoddess@gmail.com or Elaine Nelson at bpac@elainenelson.org if you have questions or comments.

AAF:

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cc: Kerry Tarullo
BPAC Members