



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Buxbaum and Members of the Olympia City Council
FROM: Clark Gilman, Chair, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
DATE: October 13, 2015
SUBJECT: 2016 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan and Bicycle/Pedestrian Priorities

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide comment and input from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) on the 2016 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan (CFP).

Executive Summary:

1. The BPAC applauds the work to consolidate the CFP and create a more accessible document.
2. The \$100,000 investment in the Bike Improvements Program will keep us moving forward.
3. As the \$360,000 price tag of the Bike Corridor pilot demonstrates, it costs money to improve walking, bicycling and transit options.
4. Olympia is underinvesting in these practical transportation options, whether measured as a percentage of total street improvement spending or measured against other cities. We have a stated goal expressed in the *2009 Mobility Strategy* of moving people, not just cars.
5. Widening a street to create additional motor vehicle capacity brings more traffic which, in turn, creates more danger for people walking and biking. Improving practical transportation options may deliver more transportation improvement for the dollar invested than road widening.

The Olympia Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee is pleased to see modest dedicated funding for bicycle infrastructure return to the CFP after many years of zero funding. We appreciate that revisions to the transportation chapter reflect concerns our committee expressed about prior CFPs. We also find the new consolidated format and online layout of the CFP much more readable.

The proposed \$50,000 funding for Other Improvements in the Bike Improvements Program is encouraging for our committee. \$50,000 is enough to get started on a design to fix a gap in the existing bike network: the disappearing bike lane on Cooper Point Road approaching Caton Way. In our experience, one dangerous spot can ruin an entire route that is much bigger. In this case, an investment to address a small gap would improve the utility of our existing bike network.

This modest level of funding keeps us moving forward, but we are concerned that at a rate of \$50,000 a year it would take many years to address all the gaps in the existing bike network. We are underinvesting in walking, biking and transit as practical transportation, whether expressed as a percentage of total spending on Olympia streets, or a comparison with other cities. A stated goal in the *2009 Mobility Strategy* quoted at the beginning of the Transportation Chapter is: "Address system capacity by moving people – not just cars – through walking, biking, and transit."

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Thank you for your support of the pilot bike corridor. This project recognizes that bike lanes on busy streets are not a great way to move "interested but concerned" cycling families safely through our city. We look forward to seeing the pilot corridor constructed in 2016. The \$360,000 cost of implementing this pilot project demonstrates the expense of even modest improvements.

We believe you get good value for the money invested in making our city more bikeable.

Appealing to the "interested but concerned," or people who do not feel comfortable riding bicycles on our current network of bike lanes on busy streets, is necessary to become a bikeable community that people of all ages and abilities feel safe riding in. We will need sustainable funding to make the changes necessary to attract them out of their cars.

The committee is also encouraged that the City Council has funded the initial work to create a multimodal concurrency program. We support impact fees being spent to increase system capacity for all modes of transportation, not just motor vehicles. We also support a method of measuring the number of people who move through intersections, rather than only counting vehicles. This is consistent with the *2009 Mobility Strategy* of moving people, not just cars.

To illustrate our thinking we'd like to describe our considerations about the Fones Road widening project. As currently described this project does not detail how it will integrate with the bike network. Fones Road is near the Chehalis Western Trail and actually intersects with the Olympia Woodland Trail. While road expansion increases capacity for motor vehicles, we want to point out that widening a road also creates more traffic, which in turn creates more danger for people walking and biking. The intersection of Fones Road and the Olympia Woodland Trail is not comfortable for cyclists or cars right now. What will it be like when Fones Road is expanded and there is an increase in motor vehicle traffic? Why is there no discussion of expanded trail access, or a protected bike lane along Fones Road instead of a new motor vehicle lane? We would argue that you can move many more people on bicycles on a street than people in cars.

This Capital Facilities Plan takes many steps in the right direction. We appreciate the time and energy Council has invested in practical transportation, and look forward to continuing to advise your efforts. Thank you for taking the time to consider BPAC's recommendations during the course of your CFP review process.

Sincerely,



CLARK GILMAN

Chair

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

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cc: Michelle Swanson, Senior Program Specialist, Public Works Transportation
BPAC Members