



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Selby and Members of the Olympia City Council

From: Scott Morgan, Chair, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

Date: October 8, 2018

Subject: 2019-2024 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide input on the 2019-2024 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) to the Olympia City Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the City's 2019-2024 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan. Members of the BPAC appreciate the efforts of the Olympia City Council and City staff to anticipate the unprecedented growth expected in Thurston County in the coming decade and to take efforts to mitigate the effects of that growth on both automobile and bike/pedestrian facilities in the City.

Multi-modal Level of Service (MMLOS): In 2016, members of the BPAC encouraged the Council and staff to adopt a multi-modal Level of Service (MMLOS) metric with a strong bicycle component to use when evaluating the need for additional facilities or facility maintenance in discrete areas of the city.

We appreciate the increased level of priority for all elements of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, however the implementation of those priorities remains tied to the needs and priorities of the cars – pavement condition and traffic congestion. Priorities are fantastic, however priorities subsequently dependent upon car traffic metrics for implementation are aspirations, not priorities. We need Level of Service metrics for all modes of transportation, as soon as possible. When funding is tied to metrics, then metrics are essential for all of our priorities.

Several cities in Washington already have multi-modal LOS metrics in place (see the Multimodal Concurrency Program Working Paper dated May 10, 2016). BPAC strongly encourages the Olympia City Council to study these plans and modify and adopt a model as soon as possible. Maintaining a level of consistency can best be achieved when all transportation modes have defined metrics.

We support the on-going Transportation Master Plan that specifically includes the MMLOS (bike, pedestrian, transit). However, the current timeline calls for the plan to be adopted around this time next year. In the meantime, bicycle facilities are prioritized according to an aspirational 'complete streets' metric and the 2009 Bicycle Master Plan, and subject to other priorities for implementation. We encourage the City to be thinking now about enhanced metrics that support decision-making around funding, and we urge the Council to take concrete steps toward adoption of the MMLOS with a robust bicycle component.

Transit Access: Sidewalk construction that provides pedestrians with a direct link to bus routes should be prioritized. As cities like Olympia address the increase in traffic that comes with a bigger population, it's important to maximize the number of people that we can get out of their cars. This is stated in Transportation Goal #12 (CFP, page 57) which emphasizes limiting traffic congestion as land use density increases.

In addition to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, it will be necessary to emphasize public transportation as an option. An example is Elliott Ave. in West Olympia, which offers the only access to transit on Division St. Emphasis should be on pedestrian safety and ADA access.

Bike Corridors: In keeping with Transportation Goal #25 (CFP, page 55), BPAC looks forward to completion of the next two bicycle corridor projects and future expansion of the bike corridors program. Besides making cycling a more acceptable option for families, strategically developed bike corridors could eventually become part of a multi-use trail system that supports bicycle commuting and leads to destinations and activities and other bicycle and pedestrian facilities, especially if streets with sidewalks are incorporated into the corridors.

Downtown Parking/Bicycle Parking: Kudos to the City for continuing to make the public aware of parking options downtown and maximizing the space available before considering the construction of a parking garage. Additionally, it is good to see new construction addressing the needs of bicyclists by providing parking for bikes and to know that the City makes bike racks available to businesses currently without them. BPAC supports incentivizing downtown businesses to provide functional bike racks with a goal of at least one bike rack on every block downtown.

Sidewalk/Pathways: We appreciate the flashing crossing beacons and curb cuts or bulb outs installed at intersections and major crossings throughout the city. They represent a big improvement in pedestrian facilities. BPAC also supports City efforts to educate users about infrastructure use, including riding bicycles with traffic in bike lanes and walking against traffic if sidewalks are not available.

Sidewalks, crossings, and bicycle lanes or paths are key infrastructures. However, it isn't easily apparent how and why maintenance is ordered or prioritized on these facilities. We need a well-publicized asset-management (cleaning and maintenance) process that is clear and open and transparent, and which connects the users of the facilities to the people who manage it. Sidewalk maintenance, in particular, is a key to safety for all residents, with special emphasis on ADA compliance.

The members of the BPAC concur with Transportation Goal #22 (CFP, page 59), in which sidewalk construction is prioritized based on a more objective multi-modal Level of Service model (see MMLoS paragraph above). This could include primary route retrofitting being given priority based on traffic volume, safety, and street conditions. An example would be Division St. between Farwell and Elliott. While there is a bike lane along Division, lack of a sidewalk often puts pedestrians in the bike lane facing away from traffic which can be hazardous for cyclists and pedestrians alike. This also dovetails nicely with the Transportation Goal #1 to make streets safe and inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists.

In Conclusion: We appreciate the broad set of construction and maintenance priorities defined within this CFP for transportation projects. We also appreciate the City's on-going work to develop a Transportation Master Plan, and we look forward to a time when multi-modal Level of Service metrics provide a means of prioritizing the most impactful bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities.

Sincerely,



SCOTT MORGAN
Chair
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

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October 8, 2018

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