



**To:** Mayor Selby and Members of the Olympia City Council

**From:** Rebecca Brown, Chair, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

**Date:** September 26, 2022

**Subject:** 2023-2028 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan (CFP); Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft of the 2023-2028 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan (CFP). The BPAC appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback. This Committee has also had a role in the development of the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Master Plan (TMP).

We are pleased to see progress in aligning these strategic documents, although there continue to be opportunities to link the prioritization and focus of the Comprehensive Plan, TMP, and CFP, especially around equity. We look forward to continuing to support the City's commitment to public health, safety, and community livability by maintaining focus on a complete streets concept. Focusing on human-centered transportation is paramount to achieving these goals.

The BPAC's review of this document focuses on what we value most when considering human-centered improvements:

### **Equity and Access to Public Services and Schools**

The Fones Road project will be a major accomplishment, and we are excited to see the city's first separated bike lane implemented. We do ask the City to consider the economic impacts to the surrounding residential areas as this area is developed and facilities improved. How will this new street impact the surrounding area's real estate values? What is the transit rider's experience in this area? How does a person walking transition to a person riding a bus to a person driving a car?

The CFP presents an excellent opportunity for the City's vision for future improvements to interconnect. The Home Fund investments can provide much needed social and public services to at-risk populations. Will these improvements include infrastructure for people walking, biking, and riding transit? We encourage the City to consider the transportation routes used by the clients of these services when investing in infrastructure.

For example, a park, school, family support center, or other critical facilities must have accessible transportation routes that match the needs of those being served. We encourage the development of trails, pathways, separated bike lanes, and bus connections associated with these facilities whenever possible. This is very important considering the increase of volume of motor vehicles as the city continues to expand and develop. We need to actively encourage alternate modes of transportation to offset increased motor vehicle usage by developing new alternate transportation facilities and improving existing facilities.

We see a missed opportunity with the development of the sprayground in Lions Park. People will be drawn to it from all over the area, especially children, but the major streets around the park are difficult to cross for people walking, biking, or using a walking aid. We would have liked to have seen the sprayground project

include pedestrian and bicycle improvements around the neighborhood that would have made the sprayground easier to access without a car.

We are also disappointed that equity is not highlighted more in the CFP. We hear that equity is important to the City and note that it was included in the TMP, but we are not seeing it reflected in this document that shows how the City is funding projects that impact community members experiencing various forms of oppression. The BPAC identified an opportunity to include a land acknowledgement in the CFP to recognize that the projects described in the document occur on historically Native American land. This land acknowledgement could be added on Page 2 where the various advisory committees are also acknowledged.

### **Climate Change and Environmental Impacts of Transportation**

As Olympia continues to support and develop urban development, it is critical to invest in multi-modal transportation facilities directly connected to those areas of increased density. We applaud the City's focus on developing neighborhood centers and considering the length of commute between city service centers.

As attention is focused on economic and environmental issues at the national level, the City of Olympia is in a unique position to address them with the CFP. Pedestrian and cycling facilities that provide easy access to bus routes can help people save money on their daily commutes. Connections to parks are key as residents seek more affordable recreation closer to home.

We must continue to invest in complete-street improvements that result in decreased car traffic volume and speeds, and convenient access to alternate routes of travel. When facility improvements do not result in increased safety, decreased traffic volumes and speeds, we urge the City to consider alternate solutions that align with this focus. For example, there are a variety of traffic circles in our city. In general, the recent round-about improvements directly improve the sidewalk-use experience as compared to other traffic obstacles or intersections that lack flashing lights and indicators. But when these facilities do not result in lower speeds and more direct transportation routes, we urge reconsideration.

### **Neighborhood Connections**

Neighborhood bike corridors will be a nice addition to our northwest and southwest neighborhoods. Connector pathways can connect dead-end and cul-de-sac streets and also link schools to nearby neighborhoods to make walking to school safe and simple. As new development occurs, BPAC encourages the City to promote neighborhood construction of a connected street grid with streets that include sidewalks and bike lanes.

In meetings addressing neighborhood centers, the one thing Olympia residents value most about this concept is walkability. It would therefore be important to see emphasis put on providing attractive access to neighborhood centers as they are completed to give residents the safe, pleasant experience they're looking for when seeking out these pockets of neighborhood businesses to visit.

However, we are disappointed at the slow pace of sidewalk construction and the lack of connection between sidewalks built by private development and the rest of the sidewalk network. We need to be

looking at the bigger picture and better integrate frontage improvements with the rest of the sidewalk network.

### **Personal Health and Safety**

The influence of the City's collision data tracking and safety planning is evident in the CFP. Thank you for prioritizing improvements on the eastern border of downtown. This area is a high collision area, and the BPAC applauds the City for designing improvements in an area of high safety risk. Continuing this link between facility improvements and system-level safety improvement is a must.

We would encourage calling all pedestrian and bicycle improvement projects "health and safety" projects in the CFP, as any sidewalk or bicycle facility allows people to address their personal health by being able to get out and get exercise.

Lastly, we acknowledge that the list of planned improvements extends far beyond the City's ability to fund and pay for these necessary investments. This is a conundrum with few easy solutions. However, we urge the City to consider creative solutions and low cost facility improvements, as we continue to invest in complete overhauls of some streets. We are grateful that the human-centered, complete street strategy is being implemented in our city, and we look forward to supporting these solutions.

Thank you,



Rebecca Brown

Chair

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Cc: Michelle Swanson, AICP, Senior Planner, Public Works | Transportation  
BPAC Members

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