

Questions for 8/21/15 CFP Meeting with City Staff
Capital Facilities Plan - Transportation Chapters
Roger Horn - August 12, 2015

Transportation Chapter

Introduction, pp. 47-48:

1. P. 47 2nd paragraph: If width of the right-of-way or resident concerns don't support a complete street, does the City ever make exceptions. Do we ever put sidewalks on one side only? Can building a narrower street result in significant savings?

Yes, depending on available funds, or unique constraints (such as wetlands) a design of a reconstruction project will be modified, or reduced in scope. Many reconstruction projects will only include sidewalks, street lights and a planter strip on only one side of the street. 18th Avenue in the southeast is an example of this. We build as narrow a street as possible both in lane width and number of lanes.

2. P. 48 Section on Advisory Boards: Final sentence reads: "Citizen members of these committees bring to the planning process their experience and input from their neighborhoods or through a particular constituency they represent." Neither of these applies to most planning commissioners. Would be appropriate to add "their work on the Comprehensive Plan," before "their neighborhoods."

Yes.

3. P. 48 Recent Trends, first paragraph: Last line says "funding is reduced because expenditures continue to exceed revenue." Suggest replacing "expenditures" with "the cost of planned projects and programs", or something like that, since expenditures cannot exceed revenue.

Ok, makes sense.

4. P. 48 Recent Trends, last paragraph: Do the transit signal priority systems give buses an early green light or is the green light held longer as buses approach (as with fire trucks)? If it's the former, suggest changing "give buses the green light" with "give buses an early green light".

Either could be done. It is undecided yet whether our system will extend the green light or give buses an early green light.

Access and Safety Improvements, pp. 49-50:

5. P. 49 Access and Safety Improvements: Has staff considered a city-wide Vision Zero for traffic fatalities, as the WA Traffic Safety Commission and several jurisdictions across the country have adopted? Such an approach is worth considering.

Staff is aware of these programs in other communities. We report once a year to the Public Works Director on collision data and use this information to determine where safety improvements should be made.

6. P. 49 HES Project List: Amounts for the proposed Legion and Adams and 8th and Jefferson projects are provided, but it is suggested that this funding will be provided from federal Hazard Elimination and Safety. Are these projects on TRPC regional priority lists for HES funding? When do we anticipate these projects may receive HES grants?

We will continue to pursue grants for these projects. These projects may be eligible for safety grants offered through WSDOT and the Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program. These signal projects are not in the Regional Transportation Plan.

7. P. 49 Pedestrian Crossing Project List: Projects 3 and 4 would provide bulb-outs on Capitol Way at 8th and 10th. Are these projects compatible with the recommended design changes in the Greening Capitol Way study? If not, it would make sense to hold off on these projects until the Greening Capitol Way design is finalized?

Yes, that would likely happen. Improvements at these intersections on Capitol Way would be coordinated with Greening Capitol Way implementation.

8. P. 49 Justification: What are “signal warrants?”

The Federal Highway Administration has a set of criteria called signal warrants that we are required to use to determine when a signal is needed. The criteria include traffic volumes, accidents, and delay, among others. Minimum thresholds are based on traffic conditions that occur over an 8-hour period. We will explain signal warrants in the CFP.

9. P. 49 Justification: Under Pedestrian Crossing Improvements, the methodology includes traffic volumes, number of lanes, and traffic speed. Isn't collision history also considered? Shouldn't it be?

Yes, we consider the collision history at these locations.

10. P. 50 Capital Costs: Why is no funding included in the out-years for Pedestrian Crossing Improvements and Street Access?

Only one-time funds have been identified for this program.

Bike Improvements, p. 51:

11. Description: Would protected lane projects fall under “Other Improvements.” If so, would it make sense to create a third category since these projects may involve more than just restriping?

Once we have done planning work to identify where we want to add protected bike lanes, we could make this a subsection within the Bicycle Improvement Program.

12. Justification: Suggest you consider the following addition at the end of the second sentence “...and are designed to be family-friendly.”

Language will be added to the CFP referring to these as “routes that serve all ages and abilities.”

13. Project List: Would it be possible to include a list of arterial and major collector projects that include bicycle amenities? Does one exist?

The Bicycle Master Plan lists the next set of major reconstruction projects that will include bike lanes. Comments on past CFPs have been critical of listing projects that are beyond available funding so only the project on Mottman Road, a Complete Street Reconstruction project that includes bike lanes, is shown.

14. Project List: Since Council has authorized the Lion's Park to Sylvester Park project, would it make sense to mention it in the project list even if the funding is from past budgets? More for public information than 2016-2021 capital budget purposes.

Yes, this can be added to the section on page 24 called "What we are building in 2016."

15. Capital Costs: Why are no bicycle funds projected for 2017-2021?

Only one-time funds have been identified for this program.

Sidewalks and Pathways, pp. 52-53:

16. P. 52 Project List: Are the sidewalk projects in priority order? If not, that should be mentioned. Are all of these projects set to begin in the next six years? If not, it may be good to explain that this is a long-term list and not all projects will be funded soon. Is the City committed to doing the first three projects (the ones with costs attached) in the CFP timeframe?

Yes, they are in priority order. We can add a note about which we expect to complete in the six-year timeframe and reinforce that this is a long term list.

17. P.52 Project List, Non-VUT-funded: Have we applied for grants for these three projects?

Yes, we have applied for grants for State and Phoenix. We are prepared to pursue grants for all three of them.

Street Repair and Reconstruction, pp. 54-55:

18. P. 54 Project List: Is the Mottman Project the only Complete Street project we expect to do in the next six years?

Yes, due to the cost, it is likely only one project of this type can be completed in the 6-year period. Grants are needed to complete these projects. Comments on past CFPs have noted that the projects listed are beyond available funding, so in this draft of the CFP, just one project is shown.

Since the preliminary CFP was published, WSDOT funding has been secured for this project. WSDOT has identified funds for this project in the 2023-2025 and 2025-2027 budgets. Another complete street reconstruction project will be identified for this program.

19. P. 54 Project List: Will the Capitol Way project be consistent with the Greening Capitol Way Study recommendations?

Yes, we will use the study to guide decisions on the design of this project.

20. P. 54 Project List: Has a decision been made regarding street preservation on local access streets?

This program has shifted and the focus of pavement preservation is in the downtown and on Arterials and Major Collectors and there will be less emphasis on Local Access streets. Patching will continue to occur on local access streets. Because local access streets see less volume, we are hoping this approach will be a more effective way to bring up our overall system rating.

21. P. 54 Measurable Outcome: Doesn't address streets with ratings between 40 and 50. Do they fall in the poor or fair categories?

This is a typo. It should read 49.

22. P. 54 Measurable Outcome: Is the system rating we are using the best measure? It is simple to understand, but it could be misleading. Another way of measuring could be the percentage of streets in each category rather than an overall system rating. The associated target, for example, could be 80% of streets in the fair and good categories.

We feel the overall system rating is best for a document like the CFP. In our analysis, and when reporting to Council, we have expressed the rating in the manner you suggest.

23. P. 55 Funding Sources: Is the REET funding included in the CIP Fund figure?

Yes, REET is rolled into the CIP Funds

Transportation Projects Funded with Impact Fees

Introduction, pp. 57-59:

1. P. 58 Transportation Fee Rate Analysis: What areas are exempt from transportation impact fees? Would development in the east and west side nodes defined in the comp plan be exempt? Does the downtown exemption cover all of downtown or just the core? Is that exemption permanent?

While there are certain impact fee reductions for downtown development projects, the downtown is not exempt. There are no areas exempt from transportation impact fees.

The nodes you mention are part of urban corridors. A recent study showed we could reduce impact fees on urban corridors because fewer trips are generated. We have not made a change to our impact fee structure to reflect this because we anticipate making a major change to our concurrency program.

We are preparing to develop a multi-modal concurrency program whereby impact fees can be used for multi-modal system improvements. Instead of using impact fees for auto-based capacity improvements, they could be used for bike, pedestrian and transit improvements because these add person-trip capacity to our system.

2. Same as above: Over the next 20 years, do we know how many trips of new residents be bringing them into downtown? If projects such as traffic signals, medians, and turn lanes are needed to accommodate additional trips into downtown, could transportation impact fees be used to cover a portion of these costs?

The most recent Transportation Impact Fee Update indicated that approximately 20% of all trips in Olympia and the Urban Growth Area start or end in the downtown.

Assuming these downtown improvements were related to capacity, impact fees could be used to pay for them. For the collection and application of impact fees, we treat the entire city as one zone, so any fee collected could be applied wherever the highest priority capacity improvement is needed.

3. P.58 Priority # Project Description: All of the projects listed are in the SE part of the City. Are there projects from other quadrants on the impact fee list but are not showing up here? If so, what are the projects? New residents in other parts of the City who pay impact fees may want to know.

Based on development trends and traffic modeling, improvements are currently needed in the southeast. Should development patterns change significantly, new projects in other parts of town may be identified and rise in priority.

2010 Transportation Stimulus Project Repayment, p. 60:

4. How does the payment of bonds work within the impact fee rules? Are future new residents paying for projects that are already completed? Will new residents purchasing homes after 2020 be paying for projects completed in 2010? Is this okay?

It is lawful to use impact fees for debt service. Impact fees will be used until 2029 to pay these bonds.

Boulevard Road Intersection Improvements, p.61:

5. Project List: Will the Boulevard Road and Log Cabin Phase II project proceed if the Bentrige and former Trillium properties are purchase for LBA Woods? If it proceeds, how will it be modified?

Yes, this project is needed for regional mobility. It has not been determined if and how the project may be modified. Staff is exploring possible design modifications.

6. Same as above: Why is the cost listed in the Project List section greater than total in the Capital Cost section (\$7.7 million vs. \$5.0 million?)

Some design and right-of-way elements of the total project have been completed. The \$5 million reflects the remainder of funds needed to complete the project, primarily for construction.

7. Justification: Are roundabouts proven to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety?

Yes. Roundabouts result in slower vehicle speeds, shorter crossing distances for pedestrians, and there is improved safety because vehicles encounter one conflict point at a time. A safety issue that is being explored in many communities is the use of roundabouts by visually impaired pedestrians.

Fones Road, p.63:

8. Will Home Depot be contributing to the cost of the roundabout at its south driveway? It seems that will provide a substantial benefit to their business. If they are not contributing, what is the reason?

Home Depot paid impact fees when it was built. Impact fees are collected and applied city-wide, not for specific projects. This roundabout is a capacity improvement that will be paid for with impact fees.

Log Cabin Road Extension Impact Fee Collection, p. 65:

9. Description: What will happen to this funding if Bentrige and/or the former Trillium properties are purchased for the LBA Woods park project? Will a road still be built?

Yes, this project is needed for regional mobility. As a capacity project, it will continue to be eligible for impact fees. If Bentrige or Ashton Woods (former Trillium) development projects do not build the street as frontage improvements, additional funds will be needed for the City to complete this project.

10. Level of Service: How was this LOS determined? To what road does this LOS D apply?

LOS is determined by capacity analysis modeling. LOS D applies to the nearby roadways that would serve as alternative routes if the connection is not built. Without the Log Cabin extension, these roads would be at a LOS D in 10 to 12 years. Widening for additional lanes and intersection improvements (roundabouts) would be needed on Boulevard, Wiggins, Herman and Morse Merryman.

Wiggins Road and 37th Avenue Intersection Improvements, p. 66:

11. Description: A bigger concern than this intersection may be the width of Wiggins and 37th. Both present unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as motorized vehicles. Are there plans to widen these roads? Is their collision history data that indicates that these roads are unsafe?

A bike lane for Wiggins is identified in the Bike Master Plan, and a sidewalk is identified through the Parks and Pathways Sidewalk Program. While there are no plans to widen these roads for motor vehicle travel lanes, intersection improvements are needed.

We are continuing to track and evaluate collisions along this street.

General Question regarding Impact Fee projects:

12. Is all the grant funding identified in the Funding Sources sections confirmed? Is there a time limit for their use?

The grant funds are anticipated, not secured. Once secured, there are time limits.