



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Buxbaum and Members of the Olympia City Council
FROM: Clark Gilman, Chair, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
DATE: October 14, 2014
SUBJECT: 2015 *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 2015 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan (CFP).

The Olympia Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee encourages the City to make long-term transportation investments that will help Olympia achieve several of the goals outlined in both the current *Comprehensive Plan* and the update that Council is presently reviewing. We acknowledge that Olympia continues to deal with a constrained General Fund, but we believe it's time to adjust our income expectations and reconsider our expenditure priorities.

Current transportation funding continues the status quo of prioritizing cars over other forms of transportation. We urge City Council to take a wider view and prioritize funding for programs that support bicycling, walking and riding the bus. These modes of transportation cost less to maintain, improve quality of life and public health and encourage people to stay in Olympia to shop instead of driving to neighboring cities.

Investments in walking and biking are also an investment in the City's future work force. Increasingly, other cities are using attractive walking and biking infrastructure to appeal to young professionals who are seeking a less car-dependent lifestyle. These young professionals walking and biking through downtown will support a vibrant core, because more positive use of public space discourages negative use.

Last year the Council funded, and we are presently hard at work on, a bicycle corridors pilot project at \$100,000. We have had six committee sessions and three sub-committee sessions dedicated to identifying a network of corridors and selecting a strong pilot project for 2015 implementation. Thank you for responding to our concerns and funding this pilot of a new type of transportation facility in Olympia.

We are hoping to engage in more creative problem solving to improve facilities for minimal cost. For example, several bicycle lanes in Olympia are discontinuous and end abruptly. State Avenue at Jefferson Street is the most dramatic example, as the lane ends and cyclists bound for the Transit Center are pushed into the busiest westbound arterial downtown while having to negotiate railroad tracks that are at a 30 degree angle. The committee wonders if there are potential funding partners the City could approach who might have a common interest in improving bicycling and pedestrian facilities. Might the Port be one of those partners?

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Finally, as a bit of budget perspective, we ask you to consider what would happen if half a percentage of the CFP, which is about \$713,000, were assigned to bicycle and pedestrian priorities. We've done the planning and we are confident that improved bicycle and pedestrian opportunities would benefit the community and the City.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the 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