



MEMORANDUM

TO: Olympia City Council
FROM: Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
DATE: October 8, 2012
SUBJECT: 2012 *Capital Facilities Plan* Comments

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide comment and input from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) on the preliminary 2013-2018 Capital Facilities Plan (CFP).

At our September 26, 2012, meeting, BPAC reviewed the Transportation Chapter of the preliminary 2013-2018 CFP.

Happy to See Neighborhood Pathways in the CFP:

We are delighted to see the new Neighborhood Pathways Program (Public Pathways Program) now in the CFP. This program has been a long time coming, and provides a way for Olympia to respond to neighborhood desires for public pathway improvements to maximize our existing street network. We are excited that this program has now launched, funded at \$125,000 throughout each year of the six-year plan.

We are pleased with what has been accomplished over the last year:

- Fourteen audible signals installed around Olympia.
- Road improvements to Capital Way, 18th Avenue, Yelm Highway, and Cooper Point Road, which included bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- A Parks and Pathways-funded sidewalk along Henderson Boulevard to Watershed Park.
- We are excited to see that we are making good progress on our list of important pedestrian crossing improvements, and with a large grant, will have sufficient funds to complete all of the crossing projects listed in the 6-year CFP.

However, we are concerned that in challenging economic times, the programs we care most about are delayed, reduced, or eliminated, as it says in the introduction to the CFP.

This CFP reflects our continuing fiscal reality. It represents what we realistically expect to receive. Therefore, we had to reduce or eliminate the 2013 amount for some projects, including sidewalks, bike facilities and urban forestry. It is necessary to make these cuts in order to maintain our infrastructure. Current economic conditions require pragmatism and moderation.

2013-2018 Draft CFP

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These Cuts are in the Wrong Places

As the City faces increasingly limited resources, so do our residents in their household budgeting. Many Olympia residents are using lower-cost forms of transportation, including biking, walking and transit for both commute and non-commute trips. We think it is important to align our priorities with the economic realities of many of our residents, and with the policies in our comprehensive plan.

CFP Does Not Reflect Comprehensive Plan Goals for Multimodal Transportation

By delaying these programs, it tells us that these are lower priorities for the City. Our comprehensive plan tells us that we support all modes. We understand that money is tight, that many funds are restricted, and that maintenance is an important goal. However, developing a budget based on what our comprehensive plan states as our priorities is important too. As the table below shows, the six-year CFP appears well-balanced based on the proposed projects (column 6). When we look at the percentage of all assured funding allocated to each mode – in column 5, we should be very proud of our commitment to pedestrian facilities – funded primarily through the voted utility tax.

However, we would like to ask that some funds be shifted to bicycle programs. Only two percent of the proposed bicycle projects have assured funding. Bicycle programs are allocated less than one percent of all assured transportation funds. *At the current rate of funding, it will be very difficult to complete the first project in the six-year period the bicycle program.* We agree with Recommendation #8 in the Planning Commission’s 2012 comment letter on the CFP – that we develop a more realistic approach to funding our active transportation programs.

(1) Mode	(2) 6-year project cost	(3) CIP Funding	(4) % of proposed projects with assured funds	(5) % of all assured funding	(6) % of all proposed transportation projects \$
Bicycle	\$12,000,000	\$250,000	2.1%	0.5%	9.8%
Walking not ADA (no info)	\$17,447,605	\$7,979,565	45.7%	17.0%	14.3%
Auto Street Repair and Impact Fees	\$91,461,596	\$38,612,511	42.2%	82.2%	75.0%
Bus (smart corridors)	\$995,305	\$134,465	13.5%	0.3%	0.8%
Totals	\$121,904,506	\$46,976,541	39%		

Are these really the right bicycle and pedestrian priorities?

The CFP lists four bicycle facility projects. The first project is a \$1.1million improvement to add bicycle lanes to the San Francisco Street hill. The entire 6-year budget is \$850,000 including \$600,000 in hoped-for grant funds. Meaning that even with grant funding, even this single, first project on the list will not be constructed over the next six years. The non-utility tax-funded pedestrian program is similar, with the first project costing more than the 6-year budget. In these difficult fiscal times, we need to take a hard look at what we have listed as priorities and ensure that limited and precious designated bicycle and pedestrian funds are prioritized to improve critical links in the network within this planning horizon. We want our City to grow into our comprehensive plan vision of an excellent place to walk and bicycle sooner that this plan will get us there.

Ensure a System Exists to Periodically Review Bicycle and Pedestrian Priorities

The Bicycle Master Plan (2009) and Sidewalk Program (2003), upon which these project lists are based, now precedes the majority of BPAC members. As new faces, we are concerned that the priorities that have been listed in the CFP may have changed since these plans were developed. We suggest that the City develop a process to take a periodic look at the 20-year list of active transportation projects, so that next year's CFP, and perhaps our updated comprehensive plan, reflect a refreshed or reconfirmed list of priorities.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our recommendations in the course of your CFP review process. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Anne Fritzel at (360) 753-9606 or bicyclegoddess@gmail.com, or Clark Gilman at (360) 352-1830 or clarkgilman@gmail.com,

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cc: Kerry Tarullo
BPAC Members

