

Olympia Planning Commission

September 1, 2021

Olympia City Council
PO Box 1967 Olympia
WA 98507-1967

Dear Councilmembers:

SUBJECT: Preliminary 2022-2027 CFP Recommendations

The Olympia Planning Commission appointed a Capital Facilities Plan Subcommittee to review the 2022-2027 Capital Facilities Plan for consistency with Olympia's Comprehensive Plan.

We would like to recognize the City of Olympia staff for consistently striving to improve the content, layout, and accuracy of the CFP. This year they added information about debt servicing which was responsive to previous comments by the OPC.

A common refrain on budgeting is that 'your budget is your values'. We have noticed that despite efforts of staff there has been little public involvement or interest in the CFP document over the years. We recognize that this document builds upon planning efforts such as the transportation master plan that included public involvement, so that involvement is to some extent 'baked in' to the projects and recommendations. Regardless, we believe that additional engagement on the CFP itself would help us assure that Olympia is investing in its values.

Olympia's comprehensive plan's Community Values and Vision section describes Olympias values on public participation like this:

Olympians value their right to participate in City government, and to engage in a meaningful, open, and respectful community dialogue regarding decisions that affect our community.

We believe that there are opportunities to advance this community value through the capital facilities planning process by making the values advanced by investments in the CFP more clear. For example, Olympians expressed their transportation vision as '*complete streets that move people, not just cars*'. It is difficult to read the CFP and understand the extent to which we are advancing that value versus investing in the status quo. We believe the difficulty a resident reading the plan would have understanding what values we are investing in could be why the

CFP document has not had the level of engagement that other documents OPC reviews, despite its importance in shaping the development of our city.

Although it is not part of the comprehensive plan Olympia has committed to:

'Continuing to learn and take action to dismantle all forms of oppression within our City government and its operations by lifting up and including the voices of our marginalized community members in decision making...'

Investments in projects across City government are clear opportunities to operationalize this value. There are a variety of ways in which the city is advancing their DEI values, for example through efforts to have a more equitable contracting process, but it is not evident in reading the CFP where we are advancing this value and where we have more room to grow.

Over the last two years the CFP has included a list of comprehensive plan goals that are being advanced in each chapter. This is a good step towards identifying how we are advancing these values but they are detached from specific projects or dollar amounts and can be difficult to contextualize for even an experienced CFP reader.

We believe the City could do a better job of connecting the CFP to Operating Budgets and the impacts the two budgeting documents have on each other. (Street Sweeper example from Greg. This could highlight successes and perhaps challenges, too.)

Concern about street conditions and the potential decline to levels that require more costly reconstruction rather than repair. (This may have been raised in an OPC comment letter in 2016 or 2017???)

The Commission encourages the City Council to continuing to consider these documents in light of the recently adopted Transportation Master Plan and Climate Mitigation Plan, as these plans will have impacts to our community and budgets for years to come.

The Olympia Planning Commission recommends adoption of the 2022-2027 CFP and applauds the efforts of staff to continue to improve the content and readability of the document.

We believe that to better engage Olympians on the content of the CFP we need to more clearly communicate how we are succeeding or failing to invest in our values. We believe that this will benefit not just residents but also help city staff and officials see the extent to which we are or are not investing in the future we have envisioned for our city.

Best,

Rad Cunningham
Chair, Finance Subcommittee