

CFP Letter to the City Council

Thank you for providing this opportunity to comment on the Capital Facilities Plan.

The CFP highlighted the City's continued growth, and we know that the region is growing in population as well. We will need to rely on alternative transportation options to address the needs of our current and future residences and visitors. As long as the transportation planning is car-centric instead of people-centric, we will continue to fall short on the Comprehensive Plan goal to ensure our roads are safe for all users. Our following suggestions are based on items in the CFP, but we looked at them through the eyes of people who are walking, riding their bikes, and taking transit every day, and seeing the results of decisions on the ground.

- Please reconsider how the City prioritized sidewalk installation in this document. While the transportation master plan is not complete and ready as a reference, the preliminary work has identified streets with serious needs for sidewalks. Taking a piecemeal approach, as it appears in this plan, does not serve the greatest need. For example, the proposed sidewalk on Elliott Ave, while probably needed, takes pedestrians to and from Division St., on a section that has no sidewalks. Division is on the bus line, with frequent and high traffic speeds, while Eliot is a secondary neighborhood street with existing traffic calming measures. A better use of funds would be to install sidewalks on Division rather than Elliott. Other busy streets throughout the city lack sidewalks, and we think a priority should be placed on adding sidewalks to those streets. We are looking forward to the Transportation Master Plan, with its prioritization system for sidewalk installation and improvements. The city should consider focusing on fixing known gaps instead of major projects until the prioritization process is complete.
- The BPAC applauds the City's commitment to increasing and enhancing parks, such as the Spooner Property and the splash pad at Lyon's Park. We request that the city considers including safe access to parks for people walking and on bicycles. We also suggest that the city include the considerable increase in park visitations that enhancements like splash parks create. Increased traffic around the park, and an increase in people walking from their homes or parked cars to the park can lead to additional safety concerns. The park purchase and improvements need to be coupled with measures that provide safe access to these park spaces.
- Since safety for all users is a primary goal of the comprehensive plan, we ask that the city design new and redesigned streets and roads for lower speeds. Speed is a major factor for serious injury and fatalities for people walking, biking, and riding in cars, and low speed limits are not enough if the streets are designed for higher speeds. The city should consider designing streets and roads for 25 mph for the safety of all users.
- We are thrilled to see the bicycle corridor program continue to gain traction. We would like to see better signage and wayfinding for these bicycle corridors, especially to guide users to the corridors.
- Finally, the city should design new streets and roads and new bicycle infrastructure to last for many years. That means planning for emerging technologies (scooters, e-bikes, etc.) Many of these emerging technologies move faster than traditional bicycles, but are still vulnerable to vehicle traffic. Thinking ahead about how to accommodate these vehicles now will save the time, effort, and resources needed to respond to their needs later.

Overall, we appreciate the hard work and choices that the city has made to accommodate bicycle riders, bus riders, and walkers over the years. We are highly encouraged to see much needed improvements to Fones Road, sidewalk and crossing improvements across the city, and expenditures for parks and bicycling. It is clear that the city takes transportation choice and safety very seriously, and understands that a growing population needs safe alternatives, like biking, walking, and transit, to survive and thrive.