



## MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Selby and Members of the Olympia City Council

From: Brittany Yunker Carlson, Chair, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

Date: October 10, 2019

Subject: 2020-2025 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) and Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide input on the 2020-2025 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) to the Olympia City Council.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to comment on the 2020-2025 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan (CFP).

The CFP highlighted the City's continued growth, and we know that the region as well is growing in population. We will need to rely on alternative transportation options to address the needs of our current and future residents and visitors. As long as transportation planning is car-centric instead of people-centric, we will continue to fall short of the Comprehensive Plan goal GT 1, which is to ensure all streets are safe and inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists, designed to be human scale, and accommodate motor vehicles while encouraging safe driving.

Our suggestions are based on items in the CFP, looking at them through the eyes of people who walk, ride bikes, take transit every day, and see the results of decisions on the ground.

### Use Data to Drive Decisions

We look forward to the finalizing of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP), specifically for its data-driven prioritization system for sidewalk projects. We see the need for this reflected in the Elliott Avenue sidewalk project, which is prioritized in the CFP over building a sidewalk on adjacent Division Street. Division Street has a bus line and frequent and high traffic speeds, while Elliott Avenue is a neighborhood street with traffic calming in place.

We understand that public input has partially driven the sidewalk project on Elliott Avenue, yet in our review of the early drafts of the TMP we saw that Division Street rated higher than Elliott Avenue for needing a sidewalk. We acknowledge that the City Council has to balance data-driven decisions against public input. We also know that the City Council has not yet had an

opportunity to review the draft TMP, which we have been reviewing throughout the year. When you do review it, we encourage you to remember that the loudest voices do not always advocate for the best course of action. These voices often come from particular parts of our community and from those who have the time, resources, and connections to engage with the City. Data does not speak loudly, but it should still be heard. Prioritizing data-driven criteria is the first step toward an equitable approach to project lists.

### **Consider Safe Access to Parks**

The BPAC applauds the City's commitment to increasing and enhancing parks, such as the Spooner property and the sprayground at Lions Park. We request that the City consider including safe access to parks for people walking and biking within a wider radius of these new and improved recreations areas. For example:

- Woodruff Park is an amazing facility that has become a neighborhood magnet. However, there is more car traffic, parking congestion, people walking and biking, buses, and overall activity that leads to conflict. We are concerned that similar intensity could happen at the Spooner property and urge the City to promote safe access for all modes of transportation to these parks.
- Lions Park with its planned sprayground is on a low-stress bicycle corridor. The potential for conflicts between cars and people walking and biking is high. The nearby intersection of Fourth Avenue, Martin Way, State Avenue, and Pacific Avenue, is not a good experience for anyone to travel through, whether biking, walking, driving, or taking the bus. While a transportation improvement at this intersection is not planned in the CFP, we are concerned that more people will walk and bike through this area to reach the sprayground, posing safety concerns.

One way to integrate pedestrian use into Parks planning processes would be to include the best biking and walking routes in park maps and prioritize bicycle and pedestrian improvements close to these new and popular areas.

### **Design for Lower Speeds**

Since safety for all users is a primary goal of the Comprehensive Plan, we ask that the City design new and redesigned streets for lower speeds. Speed is a major factor for serious injury and fatalities for people walking, biking, and riding in cars. Low speed limits are not enough if the streets are designed for higher speed travel. The City should consider designing streets for 25 mph for the safety of all users.

### **Improve Signage**

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. Ongoing maintenance of existing signs and markings should also be a high priority.

### **Plan for the Future**

Finally, the City should design new streets and bicycle infrastructure to last for many years, including planning for emerging technologies such as foot scooters and e-bikes. Many of these emerging technologies move faster than traditional bicycles, but they are still vulnerable to collisions with vehicle traffic. Thinking ahead about how to accommodate these personal mobility 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.

Sincerely,



Brittany Yunker Carlson  
Chair  
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

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cc: Michelle Swanson, AICP, Associate Planner, Public Works Transportation  
BPAC Members