

To: Bainbridge Island City Council
[Sent via email]
September 26, 2022



The City Council passed the Sustainable Transportation Plan on March 22nd, after a more than 2-year process for the Sustainable Transportation Task Force, an expert consultant, and city staff to develop the plan. That process included monthly updates to Council along the way, and Council unanimously endorsed Scenario 2 under the STP, which called for significant incremental spending to implement critical biking and walking connections between Winslow and the Neighborhood Service Centers and schools. Task Force members and advocates for active transportation and climate action were delighted that the City had finally made a commitment to address the long-standing lack of safe facilities for people walking and biking.

Unfortunately, as the city budget process commences for the next biennium, it appears that commitment may be an illusion, unless something changes. It appears that the budget being presented to Council includes **zero** incremental investments in bike infrastructure and lacks a new Mobility Manager position to drive the improvements, in spite of Council's decision in March to fund these items. We cannot overstate how disappointing this is – it really is unacceptable, after all of the time and money invested to develop the Sustainable Transportation Plan and the deferment of infrastructure investments while the process was underway.

Implementing the Sustainable Transportation Plan is absolutely critical, and that requires a commitment of meaningful funding. The City has an obligation to its residents to ensure its transportation network is safe for all users - it's one of the primary responsibilities of city government. It's high time the city stepped up to meet this responsibility, and Council voted to do that in March of this year. The STP Scenario 2 (Connecting Centers) option that Council adopted includes a six-year funding plan to give people safe, sustainable transportation options for all ages and abilities, connecting major island destinations to Winslow with high-quality infrastructure. However, if the budget/CIP currently on the table is not modified, none of these things will happen in the near term.

Climate change is an urgent issue on which we must take action now. New federal and state infrastructure grant pools make this a once in a lifetime moment to win new grant funding; not taking full advantage of this window seems careless of future generations and unwise.

All we are asking is that Council implement what it has already unanimously approved. We are stunned that a budget would be put forward that essentially ignores Council's direction from March. We understand that the city has many priorities, but the city has ignored its **core responsibility** to provide a safe and functional transportation network that works for all users for far too long. We must realign our spending with our stated values and obligations, and that may require a rethinking of where our money goes.

Roads that work only for cars are all most Americans have ever known, but the status quo is no longer acceptable, and the imperative to reduce carbon emissions is urgent. Please direct City staff to make the necessary budget/CIP changes to implement Scenario 2 under the Sustainable Transportation Plan on the timeline contemplated in the Plan. That means increasing capital spending for STP projects by at least \$2 million per year and adding a full-time Mobility Manager to drive the process and pursue additional funding. Thanks very much.

Sincerely,

Squeaky Wheels
Demi Allen, President

Bainbridge Greenways
Susan Loftus, Chair

Climate Action Bainbridge
Herb Hethcote, Co-Chair