

Regarding Implementation of the Sustainable Transportation Plan

Dear Bainbridge Island City Council Members,

I urge you to fund Scenario 2 of the Sustainable Transportation Plan in the upcoming biennium budget, required to meet the timeline of our climate action goals.

Council unanimously endorsed Scenario 2 under the STP, which called for significant increased spending over the next six years 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 walking and biking as well as additional transportation choices other than cars for getting around the island.

Unfortunately, the budget being presented to Council for the next biennium does not include the incremental investments required to implement the plan. It appears that the city's commitment may have been in appearance only--unless the budget changes--in spite of Council's unanimous decision in March to fund it. The budget lacks a new Mobility Manager position to drive the improvements and increase our capacity to capture new state and federal funding. It lacks the investments required to implement core bike infrastructure within the next 6 years. We cannot overstate how disappointing this is; we are stunned.

Implementing the Sustainable Transportation Plan is urgent. New federal and state infrastructure grants 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. Of all the important discretionary items in the proposed budget, none have the same urgency, and none provide the *definitive solution* to social ills that implementing our sustainable transportation plan has. Moreover, providing a safe and functional transportation network that works for all users cannot be seen as discretionary, but as a core responsibility of government. Those cynical of our ability to achieve our plan goals have forgotten about our children. Children make up the largest demographic of likely bike riders, and they are highly motivated to bike.

Sustainable Transportation ranks high in a cost-to-value assessment because it addresses multiple issues at the same time: income inequality since transportation is the second highest budget item for low-income people, health and wellness, since daily activity has at least the same efficacy as psychotherapy or medication and equity, since we have currently designed children and most women out of biking; they don't have access to all the benefits afforded those with lower infrastructure needs.

We ask that Council implement what has already been unanimously approved. We must realign our spending with our stated values and obligations, and that may require a rethinking of where our money goes. 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.

Sincerely,