CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

clark.wa.gov

1300 Franklin Street
PO Box 5000
Vancouver, WA 98666-5000
564.397.2000

Letter of Support and Recommendations

Clark Communities Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

September 22, 2026

Clark County Council
1300 Franklin Street, 6th Floor, Vancouver, Washington

Subject: Support for Clark County Comprehensive Growth Plan Update

Dear Members of the Clark County Council,

On behalf of the Clark Communities Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Transportation Element and Transportation Capital Facility Plan (CFP) of the County's Comprehensive Growth Plan update.

We urge this Council to see the wisdom of prioritizing active transportation in Clark County's long-term transportation strategy. Active transportation is any means of transportation not in a motor vehicle – it is human-powered or electrically assisted, for example biking, walking, wheelchair, scooter, etc.

This Comprehensive Growth Plan update provides an important opportunity to establish that commitment.

Why make active transportation a strategic priority?

Active transportation is cheaper to build than car-centric roadwork. It pays for itself through health and safety savings. It attracts businesses and increases property values. It makes a place better to live in with lower-cost options to run local errands, as well as getting to nearby schools, shopping and places of employment. Active transportation also contributes to the County's goal in the Comprehensive Plan to have net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

We have already invested in part of the network. We now must connect the parts, and correct safety issues. Here is an opportunity to commit to a complete and connected active transportation system. The $490 million estimated cost of all active transportation projects for the next 20 years represents the fact that the county has not in the past prioritized active transportation. The listed projects address problem areas that have existed for a long time, more than 16 years in many cases. It's time to pick up the pace by implementing the fixes. If we continue to pass the buck, these costs will escalate. In addition, it is more expensive to retrofit after the fact than to build truly useful active transportation facilities as development occurs.

BPAC recommends the following actions this council should take in the Comprehensive Growth Plan Update.

Adopt the Proposed Multimodal Level of Service Standards

BPAC support the adoption of the multimodal levels of service (MMLOS) standards for active transportation facilities that are proposed in the Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Element, including Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) 2 (meaning Low level of traffic stress; comfortable for most adults) or better for facilities within the unincorporated Vancouver Urban Growth Area (VUGA) and LTS 3 (meaning Medium level of traffic stress; tolerable for enthusiastic and/or confident adults) or better for facilities in the rural areas, outside the VUGA, for corridors identified in the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council's (RTC) Regional Active Transportation
Network.

Without this standard the network will continue to lack safety and connectivity. If multimodal transportation is to be part of Clark County's future, our development code must clearly define what multimodal infrastructure should look like. The current code primarily provides guidance for a six-foot bike lane as a universal solution, which is not sufficient for a safe and connected network for all.

Different roadways and contexts require different treatment types, as the LTS framework MMLOS specifies. Appropriate facilities may include protected bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, shared-use paths, and other context-sensitive designs. To successfully implement the projects identified in the Capital Facilities Plan, the County needs clear design standards and guidance for the range of active transportation facilities identified in the draft Comprehensive Plan.

The Growth Management Act provides an opportunity to plan for safer, lower-stress connections that are comfortable for a broader range of users, including families, children, older adults, and new riders. These facilities align well with the proposed Multimodal Level of Stress standard in the Transportation Element.

Adopt the Transportation Element's Active Transportation Component

We support the adoption of the updated Active Transportation Component of the Comprehensive Growth Plan Update Chapter 5: Transportation element. In response to the GMA's new requirements related to active transportation, BPAC worked with and advised county staff on updating the required active transportation component through the development of a proposed active transportation network. The proposed network builds off the 2010 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and ensures consistency with the new proposed MMLOS standards.

Address the Pace and Priority of Active Transportation Projects

Although a few active transportation projects have been implemented thus far, we recommend that the selection criteria for Public Works capital projects be revised to increase the pace at which bicycle and pedestrian improvements are delivered. Completing one or two projects each year for the next 20 years is not sufficient to address the substantial gaps that currently exist (described in the 150 listed projects).

The County needs a deliberate investment strategy focused on closing existing gaps, addressing dangerous conditions, and creating a network that is safe and useful for the average person—not just experienced users. BPAC supports the recommended Active Transportation Plan in the CFP (Appendix A, pg. 14) as an additional planning effort to follow the Comprehensive Plan that would provide an update to the 2010 Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This effort would include updating the local active transportation network, policy framework, project prioritization, and the development of a five-year implementation strategy.

BPAC is offering its assistance in the large task of ranking priorities of each active transportation project. We have already given input to the draft Transportation Capital Facility Plan Evaluation Criteria, and the committee can further help provide a current view of community needs by engaging with residents, neighborhood groups, businesses, transportation advocates, and other partners. This would help to identify current priorities and ensure that projects reflect real-world needs. Community engagement can also cover other issues at the same time which may help to clarify questions such as preference of funding options.

BPAC is committed to being your partner and your agent in this process. We intend to bring a plan to Council for consideration in the near future.

A Practical Investment in Our Future

The County's 20-year capital transportation projections make clear that resources will be constrained. That reality makes prioritization more important, not less. Active transportation infrastructure can provide significant transportation value at a fraction of the cost of major roadway expansion. A safe sidewalk, protected bicycle facility, or shared-use path can provide residents with practical options for reaching parks, schools, businesses, transit stops, and nearby destinations without relying on a vehicle.

The barriers that prevent people from choosing these options today are largely the result of past investment decisions. Clark County has not yet built a sufficiently safe, connected, and convenient active transportation network. That can change. Prioritizing active transportation can help reduce congestion, improve air quality, lower transportation-related carbon emissions, and support healthier communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Comprehensive Growth Plan update. We encourage the Council to use this process to establish active transportation as a clear and sustained priority for Clark County.

In alignment with the Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2010), BPAC supports the County's goals of GHG reduction, VMT reduction and net-zero target by 2050. Active transportation could help as a strategy with achieving some of these goals and required benchmarks. We have diligently worked to perform committee responsibilities and hope the input and recommendations are helpful to Council as you weight these decisions:

- BPAC provided input on the Transportation Element's goals and policies in the Fall of 2024.
- BPAC formally recommended the "Bicycle Facility Typology" (8/05/2025) that has been incorporated in the Transportation Element's required active transportation component.
- BPAC provided input on and a formal recommendation (12/16/2025) to **APPROVE** the proposed Multimodal Level of Service standards.
- BPAC provided input on and a formal recommendation (6/23/2026) to **APPROVE** the proposed Active Transportation Network to serve as the Transportation Element's updated active transportation component.
- BPAC provided input on and formal recommendation (6/23/2026) to **APPROVE** the draft CFP Evaluation Criteria used to prioritize improvement projects.
- BPAC provided input on and a formal recommendation (6/23/2026) to **APPROVE** the draft CFP Project List.

Sincerely,

David Zilavy

David Zilavy, Chair
Clark Communities Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee