

## Interlake High School Students Interview Peers to Obtain Youth Perspectives in Support of the Pedestrian & Bicycle Implementation Initiative

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By Andreas Piller

Transportation planners at the City of Bellevue worked with Interlake High School seniors in the Gifted program to obtain the perspectives of their peers on issues related to walking and bicycling as part of a broader community engagement effort supporting the Pedestrian & Bicycle Implementation Initiative (PBII).

Although young people are more likely to be dependent on walking or bicycling for their transportation needs than adults, they tend to be underrepresented among respondents to typical public outreach efforts. Dialog with students is a key component of the PBII, as it ensures the priorities and perspectives of everyone in the community is reflected when identifying issues, considering potential solutions, and designing encouragement and education programs.

To help address this gap, Irem Onalan and Arun Palaniappan, both students at Interlake High School, were tasked with developing questionnaires, coordinating interviews, and collecting photo messages of their peers in support of the PBII. After a brief presentation by Transportation staff to students in the Gifted program to provide context about the initiative, students filled out the online questionnaire about their own walking and bicycling habits, their impressions of and perceived barriers to these forms of transportation in Bellevue, and what could be done to encourage more people their age to bike. Students were then photographed with personal messages they wrote on poster board summarizing their perspectives, helping to put human faces to their comments.

By involving high school students directly in the PBII outreach process, students had an opportunity to reflect on how walking and biking fit into the local transportation landscape and gained first-hand experience managing a civic engagement process, and the city gained invaluable insight into how local young people perceive walking and bicycling in Bellevue.

Supporting materials include the **Interlake High School Walk/Bike Questionnaire**.

For more information contact: Franz Loewenherz at the City of Bellevue at [floewenherz@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:floewenherz@bellevuewa.gov) or Karen Roper at [roperk@bsd405.org](mailto:roperk@bsd405.org).

Image: Photo of Abhi Sivaprasad and Devansh Dwivedy

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