



Legislative Affairs Council

Choosing an Issue

Issue: Street Lighting

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Proposed Action Agenda Item Title: Increase Streetlighting

1) Describe the Issue (what is the problem & what is the solution).

The neighborhoods around Western Washington University are some of the most poorly lit in the city. The main mode of transportation for most students, particularly those that do not own cars, is walking. The sidewalks in the neighborhoods with bad lighting are not well taken care of, if they even exist at all. Most of the smaller streets around Western don't have sidewalks so students are forced to walk in the streets, which are also uneven. Not being able to see where you're going on a street like this presents a danger to all people that have to use them, particularly in the winter months when it gets dark so early and the roads are slippery. These neighborhoods have also had reports of sexual assault and attacks on a fairly regular basis. This creates an environment of fear for every student on campus. The ASWWU is not complicit in letting these circumstances continue. There needs to be increased lighting in neighborhoods around Western in order to prevent dangerous situations.

2) Please fill out a Strategy Chart.

3) Please explain briefly how/if this issue meets the following qualifications:

1. Is it winnable?

Yes, the city is already working on revamping the lighting in certain Bellingham neighborhoods and, as we all know, there are cities that provide their citizens adequate lighting.

2. Does it directly impact and improve students' lives?

Yes, improving the lighting around Western would reduce the chance of injury and make the neighborhoods safer in general. Giving the students more lighting would allow them to stay on campus later and still feel safe while walking home.

3. Does it have a clear target?

Yes, the City Council and Councilman Bornemann in particular because he's the chair of the Public Works and Public Safety Council.

4. Does it build a measurable amount of power?

Yes. Students often feel unsafe in these neighborhoods and would support legislation that would increase lighting.

5. Does it have a clear and realistic time frame?

It's been done in other cities but it depends on the City Engineer and the Public Works department. Most



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projects like this last somewhere between 6 months to several years. The ASWWU could monitor the project as it unfolds.

6. Does it have a local/state/federal organizing and lobbying angle?

Local lobbying angle.

7. Could students build a diverse campus coalition around this issue?

Yes, all students that live off campus are affected by this issue, particularly those that live in neighborhoods with lower rent.

8. Is it likely to be debated and acted upon by the Legislature in the next year?

Not by the end of this session.

9. Will it strengthen and expand efforts within the ASWWU?

Yes, it will ensure student voices are being heard by the city and will further our relationship with them.

10. Can you provide background information and the current context of the issue?

Currently the city is going through the process of replacing lights in the city with LED bulbs but the neighborhoods around Western are getting significantly less bulbs replaced. LED bulbs provide more lighting than the bulbs currently in streetlights. Ideally, we want more streetlights in general, not just the replacement of current bulbs with LED bulbs. Also, the AS passed the Community Welfare Proposal in 2014 which would've increased the amount of streetlights and panic buttons around campus.

11. What creative and/or innovative tactics could we employ to engage the media and excite new students around this issue?

Organizing information sessions, collecting student stories, staging pictures of students in the dark that shows the lack of lighting, talking to the Western police about stats for those neighborhoods.