CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 13, 2021   Bellevue City Hall
6:30 p.m.   Virtual Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Marciante, Commissioners Beason, Teh, Ting

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Klutznick, Stash

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Andrew Singelakis, Eric Miller, Kristi
                           Oosterveen, Michael Ingram, Paula Stevens, Department
                           of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Jennifer Robertson; Chris Breiland, Fehr
                           & Peers

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1.   CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Chair Marciante who presided.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners
Klutznick and Stash, both of whom were excused.

2.   APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

3.   ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Michelle Wannamaker, 4045 149th Avenue SE, an Eastgate resident, said she had some
serious concerns about the staff-proposed policies and edits for multimodal concurrency. She
said just because something is not achievable without consequences does not mean it should be
removed. She said she was referring specifically to removing vehicle congestion standards.
Vehicle congestion means that concurrency is working the way it is supposed to by limiting
growth until the infrastructure to support it exists or will be completed in six years, or until a
developer is willing to pay for the needed infrastructure. Many of the other policy suggestions
feel like they are watering down the requirements of concurrency. It is taking standards and
moving them to targets. In that case, level of service becomes a target, and that does not make
sense. Policy TR-29, as proposed, will no longer consider community goals, though hopefully
that will be added in somewhere else. Policy TR-26 should be retained and not repealed. With
regard to the proposed C, it appears as though the approach will involve evaluating the supply
and demand and then change the target.

4.   COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL,
       BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilmember Robertson reported that on May 14 she, along with Chair Marciante, Principal

Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald and Department of Transportation Director Andrew Singelakis, will interview candidates for the open Transportation Commission seats. She said she hoped to have new Commissioners on board by the June 10 meeting. By way of getting the new Commissioners up to speed, she said targeted onboarding and possibly a workshop that will include a specific focus on multimodal concurrency. Any Commissioners who want to participate in a workshop may to do so. She stressed that multimodal concurrency is a big part of the Council's vision for the future of Bellevue. The policies the Commission will discuss during the meeting are foundational to the vision. The details of concurrency and implementation will be addressed in the work on the Mobility Implementation Plan. The policy recommendations for multimodal concurrency will be submitted by the Transportation Commission directly to the Planning Commission which has authority over the Comprehensive Plan and land use issues. The recommendation from the Planning Commission will be forwarded to the Council for adoption.

5.   STAFF REPORTS

Department of Transportation Director Andrew Singelakis reported that transportation staff would be before the Council on May 17 for a study session regarding the Smart Mobility Initiative.

6.   PUBLIC HEARING – None

7.   STUDY SESSION

        A.   Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP)

Senior Transportation Planner Michael Ingram shared with the Commission a recommended adjustment to the process for the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP). He reminded the Commissioners that the staff-proposed project list was reviewed by the Commission in March. In April staff returned to the Commission with recommended funding allocations for projects including which projects were recommended to be funded for implementation within 12 years and which projects should have some lesser level of project development or implementation. Subsequently, at the Commission's second meeting in April, the Commission endorsed a set of MMLOS performance metrics. The status of the TFP update and the MMLOS concurrency system are coming together in a way that presents opportunities to more directly link the two. Now that there are MMLOS performance metrics and performance targets in hand, the TFP project list should be evaluated against those metrics and targets. That will help to flush out the details on the MMLOS side and will yield a better understanding on the TFP side of how the proposed project list holds up against the metrics and targets. The approach will allow the current TFP update to be the foundational element for the new MMLOS framework.

Mr. Ingram reminded the Commissioners that the biggest project on the recommended list is 120th Avenue NE Stage IV which was scoped as a five-lane roadway. He said an evaluation is under way to determine if a full five lanes are needed or if some less costly narrower profile would be satisfactory. He also noted that the Department of Community Development is working on a land use forecast for 2033.

Mr. Ingram said staff's proposal is to evaluate the proposed project list against the MMLOS metrics and targets and return to the Commission with the results, hopefully in July.

Commissioner Ting asked how the proposed approach will impact the public engagement that

has been done to date for the TFP, and if staff's work of reviewing the project list against the MMLOS metrics and targets will include calculating mobility units supply. Mr. Ingram said he suspected the calculation will be part of the work but could not say for sure yet. In terms of the public outreach, the questions asked of the public and how the input was framed was relevant regardless of how the projects are evaluated. Commissioner Ting cautioned that for those who have been following the TFP, getting the word out about the approach will be a good thing.

B.   Multimodal Concurrency

Mr. McDonald reminded the Commissioners that the Commission previously approved the concurrency principles and the preliminary performance metrics and thresholds. For purposes of policy writing, staff recommends using the term "targets" rather than "thresholds" . He said the focus of the study session would be on transportation concurrency policies which, once approved, will be forwarded to the Planning Commission. Once the policy work is completed, the detailed components of the Mobility Implementation Plan will be addressed.

Mr. McDonald said the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities to adopt local comprehensive plans and regulations that are internally consistent. Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan is the foundational policy document that articulates the vision for the future of the city and serves as the foundation for city actions, decisions, regulations and capital investments. The GMA recognizes that changing circumstances may require a policy response, so it allows jurisdictions to consider policy amendments once each year, a process that is administered by the Planning Commission and ultimately approved by the Council. Under the GMA, jurisdictions are to conduct a major update of their comprehensive plans every ten years. Bellevue's current Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2015 following an extensive process that involved the public and the city's boards and commissions.

In drafting policies, Mr. McDonald shared with the Commission a few tips that were used in the 2015 update. He said generally the shorter the policy, the better. The first words of a policy should state the point of the policy, and should do so by utilizing a verb to start. Each policy should be phrased in terms of what the city will do given that in each policy the city is the "actor." Policies set visions but they do not regulate, thus implementation strategies should be left to the regulatory documents. Policies should be located where people will look for them. Each policy should add value, which cannot be achieved if vague language is used. Policies should be clear in regard to priorities, but specific prioritization schemes should be left to the implementation strategies that go along with the policies. Policies should not include lists; lists belong in implementation plans, narrative sections, or in appendices.

The Comprehensive Plan is a living document that evolves as the city evolves. Over the years, the concept of level of service has changed. The Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1989 indicated that traveling on arterials should not be too inconvenient, time consuming or unsafe. The 1993 Comprehensive Plan established level of service standards in each of the city in light of growth management objectives. Policies regarding multimodal level of service measures, standards and guidelines were adopted in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. The intent is to establish multimodal concurrency in the 2021 Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

Mr. McDonald said in developing the draft policy recommendations before the Commission, staff looked to two sources, beginning with the adopted Transportation Element policies. Staff reviewed each policy in the Transportation Element to determine if the multimodal vision expresses the current vision. The process included reviewing the policies to determine if there are changed circumstances from when the policy was adopted in 2015. The language, format

and content of each policy was reviewed in light of the tips for writing effective policies. Recommendations were formulated to retain, edit or repeal certain policies. Many of the policies recommended to be repealed are actually implementation strategies which should be housed instead in the Mobility Implementation Plan.

The second source of policies is the concurrency principles approved by the Commission on April 22. Staff reviewed those principles for consistency with the Transportation Element policies. Some of the principles were found to be embedded in existing policies, and it was also found that some of the principles could be converted into policy statements. Policies that supported similar action were consolidated by staff into a single policy recommendation.

Mr. McDonald shared with the Commission a list of existing Transportation Element policies recommended by staff to be amended. He noted the addition of policy TR-73 to the staff recommended list given how important the policy is in collaborating with the transit agencies to make investments along the Frequent Transit Network. Additionally, the policy dovetails well with the MMLOS performance metrics and targets. He also presented the Commissioners with a list of six proposed new policies that were derived from the approved concurrency principles. With regard to policies New E and New F, he proposed substituting the word "gap" in place of "deficiency."

Commissioner Ting commented that in general he likes the idea of multimodal concurrency as a way of moving the city forward. He voiced concern, however, that some key aspects of the current system could be lost with some of the proposed policy revisions, including the notion of trying to reduce congestion. Each policy should be looked at with a critical eye and in light of a long-term view. There should be policies that encourage people to use different modes but without sacrificing the experience of the transportation system for the long term.

Commissioner Teh voiced his agreement with the comments made by staff and offered no changes or recommendations in regard to the multimodal concurrency aspect.

Commissioner Beason concurred with the multimodal approach and said she particularly agreed with the need to avoid losing sight of the need to accommodate residents in terms of reducing congestion.

Chair Marciante said she also concurred with the multimodal approach. She also agreed that the standards and performance targets do not water down the system, and suggested the policies should reflect the intent to maintain a quality transportation network. More should be said about what the city intends its multimodal transportation system to be like.

Mr. McDonald encouraged the Commissioners to indicate what direction the specific policies should go and to then allow staff to capture that intent in edits for additional review by the Commission.

With regard to policy TR-2, Commissioner Ting voiced concern that as drafted the policy seems to be saying that trying to reduce vehicle congestion is inconsistent with the multimodal approach. He said he hoped the city would be able to do both. The congestion problem cannot be solved with a flip of a switch and will require a lot of hard thought, but the draft policy language implies the city does not believe congestion is something that should be addressed. Taking the wider view, he said the draft language could mean the city wants all modes to be available to everyone everywhere.

Chair Marciante said the language of the current policy TR-2 is very directional in seeking to improve the network. The draft language is more about offering options but says nothing about quality. She said she did not oppose moving away from mentioning congestion specifically given the focus on a multimodal approach. Rather than "provide mobility options for all modes," the language should focus on improving the mobility network quality and the mobility experience for all users.

Commissioner Ting voiced his support for taking that approach given that it speaks to the quality of each of the options. The policy is not about one mode versus the other, rather it is about lifting up all modes.

Mr. McDonald said one of the challenges in drafting policy language is that it should not be too prescriptive. He agreed the intent of the policy could be expanded. He noted his support for including the notion of improving the system for users.

Turning to the draft language for policy TR-20, Commissioner Ting asked staff to articulate the difference between a performance management area and an MMA. Mr. McDonald said the MMAs are the 14 geographic areas used for concurrency. The Commission has long been interested in looking at different geographic areas for monitoring the performance of different modes. Having 14 MMAs is too many in terms of vehicle performance, but it might be about right in terms of pedestrian facilities performance. In the Mobility Implementation Plan work, the Commission will take a close look at the geography, possibly maintaining MMAs for some purposes while providing for different geographic areas for other purposes.

Consultant Chris Breiland with Fehr & Peers said the current MMAs are centered around the performance of autos at intersections. The performance management area approach involves looking at all modes, including autos, but recognizes that the geographic areas will be at different scales for different modes. The intent of the policy language is to recognize that different modes have different travel patterns. One reason for deliberately linking the TFP and the Mobility Implementation Plan together is to fully integrate the different geographies.

Chair Marciante noted that "Mobility Management Areas" is capitalized, which would seem to imply that there is a specific definition somewhere, whereas "performance management areas" is not capitalized. She asked if the intent is to provide a definition of performance management areas. If there is, the term should be capitalized. Mr. McDonald agreed that capitalizing the term would be appropriate as it will be defined in the Mobility Implementation Plan.

Mr. McDonald pointed out that all of the action verbs in the draft of policy TR-20 were derived from the Council ordinance establishing the Complete Streets process.

With respect to policy TR-30, Commissioner Ting asked what performance targets will be established in the Mobility Implementation Plan. He noted the policy references an external document and said he wondered what that document would say as the Commission approves the policy in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. McDonald said it is not yet known what the targets will be, but it is known what the metrics will be as they have been approved by the Commission. The Mobility Implementation Plan will describe the targets for each of the modes. The targets will articulate the expected performance relative to the metric, and will also be the performance target relative to completeness of the system.

Chair Marciante said she found it a little strange to put the policy before the actual plan. She

allowed, however, that policy is sometimes aspirational and indicative of the vehicle upon which regulations will be based. The Commission will recommend the policy as part of the process but ultimately will not own it, whereas the Commission will own the Mobility Implementation Plan.

Commissioner Ting asked why the word "prioritize" was retained in policy TR-22 and some of the other policies. Mr. McDonald said it would be used as a guideline in the Mobility Implementation Plan to establish prioritization tools; it will identify the priority investments to meet MMLOS performance targets.

Commissioner Ting asked what other goals are being de-prioritized or ignored, if any, given the language of the policy. Chair Marciante said she read the policy to mean the goal is to prioritize the transportation system improvements, not the policy itself. Mr. McDonald confirmed that as the intent of the policy. Commissioner Ting said that could be clarified.

Chair Marciante questioned use of the word "concurrency" in policy TR-22. Mr. McDonald agreed the word could be dropped in favor of just using the term "performance management area" as used elsewhere. Performance management areas are related to project definition and prioritization, not to concurrency.

Chair Marciante noted for the record that there was Commissioner concurrence in regard to Policies TR-2, TR-22 and TR-30, with some minor amendments to be incorporated by staff.

Commissioner Ting asked about the proposal to repeal policy TR-29. He noted that there are not mode-specific standards, but there are concepts in the policy that could be applied to MMLOS. Chair Marciante concurred, noting that the concepts could either be housed in a separate policy or integrated into policy TR-2. Somewhere the desired outcomes of the network need to be described. Mr. McDonald said staff would work on that.

Commissioner Beason agreed that policy TR-2 is where those issues should be spelled out as a way of outlining the global big picture.

Chair Marciante pointed out that the policy revisions have triggered the loss of the term "concurrency standard." Mr. McDonald referred to the language of proposed new policies A and B.

Chair Marciante noted there was Commission concurrency in regard to policy TR-34.

Mr. McDonald pointed out a typo in policy TR-73, noting that "travel time" should read "travel speeds.…"

Chair Marciante proposed including a policy that explains the interrelationships of the various elements. Commissioner Ting said that would be helpful. He said he understood why TR-73 was added back into the mix, but added that it feels like a lower level implementation detail as opposed to a policy. Mr. Breiland said that sort of thing often is housed in the narrative of the Comprehensive Plan. Policies can get very bogged down where there is too much comingling with the code. The code gets updated with ordinance approvals, whereas the Comprehensive Plan update is a separate process, and if they are tied too closely together, the code can be out of consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

There was concurence regarding policy TR-73.

Moving on to the staff transportation policy recommendations, Commissioner Ting asked if the policies could be written to have the performance management areas each individually meet the concurrency standards like is the current approach for vehicles for each MMA. Mr. McDonald said the short answer is no. The recommended definition of concurrency is the aggregate of citywide supply relative to the aggregate of citywide demand. The individual modes and the individual geographic areas will have individual performance targets that will either be met or identified as having a gap. The evaluation of system performance will identify the projects needed to address performance gaps. The intent is to move away from an area-by-area concurrency standard to a citywide concurrency standard that equates supply and demand and manages the system on a smaller geography with specific performance targets. The approach represents a best practice developed by staff and the consultant team.

Commissioner Ting noted that the appendix to the 2017 report references the creation of different areas for concurrency measurements, which at the time appeared to be a best practice. He asked what has changed that the focus should be on moving to a single citywide concurrency standard. Mr. Breiland said it has always been the recommendation to stick with a single citywide concurrency tracking approach. There was interest on the part of the Commission and staff in 2017 to explore options for breaking apart the current approach to track concurrency across different zones. The principle challenge lies in tracking the demand as it moves across different zones, given that vehicle trips do not stay in small areas, making tracking demand generated in one part of the city computationally intense. What has changed is the idea of performance management areas, allowing for monitoring of the performance of the system on a smaller geography and identifying projects needed to achieve the intended performance, while relating it back to tracking the demand on a citywide level. It is easy to get performance metrics in a performance management area, but difficult to calculate mobility unit supply and demand within the same zone. When tracking the mobility unit demand and the supply it consumes, there is a proportionate amount of supply that gets consumed across different zones. A trip generated in the Downtown can travel into East Bellevue or South Bellevue, and it is very complex to calculate how much of the mobility units demand is attributed to needing supply in South Bellevue versus East Bellevue. It is even more complex when trying to run it through all possible combinations.

Chair Marciante commented that New A is a bit dry. She suggested that "employ a multimodal approach to transportation concurrency" is too abstract for anyone to understand who is not part of the process. The policy should be clearly written to lay out exactly what is being described.

Commissioner Beason concurred. She said the policy as written is vague and it is difficult to figure out what it is are trying to accomplish. More clarity is needed.

Commissioner Ting commented that New A references a multimodal approach to concurrency that meets performance targets. It is not clear, however, exactly what that means. It could mean that the performance targets must be met, yet the fact is the targets do not have to be met in order to meet concurrency. The concern is that while the plan sounds good to most people, everyone seems to have their own conception of what the plan actually is. Those who say they agree with the plan may not in fact be agreeing on the same thing.

Mr. McDonald said he appreciated the input. He agreed the language of New A is vague and noted that there are actually two ideas in the policy, which goes against the cardinal rule of policy drafting. He said he would work to clarify the intent of the policy and to separate it into

A.1 and A.2.

Commissioner Ting suggested there should be mode-specific standards in outlining what the transportation system should look like. New A talks about transportation concurrency, which implies standards since concurrency is about standards. If there is a requirement to meet performance targets, those targets should be spelled out in detail at the policy level for the different modes.

Chair Marciante agreed in the sense that the policies should clarify what the performance targets refer to. The first policy should explain the multimodal approach, and then it will need to be explained that there will be different targets for different modes in different areas of the city. All of that will require being specific.

With regard to New B, Commissioner Ting called out the need to determine how to look at performance management areas, and to reference performance metrics, which are easier to calculate than mobility units.

Chair Marciante voiced concern about using the term "mobility units" in a policy. She said it is not clear to the public exactly what is meant by the term means. Either the term should be defined and capitalized, or some other language should be used to describe the intent. Mr. McDonald said the options would be to come up with a different term for mobility units that is more easily understood, or to define it and capitalize it. Mr. Breiland proposed the latter since it will be in the Traffic Standards Code, which is the regulatory document for concurrency.

Commissioner Ting said it was his understanding that a mobility unit demand is different from a mobility unit supply. One is based on person trips and the other is based on something else. Mr. Breiland explained that mobility unit is a term of art that links to the fact that the number of person trips can be quantified for each development. It can also identify the type of transportation system needed to achieve the performance targets in the Mobility Implementation Plan. The mobility unit is the element that says when the system is built to meet the performance targets, the person trips demand will be met. Mobility unit is a way to link person trip demand with a list of investments across multiple modes that are tied to their performance. If standards are set for all the modes in all the different parts of the city, the odds that the city will run into an issue where it cannot simultaneously meet the standards at one point in the future is very high. The mobility unit is the way to ensure implementation of the system set out to be accomplished at a rate that is concurrent with the amount of demand that is added to the system by growth. Commissioner Ting called for including a definition for both and to make them operational.

Commissioner Beason agreed that the issue is the need for clarification in regard to the terms. She also agreed with the need to look at the system globally rather than as individual elements. Having clear definitions will help everyone understand.

With regard to New C, Chair Marciante asked what the word "recalibrate" means in terms of a program. Mr. McDonald said essentially it references rebalancing the supply and demand of mobility in each update of the TFP. With each update of the TFP, there is a new land use forecast and a new financial forecast which must be matched up. Chair Marciante said "balance" is a far better word than "recalibrate" for the policy.

Chair Marciante asked what "multimodal concurrency program" is called under the existing approach. Mr. McDonald said it is simply called transportation concurrency, which is a simply

intersection V/C in the Mobility Management Areas. He allowed that the word "program" may not be necessary in the policy. Mr. Breiland said transportation concurrency is clearly defined in state law. He suggested it was at the Commission's discretion whether or not to include the word multimodal in the policy. It will be clearly defined in the Traffic Standards Code.

Chair Marciante suggested the policy should call for balancing the transportation system through a multimodal approach in each update of the TFP. Mr. Breiland said under the new approach, one key purpose of the TFP is to balance the supply and demand of the transportation system. He agreed that New C should emphasize that point.

Commissioner Ting agreed with the need to be clear about what New C is talking about. With regard to New D, he asked if the key issue is compliance with the GMA, and asked how it is different from New A. Mr. Breiland said New D strives to get to the definition pieces the Commission asked for. He allowed that there likely is a better way to do it, however, and agreed that New D overlaps with New A and New C. He agreed with the need to better define what mobility units are and to avoid simply restating what state law is.

Commissioner Ting stressed the need to have some way of understanding what the performance targets are. They will be defined in the Mobility Implementation Plan, but not knowing what the targets are will make it difficult to understand what New E is trying to accomplish.

Chair Marciante suggested New E and New C could be combined. The notion of recalibration uses the performance targets to identify gaps and describe their size during the TFP update process. Mr. McDonald agreed that New E is more of a how than a what policy. The targets and performance management areas are talked about elsewhere. The prioritization process will be the mechanism for looking at gaps and determining their size.

Commissioner Beason suggested about half of the New policies could be consolidated. She agreed there needs to be language included that gives an overall understanding of the intent.

Commissioner Ting noted that New F specially calls out land use context and environmental priorities. He agreed that it makes sense to do that but asked if there is a specific reason why those are specifically called out as opposed to other Council priorities such as equity, diversity and economic development. Mr. McDonald said there is a long list of considerations that go into identifying project priorities. Lists, once started, are often incomplete, so the better approach might be not to start a list in a policy.

Commissioner Ting suggested the policies should include the notion of watching for congestion. For many in Bellevue, congestion is an issue. While it cannot be magically solved, it will be important for people to understand that in the near term there is a goal for tackling the problem until there is an overall long-term solution that will work across all modes.

Chair Marciante proposed incorporating a reference to improving the travel experience. She allowed that for many that will be a reference to congestion relative to vehicles. Transportation planners choose not to talk about congestion in light of all the other non-vehicular metrics, but there should be some reference to the experience of drivers on the roadways.

Commissioner Beason said she liked the words "flow" and "efficiency" and "quality" in terms of both life and commuting for work or for recreation. She agreed the word congestion has a specific negative connotation for most people, and said there are other words that can indicate

a focus on flow, efficiency and systems that move people around the city.

Mr. McDonald said he believed the work on the policies would incorporate Commission recommendations and could be wrapped up at the May 27 Commission meeting ahead of introducing some components of the Mobility Implementation Plan, such as performance targets and performance management areas. There is also an initial equity approach to doing project prioritization that may be ready to be shared at that meeting.

8.   APPROVAL OF MINUTES

      A.   April 8, 2021
      B.   April 22, 2021

Commissioner Ting called attention to the last paragraph of page 7 and proposed deleting from the first sentence "…said to him the fundamental principles are indeed principles."

Absent objection, the minutes of April 8, 2021 were approved as submitted, and the minutes of April 22, 2021, were approved as amended.

9.   UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10.   NEW BUSINESS – None

11.   ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

12.   REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

Mr. McDonald briefly reviewed the Commission's calendar of meeting dates and agenda items.

13.   ADJOURNMENT

Chair Marciante adjourned the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

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Secretary to the Transportation Commission   Date