

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

August 6, 2024
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Stokes and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding.

Mayor Robinson said that she, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian, Councilmember Lee and Councilmember Zahn attended the Children's Business Fair. She said the winner of the entrepreneurial award, Samaira Bhatia, was invited by Councilmember Lee to tonight's meeting. Ms. Robinson congratulated her on the award, and everyone applauded her accomplishment.

Mayor Robinson noted that Aryaman Sinha, 14 years old, raised \$10,000 to fund and organize the event.

Samaira Bhatia, 10 years old, thanked Mayor Robinson and the Council for their support and encouragement and thanked Councilmember Lee for recognizing her at the Children's Business Fair. She had a gluten-free bakery booth at the fair and said her mother has an auto-immune disorder that is triggered when a person eats gluten. She said it is difficult to find healthy, tasty gluten-free products. She and her mother began experimenting with making gluten-free baked goods in recent years and she decided to start her business. She expressed appreciation for the award and said she was honored to be at the Council meeting.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

Deputy City Clerk Karin Roberts called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Councilmember Stokes led the flag salute.

(a) Black Business Month Proclamation

Councilmember Lee read the proclamation recognizing August 2024 as Black Business Month in Bellevue and encouraged the community to support local Black-owned businesses.

Tracy Brown, Owner and Principal Consultant of the Equity Leadership Collaborative, thanked the Council for the proclamation. She noted that economic stability is an important factor in the social determinants of health, education and housing security. She said Black entrepreneurs provide vital resources, skills, talents and services for the community and overall economy.

Kevin Henry noted that he worked for the City of Bellevue for 20 years and helped create and direct the diversity program. He said Bellevue was a leader in recognizing businesses working in the community and drawing on the strength of diversity. His business, KPH Media LLC, provides strategic planning, DEI training, communications training, writing services and video production for nonprofit organizations, small and large businesses, city agencies, church groups and others. He encouraged the City to connect with and support local minority-owned businesses.

Vania Bynum thanked the Council for recognizing Black-owned businesses. She said she came to this area as an engineer in 1995 and is now a dancer, instructor and choreographer. She said she initially worked more in Seattle and other communities. However, in recent years she has met people in Bellevue who truly appreciate diversity. She thanked the City for their efforts to support diversity and the arts. She is the founder of Vania Bynum Arts and Education based in Bellevue, where she also lives. Her mission is to uplift communities through the power of art, education and transformational stories that deepen the connection to African-American and other cultures in the African diaspora. Ms. Bynum said they celebrate cultural differences by nurturing diversity and amplifying the voices of all artists. She expressed appreciation for the City, the community and Dr. Linda Whitehead, the City's Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer.

Dr. Whitehead said the previous three speakers have been part of the planning committee for the Bellevue International Festival to be held on August 17 at Crossroads Park. She thanked Amazon for providing 500 backpacks with school supplies for local students.

(b) International Overdose Awareness Day Proclamation

Councilmember Zahn read the proclamation recognizing August 31, 2024 as International Overdose Awareness Day in Bellevue and encouraged the community to support education, awareness and increased access to life-saving treatment options. She noted that 1,300 people in King County died of overdoses in 2023 and 630 people have died so far this year.

Keith Allen, Medical Services Officer (MSO) and Battalion Chief, Bellevue Fire Department, thanked the Council for the proclamation. He said the prevalence of opioids affects the community on a daily basis and first responders carry Narcan, an overdose-reversing medication. He noted that the City recently hired its first opioid use disorder social worker.

Brian Snyder, Firefighter/Paramedic, said he has worked in Bellevue for 21 years and has encountered opioid use in community members ranging from individuals who are well off to others who are experiencing homelessness. He encouraged support for increasing awareness and access to treatment.

(c) India Day Proclamation

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis read the proclamation recognizing August 15, 2024, as India Day in Bellevue, noting the shared values of democracy, diversity and inclusion.

Anand Sane, a longtime Bellevue resident and representative of the Indian community, thanked the Council for recognizing India Day and for the City's commitment to supporting and celebrating diversity.

Debadutta Dash, representing the Consulate General of India, Seattle, invited the public to the celebration of India's 78th Independence Day on August 15 at City Hall Plaza.

At 6:35 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a break to allow staff to address technology issues affecting the live-streaming of the meeting. The meeting resumed at approximately 6:57 p.m.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4. Oral Communications

Deputy City Clerk Karin Roberts said staff was unable to restore the audio function of the live-stream for the remainder of the meeting. However, a video accompanied by the audio component would be available the following day on the City's web site.

Mayor Robinson noted that individuals are not allowed to disrupt the Council meeting, which includes talking out of turn or without permission, interrupting or making sounds while someone else is speaking, and approaching Councilmembers or City staff during the meeting. She asked all speakers to express themselves without name-calling, taunting or disparaging others.

Deputy City Clerk Roberts said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Persons speaking to items on the agenda will be called first and if time remains, others will be called. The presiding officer is authorized to give preference to individuals who have not spoken to the Council within the past 60 days or who are speaking to items that will come before the Council in the upcoming 60 days.

(a) Mariya Frost, Transportation Director, Kemper Development Company, expressed support for the Transportation Commission's recommendations regarding the Bike Bellevue program, including the recommendation to remove Bel-Red Road from consideration. She said this recommendation was the result of hours of discussion and hundreds of communications from residents, workers and business owners. The decision was also informed by an analysis indicating that the potential modifications would

adversely impact the function of the roadway. Ms. Frost expressed concern that the City staff memo indicates the project might be considered for further study in the future. She said Kemper Development Company opposes additional work that would implement costly and unsafe bike lanes on Bel-Red Road when there is broad community support and a need for funding to complete Spring Boulevard. Ms. Frost encouraged the Council to accept the Transportation Department's recommendation.

- (b) Nicole Myers thanked the Council for providing the process for the Transportation Commission's review and community engagement to develop the Bike Bellevue program. She commended the City's dedication to safe streets and Vision Zero goals. She encouraged the City to consider additional bike-related opportunities. She noted the need for connections to transit and for north-south travel improvements for cyclists. She encouraged the City to continue to study the feasibility of the Spring Boulevard temporary connection. She encouraged pedestrian improvements as well. She asked the City to consider negotiating a discounted bus fare when cyclists need to travel through an area that has not had safety improvements. Ms. Myers said she appreciated the City's thoughtful approach and deliberative process.
- (c) Benjamin Slivka said he has cycled throughout this region and in seven other states and at least 15 other countries. He expressed concern about efforts to prohibit removing certain traffic lanes for dedicated bike lanes. He expressed concern about road safety for cyclists.
- (d) Anne Coughlin said she participated in the Lake Hills neighborhood walk in July and enjoyed getting to know Councilmembers and City staff. She said she recently watched the Council's budget discussion and was surprised by the number of individuals requesting funding for the use of taxpayers' dollars. She said several costly projects, including the Grand Connection, are already underway. She asked the Council to focus on funding essential services, public safety and roads. She noted increasing taxes by King County and asked the Council to avoid further taxes.
- (e) Carl Vander Hoek, Vander Hoek Corporation, said he opposed City staff's recommendation regarding the Bike Bellevue program. He said that although the Transportation Commission recommended that Bel-Red Road be categorized for removal from consideration for bike lanes, staff's memo indicates an interest in further study. He said the City's study demonstrated that vehicle travel speeds on Bel-Red Road would be reduced from 14 miles per hour to eight miles per hour with the addition of bike lanes. He said a recent Bellevue Chamber of Commerce survey indicated that 70 percent of residents do not support repurposing vehicle lanes for bike lanes. Mr. Vander Hoek said the SR 520 trail, Spring Boulevard, light rail and the Northup Way corridor approved under the Bike Bellevue program represent parallel equivalent routes that would avoid conflicts, increase safety and avoid the removal of critical vehicle capacity.
- (f) Kelli Refer, Executive Director of Move Redmond, said the Redmond City Council followed Bellevue's lead in adopting the Vision Zero program and unanimously approved a buffered bike lane on Bel-Red Road that included the removal of one lane of

vehicle traffic. Ms. Refer said Move Redmond looks forward to Bellevue joining Redmond to provide a safer, more accessible biking future. She encouraged the City to make data-based decisions to provide safe infrastructure that reduces roadway speeds. She said the implementation of bike lanes will foster an increase in bicycle usage. She said the lanes are also used by people in wheelchairs and by those using scooters.

- (g) Christopher Randels, Complete Streets Bellevue, noted his opposition to the proposed Bike Bellevue plan and to staff's recommendation. He thanked Mayor Robinson for her previous direction to staff to explore the community's requests for expanding funding for the rapid implementation of Vision Zero infrastructure. He said the Bike Bellevue name undersells the true scope and importance of the project because it limits the discussion to the benefits for cyclists. He noted the comprehensive safety benefits of the Vision Zero plan. He said 14 people have been seriously injured or killed over the past 10 years on Bel-Red Road. On Northup Way, four people have been seriously injured or killed. He asked the Council to review the Transportation Commission's recommendations to judge whether they meet the original intent of the Vision Zero program.
- (h) Valentina Vaneeva said that Transportation Commissioners, before taking the final vote to remove Bel-Red Road segments from the Bike Bellevue program, acknowledged they did not understand why Bel-Red Road is important to cyclists. She said there are a number of businesses and amenities on Bel-Red Road. She expressed opposition to the Transportation Commission's recommendation.
- (i) Ken Lyons expressed appreciation for the City's leadership and support of T-Mobile and the City's investments to improve the process for installing 5G equipment throughout Bellevue. He introduced Holly Camp from T-Mobile and Jodie Alberts from the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Lyons said attendees at the Bellevue Family 4th event in Downtown Park experienced fast wireless connections enabled by T-Mobile's new 5G small wireless facilities. He thanked the Council, City Manager's Office, Transportation Department and the City's review and inspection staff for their assistance and support.
- (j) Holly Camp said the City is critical to T-Mobile's success. She thanked the City's leadership and staff for their work to implement 5G improvements in the Downtown Park. She said 5G technology will provide ongoing benefits for residents, businesses and first responders.
- (k) Jodie Alberts thanked the City for working with the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce's 5G subcommittee to create efficiencies in the permitting and review process.
- (l) Dr. Harlan Gallinger, President of the Issaquah School Board, said a number of Bellevue residents attend two elementary schools in the Issaquah School District. He said a District bond measure totaling \$642.3 million will be presented to voters this fall to focus on safety and security and to increase high school capacity. He requested an opportunity to present more information under a future Council agenda item and to ask the Council to take a position on the bond measure.

- (m) Superintendent Heather Tow-Yick, Issaquah School District, introduced herself and noted that she has been with the district for two years. She noted the importance of education and said she started her career as a teacher.
- (n) Pamela Johnston commented regarding the sign code amendment presented under Agenda Item 10(b). She expressed concern regarding extensive growth and the potential negative impact of the increase in signage and temporary signage. She asked the Council to consider the impacts on neighborhoods and the overall community. She said more than 90 signs about Bike Bellevue were removed citywide. She said signage along roads can be distracting to drivers.

5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.

6. Report of the City Manager: None.

7. Council Business and New Initiatives: None.

8. Consent Calendar

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:

- (a) Council Minutes
Minutes of July 16, 2024 Regular Meeting
Minutes of July 23, 2024 Regular Meeting
- (b) Ordinance No. 6803 authorizing execution of a grant agreement with The Bacon Family Foundation to accept \$700,000 in grant funding for Operation Water Rescue 425; amending the 2023-2024 budget of the Operating, Grants, Donations and Special Reserves Fund in the amount of \$700,000; and authorizing expenditures of said grant funds.
- (c) Ordinance No. 6804: 1) authorizing the execution of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the City of Bellevue and King County Metro for design of the South Kirkland Park and Ride Intersections Project: and, 2) amending the 2023-2029 General Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan to increase the budget for Traffic Safety Improvements (CIP Plan No. PW-R-46) by \$625,000.00.
- (d) Resolution No. 10399 authorizing the execution of a Professional Services Agreement with Concord Engineering in the amount of \$555,436.06, plus all applicable taxes, for the South Kirkland Park and Ride Intersections Project.

- (e) Resolution No. 10400 authorizing execution of a grant agreement with the Washington State Department of Commerce to accept up to \$1,942,985 of Connecting Housing to Infrastructure Program (CHIP) grant funding for the reimbursement of waived system development charges for the Bridge Spring District project.
- (f) Resolution No. 10401 authorizing the conveyance of an easement that includes two areas to Puget Sound Energy Inc. (PSE) for installation, operation, and maintenance of electrical underground facilities that serves parcels including the City of Bellevue property located at 10201 NE 4th St, Bellevue, WA 98004 known as Bellevue Downtown Park.
- (g) Resolution No. 10402 authorizing execution of a professional services agreement with SRG Partnership Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$736,010, plus all applicable taxes to perform architectural, engineering, and change management services for the Bellevue City Hall 1W Office Space Tenant Improvement project.
- (h) Resolution No. 10403 authorizing execution of a four-year Professional Services Contract with HDR Engineering, Inc, to provide on-call construction management, inspection, and support for multiple locally and Levy funded projects scheduled for completion over the next four years, in an amount not to exceed \$2,000,000, plus all applicable taxes, with an option to extend the contracts for an additional year for \$500,000, plus all applicable taxes, with the same terms and conditions.
- (i) Resolution No. 10404 authorizing execution of a four-year Professional Services Contract with HNTB Corporation to provide on-call construction management, inspection, and support for multiple locally and Levy funded projects scheduled for completion over the next four years, in an amount not to exceed \$2,000,000, plus all applicable taxes, with an option to extend the contracts for an additional year for \$500,000, plus all applicable taxes, with the same terms and conditions.
- (j) Resolution No. 10405 authorizing execution of an agreement with Accord Contractors LLC for the renovation of the challenge course at Eastgate Park in the amount of \$1,048,820, plus all applicable taxes.
- (k) Resolution No. 10406 authorizing execution of all documents necessary to implement settlement of the claim brought by Sergei Dreizin in the amount of \$132,248.88.
- (l) Resolution No. 10407 authorizing the purchase and installation of new play equipment at Hidden Valley Park and demolition of existing play equipment by Landscape Structures Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$672,448, plus all applicable taxes.

9. Public Hearings: None.

10. Study Session

- (a) Summary of Transportation Commission Recommendations to Transportation Director on Bike Bellevue Corridors

Acting City Manager Diane Carlson introduced staff's update regarding the Transportation Commission's recommendations for the Bike Bellevue program corridors.

Andrew Singelakis, Transportation Director, said the Transportation Commission was methodical and deliberate in its consideration of the Bike Bellevue program and the extensive public input. He said the commission largely concurred with staff's recommendations, with the exception of the BelRed corridor. Mr. Singelakis said his inclination is to accept the staff recommendation regarding those corridors and to refer them to the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP).

Drew Magill, Vice Chair, Transportation Commission, acknowledged the hard work and professionalism of staff in working through the Bike Bellevue plan. He praised the extensive engagement of Bellevue workers, residents and business owners throughout the process. He said the Bike Bellevue program envisions the implementation of low-cost, rapid-build bicycle network facilities on existing streets in the Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed areas.

Mr. Magill presented a map of the Bike Bellevue corridors and recalled that the Council initiated the program in March 2023. He said staff prepared preliminary design concepts for 11 candidate Bike Bellevue corridors, nine of which originally required the repurposing of travel lanes to accomplish the corridor improvements. Since that time, staff and the commission worked together to meet the program's goals without removing travel lanes. Mr. Magill said there has been strong community interest in the plan with a wide range of viewpoints. There is widespread support for more bike facilities and improved access and safety. He said the commission heard strong opposition to converting travel lanes to bike facilities from both residents and businesses, including from many who support overall bike infrastructure. He said the commission has reviewed approximately 1,000 public comments to date.

On March 25, 2024, the Council provided direction to the Transportation Commission to prepare a recommendation for each Bike Bellevue corridor consistent with seven categories. The commission has reviewed nine of the 11 Bike Bellevue corridors, and its recommendations represent the seven categories (e.g., corridors that do not require travel lane repurposing, high injury network corridors, corridors to be implemented as permanent infrastructure instead of rapid-implementation design, etc.).

Vice Chair Magill said the commission worked with staff to review the corridors and, with mutually agreed upon changes, approved staff's recommendations. He said five of the corridors can be provided without the repurposing of travel lanes and one requires further study. Three corridors were recommended for removal from further study by the commission but not by staff. Those three corridors are on a three-mile stretch of Bel-Red Road between NE 12th Street and Spring Boulevard. The Transportation Commission recommended by a majority vote that the

three corridors be placed in Category 6, corridors that would no longer be considered. Vice Chair Magill said the commission's rationale related to safety for cyclists and impacts on vehicle capacity.

Kevin McDonald, Principal Planner, provided an overview of the commission's recommendations for nine of the 11 Bike Bellevue corridors. The commission provided its first set of recommendations to the Transportation Director after a study session on April 11, 2024. The commission recommended moving forward with final design and implementation of three corridors: 6B, NE 2nd Street (Bellevue Way to 112th Avenue NE); 7, Lake Washington Boulevard; and 9, Wilburton route. These three corridors fall into Category 1 and would not require travel lane repurposing.

On May 23, the commission discussed corridor 6A, NE 1st/NE 2nd Street (100th Avenue NE to Bellevue Way). The commission recommended, instead of the Bike Bellevue design concept, shared lane markings, traffic calming, wayfinding and a reduced speed limit of 20 miles per hour. The commission indicated this would retain vehicle capacity and maintain existing and planned driveway access.

Mr. McDonald said the commission reviewed corridor 2, NE 12th Street (100th Avenue NE to 108th Avenue NE) on June 13 under Category 7, corridors that would be implemented as permanent bike infrastructure rather than with rapid-implementation design. The Bike Bellevue plan required repurposing a travel lane. However, the commission instead recommended installing a multipurpose path behind the curb on the north side of NE 12th Street. Design and construction will be coordinated with private redevelopment west of 102nd Avenue NE. The corridor is funded separately from the Bike Bellevue program.

Three corridors were discussed by the commission on July 11. Corridor 1, Northup Way, contains three segments: 1) Segment A, narrow vehicle travel lanes as feasible to provide a buffer to existing bike lanes, 2) Segment B, implement back-of-curb directional bike lanes as permanent infrastructure through development review and public projects, and 3) Segment C, refer to the next Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) update and prepare design options for consideration.

Corridor 11, 140th Avenue NE, renews existing bike lane markings and wayfinding. Mr. McDonald said the commission recommended referring this corridor to the TFP for further design to develop options for consideration and to provide a connection to Spring Boulevard from 140th Avenue NE on a short segment of Bel-Red Road.

Corridors 3, 4 and 5, Bel-Red Road, were placed in Category 6, corridors that would no longer be considered. The commission's rationale was based on safety concerns for cyclists at driveways and intersections and the desire to maintain vehicle capacity. Mr. McDonald said staff recommends referring this corridor to the TFP for further study, however.

Mr. Singelakis said staff's recommendation to move the Bel-Red Road corridor into the TFP will allow further study of alternatives, potential right-of-way acquisition, environmental constraints, costs and other factors. He said staff will consider the original Bike Bellevue recommendations

as a comparison point and select an alternative. At that point, staff will come back to the Council to present the alternative.

Mr. McDonald said the next step is to take the remaining two Bike Bellevue corridors to the commission for recommendations. Corridor 8, 100th Avenue NE, extends along Bellevue Square between NE 8th Street and NE 4th Street. Corridor 10 is a short segment on 116th Avenue NE, north of NE 12th Street, that could provide a bike connection to bike lanes farther north to Northup Way.

Mr. Singelakis said staff is moving forward with the design of the first four corridors with plans to implement those projects in 2025. He noted that the Mobility Implementation Plan will be updated later this year based on community input. He thanked Transportation commissioners for their hard work and extensive review.

Mayor Robinson thanked Vice Chair Magill for the presentation and for his work with the commission.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, liaison to the Transportation Commission, thanked staff and Vice Chair Magill for the presentation. Mr. Nieuwenhuis noted that the majority of residents and workers want great bike infrastructure in Bellevue. However, there are differences of opinions regarding specific corridors and routes. He encouraged everyone to remember that the commissioners are their neighbors who are working on behalf of the community.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis thanked the public for the hundreds of communications and comments. He said there are several bike infrastructure initiatives beyond the Bike Bellevue program to address bike and pedestrian mobility. As a cyclist, he is enthusiastic about future improvements.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis acknowledged the differences of opinion within the community regarding the Bel-Red Road corridor. He said staff recommended that the Bel-Red corridor be referred to the TFP for further analysis. However, the commission voted to not pursue this option or any further consideration of repurposing bike lanes along the road. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said Bel-Red Road is a major arterial and a heavily used connection between the east and west sides of Bellevue. Given the anticipated growth in the Bel-Red and Wilburton areas, he said it is important to preserve Bel-Red Road for vehicle traffic and to avoid further traffic congestion.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis said the analysis by the City's consultant indicated that any reduction of vehicle lanes on Bel-Red Road would make a bad traffic situation worse, even without considering the planned density for the area. The study indicated that the implementation of bike lanes would reduce vehicle travel speeds from 14 miles per hour to eight miles per hour during peak travel times. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said the commission determined that the SR 520 trail, Spring Boulevard and Northup Way improvements under the Bike Bellevue program provide parallel routes equivalent to Bel-Red Road.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis expressed support for the Transportation Commission's recommendations regarding the Bike Bellevue program and encouraged the completion of Spring Boulevard improvements, including protected bike lanes and wide sidewalks.

Noting staff's recommendation to refer Bel-Red Road to the TFP, Mr. Nieuwenhuis asked how future study and analysis would be different than the current consultant's study and report. Mr. Singelakis said the study would explore acquiring right-of-way and widening the roadway to accommodate bike lanes without repurposing travel lanes. He said the project would need to compete with other TFP projects for funding. In further response to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Singelakis said any future project will be discussed with the Council.

Councilmember Zahn thanked everyone for the robust community engagement. She said the work is grounded in Vision Zero principles and the identification of high-injury corridors. She said 40 percent of emissions are generated by transportation. She said it is not clear to her how removing Bel-Red Road from further consideration as a bike corridor actually makes it safer for all road users. She said there are several schools, a community center, a YMCA and businesses along the corridor. She expressed concern about bicycle safety and asked whether a connection through the Spring District will help access destinations on Bel-Red Road.

Vice Chair Magill concurred that Bel-Red Road is not safe for cyclists and noted that they currently use alternative routes. He said that even if a dedicated bike lane was added, there are approximately 70 intersections and driveways that could potentially cause a hazard. He said the commissioners expressed concern that designating the road as a bike route would be encouraging people to use a route that is not as safe as it could or should be. He said there are alternative safer east-west routes for cyclists.

Councilmember Zahn expressed concern about the commission's recommendation to not consider bike infrastructure on Bel-Red Road, at least for the foreseeable future. In further response to Ms. Zahn, Mr. Singelakis said Spring Boulevard will not be completed until at least 2030 due largely to environmental regulations and permitting processes. He said that repurposing a travel lane might be an option in the future.

Ms. Zahn asked about implementing both a short-term solution and long-term permanent infrastructure. Mr. McDonald said that approach would be very costly. He said the Bel-Red Road early rapid implementation project cost more than \$8 million. He said the Bike Bellevue capital budget had \$4.5 million, which is dedicated to the early implementation projects recommended by the commission. Mr. McDonald said there is no funding for a pilot project on Bel-Red Road at this time.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked staff, the commissioners and the public for their work and collaboration. He stated his understanding that the rapid implementation of a safe complete bike network has been a Council goal. He asked whether the City is moving away from that approach. Mr. Singelakis said there are limited resources, and the first four projects utilize the available \$4.5 million. He said future capital improvement projects could fund additional bike projects. He recalled previous Council direction that repurposing travel lanes should be a last resort.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian suggested that the Council increase the budget for bike rapid implementation projects. He stated his understanding that last resort means an action or decision after all other options have been exhausted. He did not interpret that to mean that a corridor

might be permanently removed from further consideration for the repurposing of lanes from vehicle to bike travel. He suggested a pilot project to study the impacts.

Mr. Malakoutian expressed concern that the competitive TFP process could take too long, potentially up to 10 years, to achieve funding for the Bel-Red Road corridor. Mr. McDonald said implementation could be as early as 3-4 years. He said the TFP identifies priorities and establishes a funding level for moving forward with those priorities. If a project is successful in being prioritized in the TFP, the Council will consider actual funding through the budget process.

Mr. McDonald said the original idea of the Bike Bellevue program was to identify projects for rapid implementation. However, the connected network was predicated on using Capital Investment Program (CIP) funds assigned by the Council along with grant funding of \$18 million. He said the City did not receive the grant funding.

Mr. Malakoutian reiterated his comment that repurposing lanes as a last resort should not mean a corridor could be permanently removed from consideration. He encouraged flexibility and concurred with Councilmember Zahn's suggestion for a pilot project on Bel-Red Road, while continuing to seek grants and other funding.

Mayor Robinson concurred with her colleagues' interest in the rapid implementation of safe and complete bike routes. As a cyclist, there are areas of Bellevue she avoids on her bike due to safety concerns. She noted a gap in the designated bike network on a section of Main Street. She noted the need for safe bike routes to connect to light rail and bus transit. She suggested prioritizing gaps in the bike network throughout Bellevue. Mr. Singelakis said the update to the Mobility Implementation Plan will study missing links.

Mayor Robinson said she appreciated the Transportation Commission's recommendation. However, she suggested that all segments of Corridor 1, Northup Way, should be designated for rapid implementation. Regarding Bel-Red Road, she suggested further study to determine whether it could be a feasible, safe bike route, as reflected in staff's recommendation. Ms. Robinson said she would like to see a pilot project on Corridor 8, 100th Avenue NE and on Corridor 10, 116th Avenue NE. Responding to Ms. Robinson, Mr. Singelakis said both funding and staff resources affect the ability to implement all of the bike infrastructure supported by the Council.

Mayor Robinson said that if a majority of the Council wants to see full rapid implementation, she would like to see a budget proposal from the Transportation Department.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis stated his understanding that tonight's agenda item was intended as an information session. He said it sounded like Mayor Robinson was providing direction to staff regarding the corridors, funding and other resources. Ms. Robinson said she is stating her opinion and articulating what she would like to see related to budgeting.

Councilmember Stokes expressed concern that the consideration of the Bike Bellevue program is going backwards in terms of the rapid implementation of bike infrastructure. He said the City of Redmond and other cities around the country are implementing similar projects despite concerns

and constraints. He said he did not understand the reluctance to move forward on certain aspects of the Bike Bellevue plan. Councilmember Stokes suggested that in the future people will be glad that the City moved forward now. He said the Bike Bellevue program improves conditions for both vehicle traffic and cyclists.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked staff and Vice Chair Magill for the presentation and said it is good to see enthusiasm and interest from the community. He acknowledged the need for more funding to complete the Council's objectives. Responding to Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Singelakis confirmed that Category 3 indicates that a trial or demonstration project would be implemented and evaluated if a travel lane is recommended to be repurposed. Mr. McDonald said there are no current recommendations to move forward with a travel lane repurposing due to Council direction to consider that as a last resort. He said the City has not evaluated all potential alternatives and solutions and therefore staff is not comfortable recommending a lane repurposing at this time.

Mr. Hamilton commended Mr. Singelakis, Assistant Director Paula Stevens, Mr. McDonald and other staff for their leadership in refining the Bike Bellevue program and working with the community. Mr. Hamilton said the Council and staff have received extensive comments from the public and he believes that all viewpoints can be incorporated into further studies and analyses while continuing to move forward. He said a number of corridors will be implemented in 2024 and 2025, which he feels reflects rapid implementation. He said there are rapid implementation goals as well as mid-term and long-term goals.

Mr. Hamilton said he sees moving Corridors 3, 4 and 5 (Bel-Red Road) to Category 5, corridors to be deferred and incorporated into the TFP, as moving them out of the rapid build category into mid-term projects. He said the TFP process is well-designed to guide the City through the necessary steps to successfully build bike infrastructure along any major arterial in Bellevue. He said there is substantial support for moving Corridors 3, 4 and 5 into Category 5 for comprehensive analysis.

Councilmember Lee said he appreciated everyone who has provided public comment to the Council and staff. He said this is a complex topic and the City has been planning and implementing its bike network for approximately 30 years. He encouraged looking at the big picture and considering more complex solutions. He expressed concern about gaps in the bike network. He thanked the Transportation Commission for listening to the public and working through the issues and suggestions. He said public involvement is critical through this process.

Mr. Lee complimented Deputy Mayor Malakoutian's earlier comments. Mr. Lee expressed concern about the time involved with the TFP process. He suggested an approach involving compromise in identifying solutions and encouraged staff to continue to pursue grant funding.

Mayor Robinson noted that a majority of Councilmembers support staff's recommendation to refer the Bel-Red corridor to the TFP process. She suggested an additional study session to discuss values, priorities and the desired path for moving forward.

At 9:05 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 9:15 p.m.

- (b) Council Initiation of a Bellevue City Code Amendment to update the Sign Code consistent with Legal Requirements and Contemporary Sign Design Techniques

City Manager Carlson introduced discussion regarding the initiation of a Bellevue City Code Amendment (BCCA) to update the Sign Code.

Kristina Gallant, Acting Code and Policy Director, said that an update to the Sign Code is prioritized on the 2024-2025 land use work plan. She said staff is seeking Council direction to initiate work to update and amend the code.

Mathieu Menard, Senior Planner, said the goals of the code update are to: 1) ensure that the code meets business needs, including small businesses, and aesthetic objectives, 2) allow contemporary design and technology, 3) simplify and streamline the code, and 4) to align with Reed v. Town of Gilbert and other court decisions. He said the City wants to avoid burdening businesses with excessive expenses to work through the permitting process.

Robbie Sepler, Assistant City Attorney, said the Reed v. Town of Gilbert court case occurred in 2015. The ruling stated that non-commercial signs cannot be regulated based on the content of the sign and cities must regulate all non-commercial signs of the same type in the same manner. The Town of Gilbert originally had different size restrictions for different types of signs (e.g., homeowners association signs, political signs, ideological signs and event signage). Mr. Sepler said cities are allowed to regulate to form (i.e., materials, dimensions, attachment to a building or the ground), location, timing, lighting and safety.

Mr. Menard said the Sign Code amendment is anticipated to be a complete rewriting of the code and will address concerns from the community. He said there is a desire for more street-level signage, especially related to retail establishments. He noted complications in the way the City permits off-premise directional signs. He said there have been requests to allow portable signs. He noted there are differing sign standards throughout the community. He said public input also encourages simplifying and streamlining the permit process. Mr. Menard said there will be internal collaboration between multiple departments, and a consultant will assist with the legal and code analysis.

Mr. Menard said community engagement will follow the BCCA process and will involve the Bellevue Development Committee, business community, neighborhood associations and internal stakeholders. Information about the code amendment process will be provided online and through City newsletters and communications.

If the Council chooses to initiate the BCCA process to update the Sign Code, next steps include hiring a consultant and initiating stakeholder outreach during the third quarter of this year. Staff will update the Council early next year and anticipates Council adoption of the code amendment during the second half of 2025.

Mr. Menard requested Council direction to initiate the BCCA to update the Sign Code.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to initiate work on the Bellevue City Code Amendment to comprehensively update the Sign Code. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the information and expressed support for updating the Sign Code. He said he hears comments from small business owners about the challenge of interpreting and implementing the current code. He said he and Councilmember Hamilton met with the CEO of the Dick's Drive-In chain and learned that they signed a lease with the property owner based on City staff's indication that the signage would be allowed. Unfortunately, that staff person later said the planned signage did not comply with the code. He said the business is located on the back of Crossroads shopping center and would benefit from signage on the adjacent arterials.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis suggested increasing the allowed size (square footage) for signage, considering on-premises signs to include the premise of the building site and not only the specific business, increasing the size of retailer signs, incorporating straightforward design standards, providing technical assistance to business owners, considering the development of a master sign plan to coordinate all signage, ensuring that businesses can locate signs to be visible to the public, and allowing signs on the tops of buildings. He said the iconic business code variance is used in Federal Way and other cities. He asked that staff explore that type of provision for iconic businesses with longevity, cultural or historical significance to the community and/or a proven track record in giving back to the community.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian asked whether contemporary signage would include digital signage. Mr. Menard said that will be studied and acknowledged an interest in digital signage within the business community. Mr. Malakoutian suggested also exploring AI signage.

Councilmember Zahn expressed support for moving forward with the code update. She said she has heard concerns about sign-related regulations from local businesses. She expressed support for simplifying and streamlining the code and for providing flexibility for artistic signs in different shapes and forms. She encouraged broad outreach into the community, including with nonprofit organizations. She suggested studying other cities that have adopted code provisions to comply with current case law. She expressed support for moving forward to update the code.

Councilmember Stokes said that, as a lawyer, he believes the City will need to be careful if considering different regulations for different organizations or businesses based on certain criteria (e.g., identified as iconic), as suggested by Councilmember Nieuwenhuis.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he would like staff to explore the options and to maintain flexibility for specific situations, including iconic businesses that have been in the community for a long time.

Councilmember Hamilton expressed support for offering technical assistance to small businesses. He expressed an interest in the suggestion about signage for iconic businesses, noting that signs can add character to the surrounding area.

Councilmember Lee expressed support for initiating work on the Sign Code, especially to comply with case law.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

11. Land Use: None.

12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions: None.

13. Written Reports

(a) Intergovernmental Affairs Monthly Update

14. Unfinished Business: None.

15. New Business: None.

16. Executive Session: None.

17. Adjournment

At 9:45 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Karin Roberts, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

/kaw