

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION  
STUDY SESSION MINUTES

April 10, 2024  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Cálad, Khanloo, Lu

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: Commissioner Villaveces

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Bhargava, Vice Chair Goepple, Commissioner Ferris

STAFF PRESENT: Thara Johnson, Emil King, Kate Nesse, Gwen Rousseau, Department of Community Development; Kevin McDonald, Department of Transportation; Matt McFarland, City Attorney's Office; Paul Clark, Chair, Parks and Community Services Board

COUNCIL LIAISON: Deputy Mayor Malakoutian

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER  
(6:30 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Commissioner Cálad who presided.

2. ROLL CALL  
(6:31 p.m.)

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Bhargava, Vice Chair Goepple and Commissioner Ferris.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA  
(6:32 p.m.)

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Lu. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khanloo and the motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS OF CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS  
(6:32 p.m.)

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian voiced appreciation for the hard work of the Commission before reporting that the Council meeting on April 8 was focused on financial strategies and the budget process.

5. STAFF REPORTS

(6:33 p.m.)

A. Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Comprehensive Planning Manager Thara Johnson took a few minutes to review the Commission's schedule of upcoming meeting dates and agenda items. The Commissioners were also reminded about the May 1 ARCH meeting at the Together Center. It was also noted that Commissioner Villaveces had sent out information about a potential tour with the city within Kenmore. Anyone interested will need to register for those events.

6. WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

(6:38 p.m.)

Commissioner Cálad took a moment to note that under Ordinance 6752, the topics about which the public may speak during a meeting are limited to subject matters related to the city of Bellevue government and within the powers and duties of the Planning Commission. Additional information about the new rules of decorum governing conduct of the public during meetings can be found in Ordinance 6752.

A. Written Communications

(6:39 p.m.)

Thara Johnson noted that all written communications received by the deadline had been included in the Commission packets. They included comments regarding the topics on the agenda as well as other topics. The additional written comments received after publication of the packets had also been forwarded to the Commissioners.

B. Oral Communications

(6:41 p.m.)

Jodie Alberts spoke on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce PLUSH Committee and gave full support to the staff recommendation, but asked the Commission to consider ensuring transparency and predictability in the transportation policies. Ensuring an adequate transportation network is key to the city. However, subareas to be redeveloped will need adequately sized parcels to create large block developments to reach the growth targets. As a result there should be flexibility where it is infeasible or not proportional to development to construct roads so as to ensure that projects will not be deterred from being built. That has been demonstrated to shut down BelRed projects specifically in the past. It is also critical for purposes of predictability that developers be made aware from the beginning what road standards are required. That will determine the size and feasibility of a project. While it makes sense to have the technical transportation standards in the Transportation Demand Manual, there should be a clear public process required before making any updates to the manual to ensure property owners have notice of such changes. Because developers are tasked with building out the city's infrastructure and housing needs, it is out of necessity that the industry be incentivized and not deterred from helping to achieve the city's vision. If developing in BelRed is infeasible, or if building is unpredictable, changes will not be seen in the subarea. If policies are transparent and projects are seen as financially viable, it will be possible to collectively achieve the transit oriented development community that is envisioned.

Mariya Frost, transportation director for Kemper Development Company, noted the previous submittal by Kemper Development Company and Wallace Properties included a joint letter

asking the city to retain and clarify BelRed subarea plan policy S-BR-54. The staff are recommending repealing the policy. The policy is one of many consequential and substantive policies the Commission has been asked to review. Commissioner Cálad wisely asked for additional time to review and think through the policies and how they will impact the city before the Commission offers its recommendation to the Council. S-BR-54 is the fourth policy in the transportation section of the BelRed subarea plan policies and it calls for the city to design and develop arterial improvements, including added vehicular capacity, transit facilities and non-motorized components to serve travel demand generated by the BelRed plan and the citywide and regional plans. The staff rationale for repealing the policy is faulty. The Transportation Design Manual covers how to build arterials, but the Comprehensive Plan concerns whether and why arterials should be built. Staff have also expressed the belief that the policy is redundant with TR-17, TR-18 and TR-24, all of which have to do with providing multimodal options and complying with the ADA. None of the policies direct the development of arterial improvements specifically to serve the travel demands. S-BR-54 is entirely unique in its direction to provide arterial improvements and connecting them to planned growth. On March 25 the City Council remarked that with the significant density being planned for, arterial lane removals should be a last resort. Kemper Development Company agreed and believes that not only should arterial lanes be preserved, they should continue to be designed and maintained to serve the travel demand created by future density and growth. That is what S-BR-54 is fundamentally about and why it should remain an important part of guiding the city's comprehensive planning efforts in the coming years.

Jessie Clawson spoke representing a landowner of a large assemblage on the corner of 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SE and Spring Boulevard. The Commission was asked to balance proximity to light rail, needed housing and density with the restoration of streams and habitat. If extensive stream buffer requirements are put into place, it will not be possible to develop many of the lots within walking distance of light rail. The result will be a BelRed as it is today with a lot of surface parking lots that drain pollutants directly into damaged habitat streams. The BelRed policies should reflect the balance of housing goals and ecological outcomes rather than off-the-shelf required stream buffers. New development should be viewed as the vehicle through which the city will achieve stream restoration. Private developers for the most part will be the housing providers for the city, and they will probably do much of the work to restore streams. To that end, extraordinary incentives will be required for developers to be able to afford the type of ecological restoration desired by the city. The flexibility that has been built in for the road grid is appreciated. Development agreements that allow and increase the flexibility of certain zoning standards should be encouraged in BelRed. Additional policy considerations were included in the written communication provided to the Commission.

Vic Bishop, legislative chair of the Eastside Transportation Association, noted having submitted written comments to the Commission enumerating issues with several policies. Travel in Bellevue is dominated by the fact that more than 75 percent of all trips are made by car. That needs to be remembered. The advocates for the minor modes of travel should not be allowed to dominate the wording of the Comprehensive Plan. Massive growth is coming to Bellevue in the Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed, and there is no plan to accommodate the traffic growth that will come with it. The purpose of Comprehensive Plan policies is to allow for a transportation system to be developed that will allow for the tremendous growth in person trips the BKR model projects. The policies should reflect the reality that Bellevue is a car-dominated city and will continue to be so. It is nonsense to believe that light rail will solve the city's transportation problems. The city can and should accommodate other modes, but it should not denigrate the street system that supports the businesses and residents. The city has for a long time had aspirational goals for transit and bike ridership, but they have never been achieved. S-BR-56

must be retained and travel lanes should not be removed to accommodate bike lanes.

Betsi Hummer voiced hope that the Planning Commission can prove the public process is alive and well. The call by Commissioners Cálad and Khanloo to slow things down is to be applauded. What has been proposed in the draft must be changed. Sunset Ranch and Fir Terrace have been rezoned from R-5 residential to Institutional and the staff should be asked for a complete explanation of how the EIS came up with the Future Land Use Map two years ago when the Comprehensive Plan studies began. Every time reference is made to rezoning, the staff come back with a reference to the Future Land Use Map, which is confusing. Staff should explain in layman's terms every step of the complex and impactful process of the Comprehensive Plan and how properties will eventually be rezoned. Everyone wants the Comprehensive Plan and rezones to be a reflection of the community, rather than a seeming stunt to further conspiracy theories, such as staff's personal agenda. That can only occur if jargon and planning speak is left off the table. If the Future Land Use Map is not thoroughly questioned, it will be rubber stamped as rezones and the Planning Commission will be responsible for all those changes. The neighbors in Sunset Ranch and Fir Terrace do not want changes to their zoning. They have been in their homes for decades and plan to be there for decades more, with the same rights as any other neighborhood. The state-mandated single family zone changes from HB-1110 will have an inordinate impact on the neighborhood without any rezoning by the city. The neighborhoods are included in the Bellevue College master plan and with the college rezone the city attorney applied the same undefined land use to the neighborhoods. The fact is Bellevue College has had the neighborhoods in its master plan since 1969 and the residents still have their homes.

Alex Tsimerman began with a Nazi salute and called the Commissioners dirty garbage rats, and Deputy Mayor Malakoutian a dirty council pig and a barracuda before addressing Ordinance 6752. The Commissioners were called criminals and dirty crooks for having the rules. The same thing is repeated six times in the ordinance, which is signed by Mayor Robinson and the city attorney. It has not been explained why the same thing is said six times. Bellevue city court cannot dominate because by definition it is a crime by the United States constitution, Supreme Court decisions and other court decisions and the Open Public Meetings Act. When the Commission uses the rules, the Commissioners are all criminals. To avoid the criminality, the Commissioners should all be dismissed. At the last Commission meeting more than 20 people spoke yet the policy only allows 10 people to speak. For 60 years the city did not have that rule, and people were given five minutes to speak, not three minutes, without limit on the number of speakers. It is all an example of stupidity and criminality, which the Councilmembers are. The Commissioners are supposed to be for the people.

Lee Sargent, 16246 NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street, thanked the Commissioners for their work on behalf of the city, and for being tolerant. Trees are important to the city. The tree canopy is something like having a coat of paint on one's house. If inferior paint is used the weather will fade the paint. If good paint is used, it usually lasts a long time and requires less treatment. The tree canopy is also a bit like Body Mass Index, which does not according to experts describe a healthy person, it is only a rule of thumb. When the city has healthy and sustainable trees and allows them to be cut down, it is a problem. Big trees protect the environment and retain water in times of drought. The important thing to remember is that evergreen trees are here all the time and they are important.

Valentina Vaniva, a Bellevue resident living near Crossroads Mall, asked for clarification regarding policy LU-29, which calls for providing walking and bicycle roads to light rail and bus rapid transit areas that are accessible and connected to destinations. What is not clear is what is considered a destination. Currently, walking to the nearest light rail station takes 40 minutes. Taking a bus, including the time to walk to the bus stop, takes 26 to 30 minutes. Riding a bicycle

is not an option because the sidewalks are very narrow and many people use them. The only good option is to drive, but all the way to the destination, not to a light rail station. Clarification is needed how streets and facilities for improvements will be selected.

Nicole Myers asked the Commission to consider impact fees for the construction of schools and other capital facilities. There is billions of dollars of utility infrastructure in the city and the possibility of tripling or more the number is residents means there will be a huge need. Even in areas that do not seem particularly dense in Bellevue, there are instances where even enlarging sidewalks interferes with other things, and the process gets much more complicated. There should be some sort of impact fee to support overall development, not just the construction of new schools. Policy TR-47 references street trees and other aspects of the pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and that is exciting. The FEIS shows there are a huge number of acres in Bellevue in the street rights-of-way that could be used to increase the tree canopy cover. What the vision is for that, however, is not clear outside of arterials.

7. PUBLIC HEARING – None  
(7:08 p.m.)

8. STUDY SESSION  
(7:08 p.m.)

A. Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Policy Changes in the Capital Facilities and Transportation Elements

Assistant Director Emil King took a moment to point out that the city's boards and commissions have done a lot of great work on all of the various elements. The public engagement process undertaken over the past few months has yielded a great number of suggestions and insights that have helped to guide the process. The final review draft will be before the Commission again on May 8 and May 22 ahead of public hearings on June 20 and 26, following which the Commission will form a recommendation and forward it to the Council for review and action.

Senior Planner Dr. Kate Nesse said there are six primary changes to the Transportation Element. The Transportation Element is fairly currently given that there have been some significant updates to it in recent years. It was updated in 2021 to support the Mobility Implementation Plan, which was a significant change for how the city approaches transportation planning. In 2022 the element was updated again to support the Curb Management Plan, which was a change in policy around how the city plans for the curb environment. Most of the proposed updates are focused on clarifications and reorganizing the policies. The Transportation Commission very thoroughly reviewed the Transportation Element over the course of seven meetings and provided a unanimous recommendation on the amendments.

The community feedback on the policies has been strongly in support of public transit investments. There was also strong support for policies around safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, and for planning for all modes of transportation. The public voiced a desire to see closer connections made to climate change; many of the policies around greenhouse gases emissions are in the Climate and Environment Element.

A number of minor changes are proposed to clarify policies; to identify their relationship to functional plans; to be current with the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2050; and to remove policies that were in regard to completed projects.

The first of the six most significant changes to the Transportation Element involves a change to the section formerly titled “Neighborhood Protection.” The change to “Residential Safety and Livability” was made in recognition of the fact that every part of Bellevue lies within a neighborhood, and to focus on the outcomes of safety and livability.

Under the climate change header, policy TR-31 is proposed to add resiliency to impacts related to climate change on the transportation network. TR-56 is a policy the Transportation Commission had a lot of discussion around. Their concern was around when excess vehicular capacity is measured, and the policy was revised to clarify that the measurement concerns peak periods, which can be either the morning or evening peak depending on the road.

TR-103 is a new policy aimed at supporting planning around the Grand Connection. The key is flexibility to work with WSDOT to use the right-of-way for a bridge over I-405 as part of the regional transportation network.

TR-106 calls for integrating the Mountains to Sound Greenway trail into the I-90 corridor through Bellevue as part of the regional transportation network.

TR-130 concerns vehicle electrification and calls for partnering with the state, county and local jurisdictions and agencies in planning for mobility electrification.

Commissioner Lu asked if the change to the header to Residential Safety and Livability is consistent with how other policies and naming conventions have been addressed. Dr. Kate Nesse explained that the word “neighborhood” has been used in a lot of different ways throughout the Comprehensive Plan. The intent is to make sure the application is to residential areas and not every part of the city.

With regard to TR-31, Commissioner Villaveces suggested the policy should also focus on preventing impacts.

Commissioner Lu proposed “enhance” instead of “protect,” adding that more needs to be done than just maintain and protect.

Commissioner Cálad suggested the policy is somewhat vague in that it says nothing about the impacts of climate change are to be measured. Dr. Kate Nesse said the reference to the impacts of climate change concerns the frequency of severe weather events like flooding, excessive heat or wildfires and the resulting smoke, impacts that do not always rise to the level of being a disaster.

Turning to TR-56, Commissioner Lu expressed the understanding that there has been some updated guidance from the Council about repurposing travel lanes as a last resort. That direction was given to the Transportation Commission and should be incorporated into the policy. The spirit of the policy is strong, especially given that it looks 20 years out.

Commissioner Villaveces allowed that the practice might be controversial, but it has been successfully carried out in other areas through multiple methods. It is far more efficient to travel by bike for short trips in terms of space utilized. Bogata has created bike lanes using sidewalks, by locating them in roadway medians, and by modifying the street network, allowing for segregated bike lanes. Bike lanes typically narrow enough to be created by simply re-dimensioning the travel lanes, which in Bellevue are typically quite wide. It would be wise to retain the policy, though the language regarding determining excess capacity at peak periods is

somewhat limiting and the vision should be wider.

Commissioner Cálad asked how the topography of Bogata compares to Bellevue's hills. Commissioner Villaveces said Bogata is a very hilly city. The city of Paris has also successfully implemented bike lanes in similar fashion.

Commissioner Cálad agreed that the public has indicated support for more facilities for bicycles and pedestrians and alternative modes of transportation. Bellevue is, however, a car-dominated city. Commissioner Cálad voiced being a hundred percent opposed to eliminating travel lanes as that would hurt the city tremendously. It is true that studies in other cities show that bike options work, but Bellevue has to think about options that will work locally. The city is growing and cars are not going to be eliminated. Prioritizing the replacement of travel lanes with bicycle facilities is a flawed approach. The Council has called for conversions to be the last resort and that needs to be documented. Other options need to be explored. The wording of TR-56 cannot be supported until the wording is clarified to include the notion of last resort.

Dr. Kate Nesse noted hearing differing views, with one Commissioner wanting to see less specificity in the policy; another wanting to reflect the Council's discussion about bike lanes specifically; and another does not want to allow the repurposing of travel lanes for bike lanes. Staff needs more specific direction.

Commissioner Cálad allowed that not everyone was on the same page. There is agreement around the need to bring new modes of transportation to the city, but replacing travel lanes without clear studies and demonstration projects is overly idealistic.

Commissioner Lu advocated for keeping the policy in place as an available tool for the next ten or twenty years. Support was indicated for the prioritization outlined in the policy for considering repurposing a travel lane. Not having the policy tool at all could hamstring the city should things in fact change in the future. The policy allows for flexibility. Adding a reference to the notion of conversion as a last resort would be acceptable.

Commissioner Khanloo agreed the policy should be retained as it is. The policy was recommended by the Transportation Commission which undoubtedly fully studied in the issue.

Commissioner Villaveces agreed with Commissioner Khanloo.

Commissioner Cálad said there must be a detailed explanation backed with details and studies before repurposing a travel lane.

Emil King observed that with modifications regarding flexibility and being aligned with the Council's direction, the majority of the Commissioners favored retaining the policy.

The Commissioners offered no changes to TR-103. Commissioner Villaveces added that the policy should be reflected in the Wilburton plan.

The Commissioner made no changes to TR-106

Commissioner Lu suggested using the word "incentivize" in TR-131 to make the policy stronger. A lot of the city's mobility concerns could be addressed via electrification. The Commissioners concurred.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***

(7:43 pm. to 7:45 p.m.)

Commissioner Khanloo referred to TR-17 and noted support for it, then asked if there is a dashboard for it. Principal Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald indicated that there is.

With regard to TR-20, Commissioner Khanloo asked if the word “aggressively” is needed. Emil King said the policy has had a lot of discussion and the conclusion reached was that only some minor revisions were needed. That certainly was what the Transportation Commission agreed to.

Commissioner Khanloo asked about the reference in TR-29 to support land use. Dr. Kate Nesse explained that land uses and the transportation system are closely connected. The policy seeks to clarify that the transportation network supports land use decisions; it is not the other way around: land uses do not support the transportation network. Land use is what drives the system demand.

Commissioner Lu noted having three primary concerns with the policies. Elements of safety should be included in TR-4, TR-10 and TR-27. The need for specificity of policy intention is another concern, which is evident in TR-5, TR-23 and TR-27. Overall the work of the Transportation Commission on the policies is very good.

Commissioner Villaveces voiced support for TR-10 and especially the call for showers and lockers in support of bike infrastructure. TR-11 would be better if it did not specifically require developments to reduce drive-alone commute trips to the site. “Encourage through meaningful incentives” would be better. If the city wants developers to build the city, the city should make it easy for them. Also, neither TR-10 or TR-11 make mention of parking facilities. Dr. Kate Nesse said the provisions regarding parking facilities are addressed in the Land Use Element because parking is a land use decision.

Commissioner Villaveces said the concept of TR-36 is good but if possible “active medians” should be added to it. Some medians are wide enough to support a public use.

Commissioner Cálad remarked that the policies do not specifically mention integrating transportation for non-residents coming in from outside the city. TR-36 appears to add a necessary component, but it is not clear what the specific vision is. Arterial lanes with semi trucks going by would not be the right location for vendors and food trucks. Dr. Kate Nesse explained that the policy was added in 2022 after being recommended by the Planning Commission to support the Curb Management Plan, which is specific relative to safety and locating food trucks and vendors.

Commissioner Cálad stated that TR-8 makes no sense, though it may have two years ago. There are many who would prefer to work remotely, but it does not make sense for their employers. More and more workers are being called back to work in their company offices. The policy is not in line with the direction companies are taking.

Commissioner Lu proposed revising the policy by eliminating the specific use cases, leaving the policy to call for reducing peak period commute trips.

Commissioner Villaveces asked how the intent of TR-8 is addressed from a transportation standpoint. Dr. Kate Nesse said there are a number of ways to work with employers. One example, from many years ago and long before the pandemic, Boeing elected to adjust its shift hours, the result of which was a reduction in peak period travel. Companies with flexible



scheduling can make a very big difference.

Commissioner Lu suggested using the word “workers” instead of “employees” in the policy.

Commissioner Cálad referred to TR-21 and suggested some clarifying language should be added to ensure full transparency for the public.

Commissioner Villaveces asked what is meant by the phrase “most of the time” in TR-61. If the desire is to have a lively and active city, 24 hour transportation is needed. Dr. Kate Nesse said key to the policy is the notion of serving the maximum ridership while recognizing that the transit system cannot take everyone everywhere all the time. Demand must be balanced with cost efficiency.

Commissioner Villaveces said TR-72 talks about mobility hubs, which is defined in the glossary, but there is no mention of public parking in the mobility hubs. Dr. Kate Nesse reiterated that parking is addressed in the Land Use Element.

Commissioner Villaveces voiced support for the detail of the limiting list in TR-81 but suggested saying something like “including but limited to” ahead of the list of items. Dr. Kate Nesse explained that wherever there is a list with the words “not limited to” the list is in fact treated as being limited. It is difficult to justify giving priority to something that is not specifically listed. As proposed, the focus of the policy is on the goal rather than the means, which are enumerated in the functional plans.

Commissioner Villaveces referred to TR-84 and said there are systems for public/private partnerships to provide public parking under public lands such as parks. Millennial Park in Chicago is an example and there are others.

Commissioner Villaveces called attention to TR-105 and asked what the typologies are for pedestrian crossings, suggesting that the policy should include raised crossings that act as speed calming measures. Dr. Kate Nesse said the details about the specific types of safety measures are covered in implementation plans and specifically in the Transportation Facilities Plan. Emil King allowed that raised crossings are a type of improvement.

Commissioner Khanloo referred back to TR-82 and TR-83 and noted support for retaining the listed items proposed to be removed from the policies.

Commissioner Lu suggested TR-44 should be revised to begin with “Provide and maintain...” TR-47 should specifically call for using appropriate street trees. The word “character” has been removed from most policies but continues to appear in TR-48. TR-49 should stress maintaining and enhancing safety for the most vulnerable users in line with the Vision Zero goals. More specificity should be added to TR-83. “Valued places in the community” is not easy to assess.

Commissioner Cálad said TR-66 is a great policy. Overall, the policies need to have more of an emphasis on safety when it comes to public transportation. Seniors and the disabled are not clearly included. The key word in TR-66 is “integrated.” All of the various transportation systems need to be integrated in a methodic and strategic way in order to build an efficient system. The must think about the many people and that Kemper Development Company and the businesses bring to the city. All those people need parking. There is not enough parking for people to bring their kids to Downtown Park. Transportation is a huge issue but the parking component is separated. It needs to all be seen together to fully understand the picture.

Commissioner Khanloo called attention to Old TR-145 and pointed out that nothing is said in TR-128 about reducing traffic noise in residential neighborhoods. The same is true for Old TR-146. It is also not clear why Old TR-151 is considered to be outdated. It should be retained. Kevin McDonald suggested editing the rationale rather than the policy Old TR-151. The Compete Streets policies are already in the Comprehensive Plan, which also addresses arterial corridor design considerations. As such, outdated is not the right word. The policy is, however, redundant to other policies.

Commissioner Lu suggested TR-100 should either be deleted or made stronger. Considering public health benefits does not do much in terms of policy implementation. TR-128 should include a reference to residential impacts. It was suggested that “adequately funded” as used in TR-131 is an open question when it comes to defining it. The existence of the Neighborhood Enhancement Program shows the city is not adequately funding neighborhood traffic safety programs. The intent of the policy needs to be clarified.

Speaking generally about the issue of parking availability, Commissioner Lu pointed out that a lot of major parking garages in the city are free after certain hours. Incorporating an element of education would help alleviate some of the stresses. If a new policy is needed, it should be along the lines of collaborating with the private sector to identify parking uses.

Commissioner Villaveces agreed but added that the suggestion applies to not only parking but other aspects of the transportation system.

Commissioner Cálad referenced TR-116 and said the issue of freight mobility is huge. Trucks bring goods and food in and out of the city, and connect Bellevue with the region. The policy needs to include a reference to maintaining transportation systems and facilities.

TR-117 calls for requiring new development to provide for large-scale freight loading and unloading on-site rather than on the public right-of-way and Commissioner Cálad asked what that would look like. Dr. Kate Nesse said it would entail having loading docks where trucks can pull onto the private properties out of the right-of-way instead of parking in the middle of the street. The city cannot require developments to retrofit their buildings absent some significant renovation work.

Commissioner Villaveces said one way to address the issue would be through the provision of alleys. In New York city the trucks all park in the street because there are no alleys. Commissioner Cálad said Chicago does a good job with alleys.

There was agreement in favor of preserving infrastructure for freight mobility in the city.

Emil King summarized the policies highlighted for additional review. The call for incorporating elements of safety applied to TR-4, TR-10 and TR-27. More specificity regarding implementation was called out for TR-5, TR-23 and TR-27. Comments about parking facilities covered TR-18, TR-20 and TR-72. The suggestion was made to take an overarching approach to addressing how people who live outside of the city access and enjoy Bellevue. Certain policies included lists and suggestions were made to review some of them and in some cases consider adding examples. Ensuring adequate parking and access to amenities was called out a need, along with education about available parking. The importance of freight mobility was also called out. The suggestion was made not to use the word “require” in TR-11, but Emil King noted that state law requires transportation demand management plans for larger employers and that is why

“require” was used in the policy.

Specific comments were made about the language in TR-8, TR-18, TR-20, TR-21, TR-31, TR-36, TR-44, TR-47, TR-48, TR-49, TR-56, TR-61, TR-72, TR-81, TR-82, TR-83, TR-84, TR-100, TR-116, TR-117, TR-128, TR-145, TR-146, TR-131, TR-133.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***

(8:39 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.)

A motion to extend the meeting to 10:30 p.m. was made by Commissioner Lu. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khanloo and the motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Kate Nesse said there were not a lot of changes made to the policies in the Capital Facilities Element. The major change made was to ensure that the community facilities are resilient to climate change and environmentally sustainable. In general the community supported the increased focus on sustainability. There were some comments made regarding a desire to see more performance arts or cultural exchange facilities, which are covered in the Parks element. There were some minor changes made to the policies in the Capital Facilities Element, most of which were to provide clarification and to incorporate more current language.

Commissioner Villaveces referred to CF-20 and suggested adding “and incentivize” after the first word in the policy. Dr. Kate Nesse reminded the Commissioner that the policy addresses facilities that the city owns. There is no reason for the city to incentivize itself to provide the facilities.

With regard to the streams in the BelRed area, Commissioner Villaveces said development should be the vehicle for maintaining and conserving them. Having stringent measures for developing around streams in critical areas would make it very difficult to develop. There should be a clear process, but it should allow for development provided the stream channels are taken care of.

With respect to CF-21, Commissioner Villaveces suggested revising the policy to read “...operations and facilities by prioritizing building performance and supporting renewable energy....” It is easy to rely on gadgets such as solar panels as a way of making a building green even where a building itself does not perform well.

Commissioner Villaveces asked what the last part of CF-25 is intended to mean. Dr. Kate Nesse said essential public facilities is a specific term used in state law to refer to things like airports and landfills, things that are essential to the functioning of the region. Such facilities may offer a higher burden on the areas where they are sited, and for that reason they are difficult to site.

Commissioner Khanloo referred to CF-30 and proposed replacing “consider” with a more proactive word. With regard to CF-28, the question asked was if a reference to public involvement could be added. Dr. Kate Nesse stated that the equitable process contained in the policy involves a public process, especially for those who would be disproportionately impacted. It could, however, be spelled out in the policy.

Commissioner Khanloo agreed with the intent of CF-21 but suggested it should include some specific goal or timeline. Additionally, CF-19 should be written with more proactive language. Dr. Kate Nesse said the Climate and Environment Element includes a policy calling for Bellevue to be a zero waste community.

Commissioner Lu commented that the only projects that are getting anything close to prime rate financing currently are utilities and renewable energy projects. Interest rates are high and inflation is resilient, but there still is opportunistic financing that can be tapped in building up a more resilient infrastructure. In that vein, several of the policies should be more aggressive. Future growth should be incorporated into CF-1. CF-2 should be worded to address adversely impacted communities. CF-3 should include the notion of resiliency and should also reference earthquake impacts. CF-6 should incorporate growth into the facilities system plan. CF-15 is essentially a disaster recovery plan, which can be burdensome from a cost perspective. It should prioritize the facilities that need to be recovered. CF-16 should also reference earthquake resilience. CF-19 should split out the community-based waste reduction from the city as an organization waste reduction; adding in some language around education for the community would be good. In CF-21, “supporting” should be replaced with “incentivizing.” CF-23 works great for facilities on city property, but it should also incentivize private infrastructure.

Dr. Kate Nesse clarified that CF-23 is only focused on city facilities and does not address community facilities. There is a policy in the Climate and Environment Element that addresses incentivizing electric charging stations at private developments.

Commissioner Lu suggested CF-28 should be worded “Work to site and expand.....” CF-30 should be more quantitative by adding in “analyze the potential impacts of accelerating climate change.”

Commissioner Cálad referred to CF-29 and asked what secure community transition facilities are. Thara Johnson said they are defined under state law and refer to certain types of facilities, such as halfway houses. Emil King said staff will make sure there is a definition included in the glossary.

Commissioner Cálad allowed that CF-14 is about high performance, but said standards for people with disabilities and seniors need to be incorporated somewhere in the policies.

Commissioner Cálad asked for some clarification with regard to CF-22 and Dr. Kate Nesse explained that green certification standards is defined in the glossary as something like LEED building. The standards, while great, often come with a cost so the policy calls for meeting the certification standards even if there is no actual certification involved depending on cost and priorities.

Emil King noted the Commissioners had made overarching comments about protecting the environment and including associated metrics, and planning for those with disabilities and for seniors. The policies highlighted by the Commissioners for revisions were CF-1, CF-2, CF-3, CF-6, CF-15, CF-16, CF-19, CF-21, CF-28 and CF-30.

Dr. Kate Nesse said the policies would be before the Commission again on May 8.

B. BelRed Look Forward Comprehensive Plan Amendment: Changes to the Environment, Parks and Open Space, Transportation and Implementation Policies (9:11 p.m.)

Senior Planner Gwen Rousseau reminded the Commission that the BelRed Look Forward was launched as part of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. The intent of the initiative is to review land use designations in the BelRed area to look for opportunities to increase capacity for

both housing and job growth, and to review the subarea plan policies to make sure they reflect current information and provide clear direction for implementation of the BelRed vision. The initiative is not intended to change the vision or the policy direction for BelRed, but rather to streamline, clarify, strengthen, and bring the policy language up to date. When the plan was adopted in 2009 it was a first of its kind for the city, and it included a number of new innovative policies. However, it was adopted in between major Comprehensive Plan updates, and therefore, the new policies had to be incorporated into the subarea plan itself. Since 2009, there has been one major Comprehensive Plan update and another is under way. Many of the innovative policies from the BelRed plan have since been incorporated into Volume 1, and they apply citywide. The Look Forward provides the opportunity to streamline the BelRed plan by removing redundant policies to avoid potential inconsistencies that could occur in the future, and to streamline policies and clarify intent. While the proposal includes changes to the language of a number of policies, none of the changes to these three sections are significant in policy direction.

Gwen Rousseau briefly reviewed with the Commissioners the initiative timeline to date. The Commission began reviewing the proposed land use policies in February. Following the current study session on the Environment, Parks and Open Space, Transportation and Implementation sections, an additional study session will be focused on Housing, Urban Design and Arts and Culture.

The recommended policy changes for the environment section of the Plan fall into four categories: removing policies that are redundant with citywide Volume 1 policies; streamlining policies to clarify intent; modifying policies to highlight the importance of internal and external coordination and collaboration; and reflecting current circumstances.

The Environmental Services Commission was involved in reviewing the environmental policies amendments as directed by city code, and the members brought their expertise in implementing many of the Comprehensive Plan policies to the review process related to surface and storm water utilities. The Environmental Services Commission reviewed and discussed the updates over the course of two study sessions and ultimately voted unanimously to recommend the amendments shown in Attachment A of the Commission's packet.

The policy changes specific to Parks and Open Space relate to clarifying outcomes, strategies and intent; focusing on just one topic per policy; highlighting key projects; and supporting the integration of park and transportation facilities.

Paul Clark, Chair of the Parks & Community Services Board, stated that the Board met twice to specifically review the staff's recommended updates to the BelRed-specific policies. Community feedback and the public comment was reviewed. The Board spent the majority of its time discussing S-BR-53 with the goal of ensuring that the streams in BelRed would be the organizing principle for parks in the neighborhood, that the trails connecting the parks, and that the design of the parks and trails would all have as an organizing principle the streams in the area. In support of the change, the Board approved inclusion of the word "connected" in the goal statement and the narrative, and in the rephrasing of S-BR-53. Time was also spent discussing S-BR-60, specifically the desire to protect wildlife habitat corridors. At the second review meeting, the Board unanimously approved the proposed amendments 6 to 0. The changes approved by the Board will help to product a vibrant and unique new livable neighborhood.

With regard to the transportation section, Gwen Rousseau said many of the changes were related to removing policies deemed to be redundant with the citywide Volume 1 policies; streamlining policies to clarify intent; and adding a new policy in acknowledgment of the need for limited

flexibility when implementing the local street grid. The Transportation Commission was involved in the review of the amendments to the transportation policies. They voted unanimously to recommend the amendments to the transportation section goal and policies as shown in Attachment A.

Gwen Rousseau said the proposed policy changes to the implementation section address the removal of a policy deemed to be more appropriate for a functional plan; streamlining language to clarify intent; and to add a new policy calling for stream rehabilitation and restoration plans to facilitate partnerships and coordination.

Commissioner Lu commented favorably on the overall policies. With regard to S-BR-2 and the public comment made about incentivizing public and private opportunities, the Commissioner agreed it would be good to include that concept in the policy.

Noting that both S-BR-49 and S-BR-50 talk about density transfers, Commissioner Lu asked what the criteria is for a density transfer, and suggested some clarity in the policy about the practice would be good. Gwen Rousseau said S-BR-50 regards the transfer of development rights to allow for the preservation of areas outside of the urban growth area. The transfer of development rights program that was in place with the plan was initially adopted was limited to a certain number of credits, and it was conducted in partnership with King County. The Hyde Square development completely used up all available credits. The policy is in consideration of renewing the program. Commissioner Lu agreed with the intent and called for guidance as to what qualifies for a transfer.

With regard to the implementation goal, Commissioner Lu suggested taking away “facilitate partnerships.” The intent is actually captured with the “coordinate strategies.”

Commissioner Khanloo referred to S-BR-57 and questioned if at the policy level it was necessary to refer to the park by street number, especially given that the station name may change. Gwen Rousseau allowed that it is tricky going from Volume 1 to Volume 2. Both are intended to be at the high level, but there is also a need to highlight the unique things about the subarea. Getting the balance right is tricky. One of the goals is to highlight key projects in the Plan.

Commissioner Cálad agreed with Commissioner Khanloo and suggested the policy should focus on if a park is needed and why, not on the how, which is the implementation part.

Commissioner Khanloo agreed with the need to be more detailed in Volume II and agreed to keep the policy as is without change.

Commissioner Villaveces specifically addressed S-BR-46, S-BR-49 and S-BR-50 and noted having seen even simple critical area projects take more than two and a half years to get permitted. In the context of the larger affordable housing conversation, streamlining the permitting process is an important component for reducing cost, including for projects that deal with stream protection. There will need to be incentives or optimization through the permitting system to make it happen.

Commissioner Villaveces called attention to the reason column for S-BR-31, which is marked for deletion in part due to UD-44, which calls for integrating low-impact development principles early in the site design and development process, and suggested there should be a requirement for a preapplication meeting so everyone will be on the same page, allowing for the process to be

streamlined from the beginning. Gwen Rousseau said generally speaking that is the practice. Preapplication meetings are held with new development projects to get everyone on the same page.

Commissioner Lu asked if the word “manage” as used in S-BR-60 encompasses the concept of preserving. Utilities Planning Manager Eric LaFrance said in general manage includes preservation but allowed being open to adding clarifying language. Commissioner Lu then proposed adding “and preserve” after “manage.”

With regard to S-BR-61, Commissioner Lu said if the approach regarding the conversion of travel lanes to bike lanes will be an act of last resort, there is an opportunity for trails for recreation and transportation to also incorporate the notion of active transportation in the analysis of the new recommended maps that will come out of the Transportation Commission to see if there are overlaps between the trails system that could be used as substitutes to create a more interconnected system.

Commissioner Khanloo suggested S-BR-62 as drafted is not clear as to its intention. Gwen Rousseau said the issue is talked about both in the parks section and the transportation section. S-BR-62 is focused on incorporating park, recreation and green infrastructure into the streets. In the transportation section the focus is on incorporating green streets into the transportation network.

Commissioner Villaveces asked if any of the streams in the BelRed subarea are currently under ground. Gwen Rousseau said there are piped streams in a couple of different places in BelRed, including the West Tributary and Goff Creek. Daylighting the streams is one of the goals in the plan.

Commissioner Lu suggested adding “and active transportation” to the end of S-BR-62.

Commissioner Villaveces asked if green infrastructure includes bioswales and the like. Gwen Rousseau said bioswales is a good example of green infrastructure along with all forms of low-impact development. S-BR-62 specifically talks about opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure when building streets. The city encourages natural drainage practices where possible.

Commissioner Villaveces asked for some clarity regarding S-BR-81. Gwen Rousseau said there has been a lot of feedback from developers about the need for flexibility when implementing the local street grid. The policy was added to acknowledge that need, particularly when there are constraints such as alignment or steep slope issues. It is development that implements the street grid, as spelled out in S-BR-80. The Land Use Code and the transportation design manual contain the specifics about how to implement the street grid.. Certain details are worked out through development review.

Commissioner Lu pointed out the words “community character” in S-BR-80, noting that in other policies the phrase has been replaced with more specific terminology. For the policy, “aesthetics and functionality” probably would make more sense.

Turning to S-BR-81, suggested that as worded the policy contains two separate concepts, specifically “limited flexibility” and “where site constraints exist.” One or the other should be removed from the policy, or the policy should just generally be reworded.

Commissioner Lu noted that S-BR-84 also uses the term “neighborhood character.”

Commissioner Lu suggested adding in heat island effects to S-BR-85 given that green streets would also add shade and shelter. S-BR-86 ties in with the notion of having a trail system that can also supplement bike paths, so adding “active transportation” to the policy would bolster that notion. S-BR-88 should better define “multiple access points.”

Commissioner Lu suggested that S-BR-90 could be an enormous tax burden and asked where the funding for the development of a new Transportation Management Association would come from. Gwen Rousseau said it falls under the heading of Transportation Demand Management. The programs work with employers to implement commute trip reduction programs. Commissioner Lu suggested softening the policy language to “evaluate” or “analyze” rather than “support.”

Commissioner Khanloo asked staff to comment on why Old S-BR-54 should be deleted. Gwen Rousseau said the policy is covered in Volume 1. New TR-2 in Volume 1 specifically calls for directing transportation investments to the countywide centers. Additionally, the first policy in the transportation section calls for supporting the BelRed land use plan with a multimodal transportation network that provides connections within BelRed and with the rest of the city. The intent of supporting the Land Use Plan is addressed there.

Commissioner Cálad challenged staff and the Commissioners to rethink deleting Old S-BR-54 and voiced strong opposition to deleting the policy. The policy should be kept and the word “maintain” should be added to it. Absent Old S-BR-54, there is no clear protection for the maintenance of arterials. Deleting the policy would be a mistake and could lead to removing protections for arterials throughout the city.

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald pointed out that the city is spending \$100 million on arterial improvements in BelRed alone. Those improvements also include facilities for transit and active transportation modes, all as a direct response to the policy. However, the Old S-BR-54 is redundant to all the similar policies in the Transportation Element in Volume 1, and to the larger city approach to mobility for all modes. In the Transportation Element, there is reference made to the Mobility Implementation Plan, which was approved by the Council in 2022. Within that plan there are performance metrics and targets for every mode for every arterial in the city. The obligation the plan puts on the city is to monitor the performance of the transportation network with respect to the performance targets, identify where there are gaps in the performance, and then to identify project concepts that could be implemented by the city to meet the targets. The Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update Environmental Impact Statement identified the performance target gaps that are now being reviewed and addressed, starting with the Transportation Commission. The comprehensive focus on mobility includes all the elements in Old S-BR-54.

Commissioner Cálad argued that the city should in fact protect, maintain and develop arterial roads at the policy level. The policy outlines whether that should be done or not and why. By deleting the policy, there is no overall direction to do that. It would be a mistake to delete the policy.

Commissioner Lu asked if TR-18 includes a periodic assessment of needs. Absent a periodic assessment of needs, the city could be mis-investing funds. There is a clear need for the city to maintain its arterials, the question is how to best do that from a policy standpoint.



Commissioner Khanloo suggested language about preserving and maintaining could be added to TR-18.

Kevin McDonald said TR-18 has a lot of different components. The first part is very important and calls for ensuring that the transportation network infrastructure provides mobility options for all modes. The Pedestrian/Bike Transportation Plan provides the network for active transportation. All pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the city are mapped out in that plan. The Transit Master Plan is entirely focused on the transit facilities that are expected to be needed to support Bellevue's projected growth out to 2035. The Mobility Implementation Plan marries all the separate plans together, including the arterial network, the ped/bike active transportation network, and the transit network. The Mobility Implementation Plan integrates and makes sure that all travel modes complement one another. The second part of TR-18 is also addressed by the MIP in that it accommodates the mobility needs of everyone, including underserved populations. The MIP has four goals: support growth, consider equity, improve safety, and provide access and mobility for everyone. The process behind implementation of the Mobility Implementation Plan is all about making sure that the performance of the network complies with those four goals, and developing project concepts eligible for city funding through the Transportation Facilities Plan and the Capital Improvement Program plan so they can be built in a timely manner. The process preserves the capacity of the network overall and expands it to support the expected growth identified in the Land Use Plan.

Commissioner Cálad commented that while all of that is wonderful, it is not specific to protecting the arterials, and that is a mistake. Old S-BR-54 should not be deleted.

Commissioner Villaveces agreed that the issue should be revisited. While the intent is there in the proposed approach, more clarity is needed.

Commissioner Khanloo suggested that either TR-18 could have clarifying language added to it, or Old S-BR-54 should be retained but redrafted to be less specific.

Commissioner Lu asked how often an evaluation of need is conducted based on the Transportation Implementation Plan. Gwen Rousseau said it is conducted every two years.

Commissioner Lu said TR-18 captures the spirit of Old S-BR-15 even without additional clarifying language. At the heart of the issue is the implementation process itself, anticipating need, and if that is incorporated within the Transportation Implementation Plan, nothing else needs to be done in the policy, which is specific to BelRed.

Commissioner Cálad commented that as written the city can eliminate arterial road lanes and replace them with bike lanes. Gwen Rousseau pointed out that TR-56 in Volume 1 talks about allowing for the repurposing of travel lanes, and lays out the criteria for doing so. The previous recommendation of the Commission was to add to TR-56 the Council's recommendations about prioritization.

Emil King said the Council's comments in that regard were specific to the Bike Bellevue project. TR-56 goes beyond that and talks about many potential uses.

Commissioner Khanloo called attention to S-BR-79 the phrase "environmentally sensitive design features" and asked what the phrase means, particularly the word "sensitive." Gwen Rousseau said the phrase specifically means sensitive to the environment, adding that it could be clarified in the glossary.

Referring to Old S-BR-57, Commissioner Khanloo said TR-53 does not evoke the same spirit. Gwen Rousseau said the intent is to not have vehicle access into a building from an arterial because it tends to slow traffic down. TR-53 calls for minimizing the number of driveways to affect that same outcome.

Commissioner Khanloo referred to S-BR-86 and suggested something more aggressive than “improve” should be used.

Commissioner Villaveces suggested that if Old S-BR-57 and Old S-BR-54 are redundant, it could be that they need to be revised to clarify how the policies in Volume 1 apply instead of deleting them.

Commissioner Lu suggested S-BR-94 should be made a little stronger, noting that private development will be a key area for getting public infrastructure. The policy should say “incentivize” rather than “allow.”

Commissioner Lu noted that S-BR-98 was listed in both the environment and implementation sections. In both instances the term “facilitate partnerships” is too restrictive.

Commissioner Khanloo called for either retaining Old S-BR-54 or repealing other policies that are specific about BelRed to be consistent.

A motion to extend the meeting to 10:40 p.m. was made by Commissioner Khanloo. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lu and the motion carried unanimously.

Emil King summarized the policies marked for changes or additional review as being S-BR-2, S-BR-46, S-BR-49, S-BR-50, S-BR-98, S-BR-60, S-BR-61, S-BR-62, S-BR-54, S-BR-79, S-BR-80, S-BR-81, Old S-BR-57, TR-53, S-BR-84, S-BR-85, S-BR-86, S-BR-88, S-BR-90, S-BR-94, and S-BR-98.

9. OTHER BUSINESS – None  
(10:29 p.m.)

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None  
(10:29 p.m.)

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None  
(10:29 p.m.)

12. ADJOURNMENT  
(10:29 p.m.)

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Lu. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Khanloo and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Cálad adjourned the meeting at 10:29 p.m.



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Thara Johnson  
Staff to the Planning Commission

May 2, 2024  
Date



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Vishal Bhargava  
Chair of the Planning Commission

May 2, 2024  
Date