

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

July 10, 2025
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Hybrid Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vice Chair Magill, Commissioners Keilman, , Rebhuhn, Ting, Williams

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: None

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Stash

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Andrew Singelakis, Eric Miller, Michael Ingram, Kristi Oosterveen, Chris Long, Molly Johnson, Department of Transportation; John Resha, Evan Phillips, Department of Finance and Asset Management

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Nieuwenhuis; Chris Iverson, Iverson Mobility; Chrissy Mancini Nichols, Kenzi Colson, Walker Consultants

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

A. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Vice Chair Magill who presided.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Stash who was excused.

B. Introduce New Commissioner

Vice Chair Magill introduced new Commissioner Kay Williams.

Commissioner Williams noted being a long-time Bellevue resident, a commuter, a shopper, a diner, a biker, walker and runner, who worked for many years for Microsoft as a product and program manager. With an interest in transportation and in working with the public, the Transportation Commission is a good fit.

The Commissioners took a moment to introduce themselves.

C. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald noted having received one nominee for the position of Chair: Karen Stash.

There were no other nominations from the floor.

The nomination of Karen Stash to serve as Chair carried with a unanimous vote.

Kevin McDonald noted there had been one nomination received for the position of Vice Chair: Drew Magill.

There were no other nominations from the floor.

The nomination of Drew Magill to serve as Vice Chair carried with a unanimous vote.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Action to approve the agenda was not taken.

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Kevin McDonald highlighted the forwarding of a written communication from Kevin Wallace.

Vice Chair Magill stated that in compliance with Washington state campaign laws regarding the use of public facilities during elections, RCW 42.178.555, states that no speaker may support or oppose a ballot measure or support or oppose a candidate for an election, which includes one's own campaign. Any speaker who begins discussing topics of this nature will be asked to stop.

Chris Randles addressed the Commission on behalf of Complete Streets Bellevue in support of the curb pricing study update. The staff and the Commission were commended for their detailed and data-informed approach. There has been a positive progression of the Curb Management Plan from concept to implementation, with good public outreach and alignment with Council directives. Curb pricing is an effective tool for demand management in Bellevue's growing urban core, and it has the potential for revenue reinvestments to improve curbside enforcement and community mobility. The Commission was urged to affirm the work and pass it on to the Council for adoption.

Vic Bishop noted being a long-time Bellevue resident, a former two-term Commissioner with the Commission, and traffic engineer with more than 60 years of experience and a history of operating a traffic engineering firm. The importance of the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) was emphasized as the city's capital spending roadmap for the next 12 years. The Commission was urged to adopt a proportional approach to capital investment. It was pointed out that approximately three-quarters of Bellevue's residents travel by car on a daily basis. Funding allocations should reflect that usage. Car infrastructure deserves at least half of the available funding. Support was voiced for TFP-257, which allocates \$12.5 million to a phase of the West Lake Sammamish Parkway upgrade, the third of five promised phases for the Parkway's improvement since the area's annexation into Bellevue. Additionally, the Commission was urged to advocate for the long-discussed but currently unfunded HOV lane on South Bellevue Way from 112th Avenue SE to I-90. The severe congestion in that corridor highlights the need for the project.

Joe Kunzler voiced excitement regarding the 2 Line linking Seattle with Redmond and passing through Bellevue. There is currently no inviting reason to get off the train in Bellevue such as place to grab a coffee or other concessions at the stations. The speaker noted having recently

used a Lime scooter to get around Redmond on paved bike paths. Hopefully Bellevue will soon have a network of bike lanes that pair with light rail, making it easy for people to get around. The speaker was happy to note that Alex Tsimmerman was not in attendance to make rude and offensive campaign speeches. The Commission deserves better and hopefully that person will not attend any more Commission meetings.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, AND MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION - None

5. STAFF REPORTS

A. Environmental Sustainability Plan

Kevin McDonald highlighted the memo in the Commission packet from Climate and Electric Mobility Coordinator Colin Munson regarding the Environmental Sustainability Initiative.

With regard to implementation of the Urban Core Bike Network, formerly known as Bike Bellevue, Kevin McDonald said work has begun on the corridors recommended by the Commission for early implementation. Currently in design and on target for implementation in 2026 are the Lake Washington Boulevard corridor between 99th Avenue NE and 100th Avenue NE; and a section of 100th Avenue NE between Main Street and NE 1st Street to provide a connection to NE 1st Street and NE 2nd Street between 100th Avenue NE and Bellevue Way along Downtown Park. Grant funding is being sought to support the design for other bicycle network projects recommended by the Commission.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Transportation Facilities Plan Update Revenue Forecast

Transportation Director Andrew Singelakis introduced John Resha, Director of the Department of Finance and Asset Management for the city, and Evan Phillips, Director of Financial Strategy and Performance for the city. The shift to a 20-year planning horizon for the TFP was explained as being in alignment with the structure and timeframe of the city's Comprehensive Plan in light of the long-term nature of projected revenues. The TFP is a planning tool that is updated biennially and it may evolve to incorporate additional revenue as new funding becomes available.

Continuing, Andrew Singelakis said about \$12 million is allocated annually to street overlay and maintenance has been moved from the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to the operating budget to ensure that basic maintenance activities are preserved. A significant portion of transportation revenue remains dedicated to debt service on the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan and to funding infrastructure in the BelRed area, where arterial investments to support growth are largely complete.

John Resha acknowledged that the city's financial outlook is shaped by economic uncertainty and limited revenue growth, and that requires a strategic and policy-driven approach to resource allocation. Bellevue's tax revenues must be used efficiently, transparently, and in accordance with community priorities.

Evan Phillips outlined the city's Comprehensive Financial Policies (CFP), including the "investment waterfall" that serves as a prioritization framework to guide financial decisions. The five tiers of investment priority are: debt obligations, which are non-negotiable and must be satisfied first; maintenance of existing infrastructure and services, such as the street overlay program; delivery of planned growth, in alignment with the City's Comprehensive Plan; planning for future growth, which includes long-range initiatives such as the TFP; and pilot programs and new initiatives, which must be evaluated carefully and require exit strategies if unsuccessful. The tiers are general principles rather than rigid rules, but the city aims to adhere to them in order to practice responsible stewardship and financial transparency. Bellevue issues debt infrequently, generally only in the case of transportation-related needs or major capital investments such as City Hall. Given the magnitude of growth anticipated in Bellevue, a more flexible and thoughtful approach to debt may become necessary in the future.

The city's Capital Improvement Program is presently structured as a six-year document, but there is an aspiration to transition to a ten-year model to better align with the long-term nature of capital infrastructure investments.

The Commissioners were shown a chart showing tax revenue growth 2019 to 2034. The chart indicated five key revenue sources, ranked from most to least stable: utility taxes, which remain highly stable due to their consistent base; property taxes, including the transportation levy; business and occupation (B&O) taxes; sales taxes and real estate excise taxes (REET), which are extremely volatile and subject to economic fluctuations.

Evan Phillips observed that from 2024 through 2026, overall revenue is expected to remain flat, a condition that restricts natural growth adjustments related to inflation. The spike in 2023 revenues resulted from the passage of the parks levy, which is set to expire in 2032, reducing revenues accordingly. Both the transportation levy and fire levy will sunset in 2035, which is significant in terms of long-term revenue planning.

John Resha reminded the Commissioners that in 2022 leading into 2023, the city increased its B&O tax. That coincided with the post-Covid "hangover" where big changes were seen in the business environment, including Microsoft moving back to Redmond, and various consolidations. As a result, even despite the tax rate increase, actual B&O revenues declined in real dollars. Simultaneously, sales tax revenues experienced volatility. During the pandemic, destination-based online purchases resulted in temporary sales tax gains. But sales taxes from construction declined, which Bellevue considers a leading indicator of economic activity. Fewer cranes and less building material movement reflects a downturn in development activity.

One side effect of all that is the REET, which has also declined from previous peaks. Large property and building sales that had contributed significantly to city revenues earlier in the 2000s diminished. While some residential and smaller commercial transactions continued, Bellevue no longer is seeing the high-value real estate activity that once bolstered the REET collections. Current REET levels are among the lowest the city has seen in real-dollar terms.

The economic conditions impacted the 2023 budget forecast. City finance staff had originally projected revenue growth across B&O, sales tax, and REET. However, actual collections flattened, resulting in a revenue shortfall of approximately \$25 million annually relative to the city's projections. The shortfall is visible where the anticipated revenue trajectory lies significantly above the actual performance curve. Despite the revenue gap, the city avoided staff reductions and service cuts due to prudent financial planning, robust reserves, and a

commitment to a cash-basis budgeting model. Bellevue's fiscal discipline has allowed it to absorb the economic shock without compromising core operations.

John Resha said there are implications for transportation funding. A shift of \$10 million to \$15 million per year from the capital budget into the operating budget was necessary to support maintenance needs and to accommodate growth in asset upkeep. Additionally, the city continues to allocate more than \$15 million annually for debt service stemming from two bond issuances and the TIFIA loan, amounting to a combined \$30 million annual shift away from new capital investments. To manage the constraints, the Transportation Department included a contra line in its CIP budget, which means not critical TFP projects can be funded under the current revenue conditions. The department is now undergoing a realignment process to match the extended 20-year TFP horizon with the available funding.

For the 20-year forecast period, several key revenue sources and their estimated contributions were identified, including approximately \$111 million to \$112 million from various city taxes and revenue streams. Approximately \$196 million is anticipated from the transportation levy, assuming the levy is renewed in the future. The forecast includes the assumption for planning purposes, with the caveat that renewal will require action by Council and the community. Just over one million annually is expected from the motor vehicle fuel tax, a revenue source that continues to decline as fuel consumption decreases. Transportation impact fees, which previously were as high as \$8 million to \$9 million annually, have dropped to only a few million dollars due to reduced development activity. Grants and external funding, assumed at a conservative average of \$5.8 million annually, will contribute a projected total of approximately \$116 million to \$117 million over the 20-year period. It was emphasized, however, that grant funding nationwide remains a financial risk as federal and pass-through sources have become less reliable. Nonetheless, the transportation team has historically performed well in grant competition, and the city remains optimistic about future opportunities. Altogether, the various sources total just under \$500 million in forecasted revenue to support the 20-year TFP. That funding must sustain the current CIP, the portion of projects deferred under the contra line, and future programmatic needs through 2045. A small remainder is expected to support a limited number of new candidate projects.

John Resha emphasized the highly uncertain nature of the broader economic environment. The factors contributing to revenue unpredictability include international tariffs, geopolitical instability, persistent inflation, and changes to Washington State tax policies. The dynamics have led city staff to describe the forecast as "bouncy," indicating significant year-to-year variability. Despite the uncertainty, Bellevue's in-house economist has provided remarkably accurate forecasts. In 2024, the city's revenue estimates were off by only one percent, a result that can only be described as exceptional. Bellevue's financial team continues to monitor and compare its projections with those of state and county counterparts, many of whom were overly optimistic and now face mid-cycle reductions. Bellevue's more conservative assumptions have placed the city on a relatively stable financial trajectory.

Commissioner Rebhuhn inquired about what is driving the drop in transportation impact fees. John Resha attributed the decline primarily to high interest rates which have discouraged developers from pursuing projects. While there is significant capital ready to invest, many projects remain on hold until borrowing conditions improve. Once interest rates ease and project pro formas become viable again, development activity and impact fees should recover.

Commissioner Williams asked about the contra line item and how its distribution across city departments is determined. John Resha explained that resource allocation follows the

investment waterfall, with debt service receiving top priority followed by maintenance. After addressing those obligations, funds are projected citywide across both capital and operational needs. Due to its large maintenance and debt commitments, transportation receives a substantial portion of the remaining funds. Discretionary funds in the general budget are limited. Bellevue's reserves are largely allocated to specific purposes such as utilities, and that leaves only single-digit millions in unallocated general reserves. The Parks & Community Services department benefited from a voter-approved levy, which enabled a reduction in general fund allocations for parks capital projects. By contrast, transportation funding remains dependent on constrained sources and is balanced alongside other city obligations, including fire levy support, infrastructure replacements, and City Hall maintenance.

Commissioner Williams requested clarification on the roughly \$25 million allocated annually to debt servicing and questioned whether the amount had previously been paid through another source or whether the obligation was new. John Resha explained that the debt is the result of new issuances, specifically a \$70 million bond in 2016, an \$80 million bond in 2019, and a \$100 million federal TIFIA loan. As those capital projects neared completion, the debt repayments began. The obligations now require guaranteed funding and are prioritized in the city's financial planning. Although TIFIA loans are cost-effective, with interest rates below two percent, they still constitute a significant financial responsibility.

Commissioner Ting said the contra line used in the Transportation CIP appears to represent all high-priority transportation costs. John Resha clarified that the contra line is not a list of funded projects, rather it is an accounting tool. It is used to present the full list of identified transportation needs along with a balancing line item reflecting the shortfall in available revenue. The tool enables the public and the Council to see the full extent of the need, which exceeded the available funds by \$157 million during that budget cycle. The Transportation Department is currently reassessing and reprioritizing which of those identified projects can be completed within the fiscal constraints.

Commissioner Ting asked if there was a reduction in general fund contributions to transportation projects. John Resha explained that real estate excise taxes and the transportation levy are the only fully dedicated sources for transportation. Historically, portions of the sales tax and the B&O tax were used for transportation as well, but those general fund sources are now being used to cover the new debt service and increased maintenance costs, limiting what can be allocated elsewhere.

Vice Chair McGill asked how the \$500 million TFP forecast compared to previous years. John Resha said while specific comparative numbers were not immediately available, the economic variability makes consistent forecasting difficult. Bellevue utilizes optimistic, pessimistic, and middle-range projections, but current conditions have pushed the city toward conservative forecasting due to the significant revenue volatility in the broader market. In some revenue sources, volatility has exceeded 15 to 20 percent year-over-year, far beyond the five percent swing traditionally seen as high risk. Former indicators such as unemployment have lost predictive value in the current economic environment. Bellevue tends to lag behind national trends, with economic impacts often delayed by one to two fiscal quarters compared to other regions. Accordingly, even if national stability emerges, Bellevue's revenue streams may not reflect it immediately. Nevertheless, Bellevue's internal economist forecasted the 2024 revenues with only a one percent margin of error, which is a rare accomplishment under the current conditions. There is relative confidence in the \$500 million forecast. The least level of confidence is in regard to grant dollars.

Implementation Planning Manager Eric Miller explained that Bellevue uses a 10-year rolling average to track grant award performance. Between 2015 and 2024, the City averaged \$10.7 million in grant funding per year, with recent biennia exceeding \$15 million annually. However, for 2025, the city has already secured \$9.5 million, though much of that is not new but rather supplemental funding from past awards. Bellevue's ability to absorb unspent regional grant dollars from other jurisdictions has temporarily bolstered the total. Even so, future grant availability is highly uncertain, and Bellevue must supply matching funds and have competitive, shovel-ready projects to remain successful in acquiring grants. That reality justifies why the TFP forecasted a much lower average grant contribution, closer to \$5.8 million annually.

Commissioner Ting asked if the contra line corresponds fairly closely to the projected revenue shortfall. John Resha explained that the shortfall is higher. Multiple city departments and programs experienced belt-tightening measures. The City Council also eliminated certain pilot programs that could not be sustained in future biennia due to lack of funding. While the contra line reflects unmet needs in transportation, other parts of the city budget are similarly impacted by reduced revenue growth.

Commissioner Ting asked how big the contra line would be if there was no shortfall. John Resha said if the city had another \$25 million per year, the conversation would be different. The Council would have made different decisions and the CIP would be different, and there could be investments addressing things like the fire station backlog and other building infrastructure.

B. Transportation Facilities Plan Update Preliminary Project List

Senior Planner Michael Ingram reiterated that there is only \$26.5 million available over the 20-year timeframe. Given the modest amount, it would not be practical to allocate fixed dollar amounts to individual projects. Instead, projects will simply be designated for inclusion or exclusion from the TFP, allowing the city to remain flexible and responsive as funding conditions evolve.

The project prioritization framework, originally reviewed by the Commission in May, categorized projects using a four-color scheme. In the gray category are projects that are adopted in the CIP and thus have been approved by the City Council. Those projects are not subject to re-evaluation. The green category is a short list of seven high-priority projects that are supported by existing partnerships or work-in-progress arrangements. The projects are strong candidates for implementation and reflect current strategic priorities. The peach category has projects that are recommended for inclusion in the TFP, but not as high-priority as those in the green category. The red category projects were evaluated but determined to be less urgent or not currently viable and therefore are not recommended for inclusion in the TFP, even though many are worthwhile in concept. They will remain on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) plan as it is not revenue constrained.

When the final TFP is developed, projects will either be in or out; they will not be categorized by color. The color designations are intended only to serve as a helpful internal framework for evaluating project strength and readiness. Ongoing capital programs were incorporated into the TFP project list to reflect continued investment in transportation beyond major capital projects. The ongoing efforts, while not always visible at the same scale as new construction, still contribute meaningfully to infrastructure improvements beyond basic maintenance.

In response to feedback received from the Commission in May, staff added information on project need and project benefit for the green and peach categories, as well as justifications for excluding red category items. The additional information is intended to support the Commission in making informed decisions about inclusion in the TFP. The short list of green category projects remained largely unchanged, with the exception of the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail, which was split into two separate segments. The portion beginning construction in the current year was moved into the gray category, reflecting its status as an already funded project. The remaining segment, located east of 150th Avenue SE, is a longer-term initiative and was reassigned to the peach category for further evaluation.

Michael Ingram also noted the addition of two projects to the gray category to more realistically capture everything that is relevant. One of the projects is the BelRed Local Streets Network initiative, a project that is supported by \$4 million in the CIP and aimed at facilitating the build-out of a finer-grain street grid in the BelRed area. The vision is to create a more walkable and connected street network to accompany ongoing redevelopment. As larger parcels are redeveloped, developers are expected to construct half-street improvements along the edges of their properties. Over time, the improvements will accumulate into a more complete 300-foot street grid. The project requires public investment to address the challenging design scenarios and to provide preliminary engineering support, ensuring that the new network can be implemented incrementally and efficiently as development continues.

The other project involves improvements to SE 5th Street at 118th Avenue SE at the north end of the trestle where Eastrail crosses SE 5th Street. The existing road geometry does not meet city standards; it has poor sidewalk connectivity and a non-standard corner curvature. Funding for the project has been programmed in the CIP for 2030, and it was added to the TFP list to ensure full recognition of its adopted status.

The Commissioners were asked to consider whether any projects in the red category warranted elevation to a higher category, and whether any peach-category projects should be reconsidered for demotion.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if the fact that 75 percent of all trips in the city are by car is taken into consideration in allocating the available funds. Michael Ingram said that decision is largely up to the Commission. There have been attempts in the past to quantify percentage allocations by mode, but the exercise has always been difficult given that many projects address more than one mode. In the end, the approach was not proven to be very useful. There are identified gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle systems. On the vehicle side, the network is essentially, though not fully, complete.

Commissioner Rebhuhn noted that the population of the city is going to continue to increase, and if 75 percent of the new residents will choose to drive, that may need to be reflected in the planning. Michael Ingram acknowledged the concern but pointed out that roadway capacity cannot be expanded indefinitely. Beyond a certain point, scaling the roadway system up does not work. There can be growth in population and jobs without a commensurate growth in vehicular traffic. That certainly has been the case in the Downtown and other areas where traffic volumes over the past twenty years have remained stable or have even decreased.

Commissioner Ting said the addition of the extra columns in the project spreadsheet was very useful in understanding the various projects. It would be interesting for the Commission to have an understanding of balance between the different modes. While the Commission has a scoring system for evaluating projects within each transportation mode, it lacks a method for

evaluating priorities across modes. The staff were encouraged to consider developing qualitative guidelines or principles to assist future commissions in making better-balanced investment decisions.

Commissioner Keilman urged taking a deeper dive into prioritizing the gaps, particularly regarding pedestrian access to major transit centers. Most commuters who disembark from buses at the Transit Center walk to their work destinations, and weather patterns in Washington State often discourage bicycle use. Staff was urged to consider commute behavior, seasonal impacts, and the Vision Zero goals when evaluating which modes should be prioritized.

Commissioner Ting referenced a conversation with a finance staff member about network effects in multimodal systems who raised some interesting ideas. The concept was that as part of looking at a transit system it is necessary to look at the sidewalks, bike lanes and roads needed to access the transit system. Staff was asked whether they had conducted any integrated analysis to identify projects that could amplify or reinforce other investments across transportation modes. Eric Miller confirmed that station area planning has been an integral part of the analysis. Examples were cited from the South Bellevue and East Main light rail stations where targeted infrastructure improvements had been made to support pedestrian and bicycle access. Specifically mentioned was a multiuse path along Main Street from the East Main Station to 108th Avenue NE, a key investment currently moving toward construction. Similar efforts are underway near the South Bellevue Station to strengthen the sidewalk connections and encourage neighborhood-level pedestrian access.

Commissioner Ting commented that the spreadsheet presentation of TFP projects makes it difficult to identify which projects deliver cross-modal benefits. The importance of knowing which projects deliver the most impact per dollar invested, especially under the constraints of a limited \$26.5 million budget over twenty years, was emphasized. Eric Miller reaffirmed that prioritization efforts do account for such considerations, particularly in the planning around high-capacity transit infrastructure like light rail.

Program Manager Kristi Oosterveen, who manages the Neighborhood Sidewalk Program, said as candidates to address missing sidewalks are suggested, transit stops and access to things like activity centers are part of the review process.

Vice Chair Magill asked how the Grand Connection project ended up being included with an allocation of \$46 million. Michael Ingram said Grand Connection is in the existing CIP with that dollar amount. Eric Miller added that the \$46 million does not represent the full cost of the Grand Connection project; it is sufficient only to support design and potentially right-of-way acquisition for the I-405 crossing portion of the project. Michael Ingram said work is under way to develop a funding plan for the project, which carries a cost exceeding \$200 million. All currently allocated funding is situated within the transportation portion of the CIP, though the project itself crosses multiple domains, including parks and transportation.

Vice Chair Magill asked if the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) is where the Commission in the future might look at multimodal transportation and how the modes work together to improve transportation efficiency overall. Michael Ingram said that discussion would be more appropriate in regard to the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) or the Mobility Implementation Plan (MIP) as they are updated. Given the differences between the various modes, comparing projects is difficult. Having a guiding policy framework to support better decision-making would be helpful. There are always trade-offs in making decisions around adding turn lanes at intersections that might adversely affect pedestrians, or reallocating lanes

for transit use. Cities like Seattle have and use defined policies to guide such decisions.

Given that both the green and peach project groupings are being added to the TFP despite limited funding, Commissioner Ting asked if there will be a future Commission discussion around project prioritization. Michael Ingram clarified that while the TFP identifies a bucket of prioritized projects, the final selection of projects and funding allocations occur through the CIP process, which is more compressed process that happens during the budget process.

A motion to endorse the TFP project list was made by Commissioner Ting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keilman and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the transmittal letter to the City Council was made by Commissioner Keilman. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ting and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to designate Vice Chair Magill to attend the August 4 Council meeting to discuss the TFP was made by Commissioner Rebhuhn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ting and the motion carried unanimously.

Michael Ingram said the TFP project list and transmittal letter would be presented to the City Council on August 4 along with a recommendation to extend the TFP planning timeline to 20 years. Assuming Council approval, further analysis will be performed to validate the alignment of the TFP with the city's impact fee program. Subsequent steps will include conducting the SEPA environmental review, preparing the final TFP document, and returning to the Commission for final endorsement in the fall.

C. Curb Pricing Study Update

Chris Long, Assistant Director of Mobility Operations, introduced consultant Chris Iverson with Iverson Mobility, and consultants Chrissy Mancini Nichols and Kenzie Coulson of Walker Consultants to present updates on findings from the second round of community outreach and the next steps.

Chris Iverson said the study stemmed directly from the Curb Management Plan, which was adopted unanimously by the City Council with support from the Transportation Commission in 2022 and 2023. The Curb Management Plan includes more than two dozen practices, which are ideas for how to improve conditions at the curb. One of the highest priorities was a study to evaluate a paid parking program, and the curb pricing study is the first major step in operationalizing that plan.

The study area focuses on Bellevue's urban core, including Downtown, Wilburton, and BelRed, with separate, nuanced attention paid to Old Bellevue and the Spring District due to their unique parking conditions. Adjacent residential zones are also being conceptually evaluated for potential spillover effects, especially in terms of Residential Parking Zones (RPZs).

The key goals of the study include: improving curb access to make it easier to find available spaces, with one to two parking spaces available per block at any time; increasing parking compliance along with improving safety and predictability and achieving equitable outcomes at the curb by balancing the various needs of users.

Chris Iverson described the findings from data collected during the fall of 2024, which indicated that street parking is nearly full beginning in the afternoon and extending into the evening across nearly all study areas. The saturation leads to double parking, illegal parking, and blockage of travel lanes, especially by delivery vehicles. The study also examined the existing parking market. An analysis of off-street facilities revealed rates ranging from four to eight dollars per hour for the first two hours. The pricing contrast provides context and shows the divergence between free curb parking and paid off-street parking in adjacent areas.

The project timeline anticipates the full draft implementation plan to the City Council later in 2025. Although the original plan included a formal Transportation Commission recommendation, the plan was slightly revised based on guidance from the City Attorney's Office and other departments. Instead of providing a direct program recommendation, the Commission's role now is to review program concepts and confirm alignment with adopted city plans, particularly the Curb Management Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. The program is unique and is very revenue forward, which ultimately will require Council attention and approval.

Chris Iverson provided a summary of the public engagement efforts conducted during February and March. They included nearly 50 door-to-door interviews with businesses; over 200 sidewalk intercept surveys; an online survey, an in-person open house, and a virtual open house; the distribution of approximately 17,000 mailers and community flyers; and a high degree of media and social media coverage, which helped raise community awareness. Community feedback varied significantly. While there was broad consensus that existing curb conditions are problematic, the responses to paid parking were mixed. Some residents and businesses considered curb pricing a logical and overdue solution, while others opposed it strongly. Nevertheless, curb pricing remains a national best practice which Bellevue is taking seriously in its planning efforts.

The team is currently in the midst of the second step of engagement, which includes tabling at public events such as the Bellevue Family 4th celebration and Downtown Park pop-ups. The events are facilitating further feedback collection from community members, and are helping to refine the implementation concepts.

Chris Iverson reviewed the curb pricing principles that were workshopped with the Commission two or three years ago during the original Curb Management Plan process. The principles guide the structure of a potential program and include the following priorities: establish rates that support availability goals; enhance enforcement and mobility efficiency; communicate clearly and transparently with the public; ensure equity in permitting and pricing; and align with broader city goals and policies.

Chrissy Mancini Nichols outlined the development of the operational model for the proposed curb pricing program, noting that the model integrates findings from extensive community engagement, collected data, and best practices derived from similar programs in other cities. The team used input from Bellevue commissioners and local businesses to shape the proposed structure.

The proposed operational model includes a three-hour time limit for curbside parking, which is reflective of the feedback from the community and the occupancy patterns observed during the day. The proposed enforcement hours vary by area and are data-driven. In Old Bellevue, for example, additional time was added to the enforcement hour due to consistently high demand. Sunday enforcement is recommended where business hours justify the need. It was stressed

that the proposed pricing structure is not yet finalized but will in the end be based on a combination of existing local off-street parking rates, national best practices, and a financial model designed to make the program self-sustaining. The model proposes higher rates in areas with greater demand, while also allowing for rate adjustments over time based on occupancy data. The demand-responsive pricing approach would allow for increases or decreases in rates in specific locations. Some cities using quarter-dollar or fifty-cent adjustments as precedents.

The program is designed to be flexible, adaptive, and equitable. Equity considerations are embedded throughout the proposed plan, especially in how it relates to access for employees. The team understands that addressing the unique challenges faced by employees who rely on curbside parking is complex, but efforts are ongoing to integrate the issue into the broader transportation demand management strategy.

The implementation timeline allows for further community input and planning. Even if the City Council approves the program, implementation would take approximately one to one-and-a-half years, due to necessary procurement, staffing, equipment installation, and operational development.

Chrissy Mancini Nichols said the operational cost model includes allocations for staffing, enforcement, equipment, and a designated parking manager. The model also accounts for planned enforcement of residential permit zones (RPZs) to prevent potential spillover from paid zones into nearby neighborhoods. In terms of revenue allocation, once the program sustains its own costs, additional funds could support broader curb management improvements, such as better signage, loading zones, ADA-accessible parking, and employee transportation alternatives. The program could also fund curbside enhancements like trash receptacles, flowers, and streetlights, which have been requested by the community.

Chris Iverson emphasized the alignment between the draft operational model and the curb management principles previously adopted by the Commission. The principles include: achieving optimal occupancy levels, typically around eighty percent, to keep parking available; supporting strong enforcement and mobility operations; ensuring communication is accessible and effective, with materials translated into multiple languages and signage clear and widespread; offering multiple payment methods, including options beyond app-based systems, such as credit card payments; revisiting public right-of-way policies to improve permitting and management practices; and promoting equitable outcomes, including investments in ADA spaces, loading areas, and programs supporting alternative modes of travel.

The overarching goal is to create a safe, accessible, and efficient curb system, reducing illegal parking, blocked travel lanes, and limited access for deliveries and passengers.

Chris Long explained that a draft report of the implementation study will be available before the Commission's meeting on September 11 where it will be reviewed. The team will continue public engagement, particularly with stakeholders from the first engagement round, before seeking City Council action later in the year.

Commissioner Williams recommended the addition of a Q&A section specifically addressing employee and construction parking due to repeated community concerns. Also emphasized was the importance of clearly stating in the report that mobile apps would not be the only payment method given that requiring apps could be a barrier for some users. Ease of payment through credit card terminals should be emphasized.

Commissioner Ting asked if enforcement of RPZs will be part of the program. Chris Long confirmed that increased enforcement for RPZs is included in the operational assumptions due to community concerns. Although enforcement resources are currently limited, there are only two officers citywide, the curb pricing program would allow dedicated staff to monitor both the paid zones and RPZs effectively.

Commissioner Ting asked how residents use on-street parking. Chris Long explained that most residents in Old Bellevue, where the team recently conducted outreach, have access to off-street parking within their buildings. However, visitors frequently struggle to find parking and residents expressed interest in improving availability even if that means paid parking. In areas like the Spring District where the parking ratios are lower due to transit-oriented development planning, some residents rely more on on-street parking, especially overnight.

Commissioner Keilman stated that other regions in the state offer free park-and-ride lots associated with light rail stations and asked if requiring payment for curb parking near stations might discourage multimodal transportation. There could be an impact on commuters who would need to drive to the station in inclement weather before transitioning to other transportation modes. Chris Long stressed that the program will not make any changes to existing park-and-ride operations within the study area. The only transit-dedicated parking facility involved is near the BelRed station, which has approximately 300 parking spaces between 130th Avenue NE and 132nd Avenue NE. While there will be paid on-street parking on those streets, the actual parking lot is not included in the curb pricing program. For the Wilburton station behind Whole Foods, one adjacent street currently offers two-hour time-limited parking. It is the only street in Wilburton with on-street parking today that is included in the study area. That parking was not originally designated for transit riders, and its purpose remains uncertain.

Commissioner Keilman asked if there are examples or case studies demonstrating whether or not operational costs for similar programs are sustainably offset by revenue. Chrissy Mancini Nichols responded that the financial model forecasts that the Bellevue program would pay for itself, which is a fundamental goal of most parking programs. Many cities not only recover costs but generate revenue that supports additional enhancements such as public amenities and neighborhood improvements. There are good examples in Sacramento, Boulder, and San Luis Obispo where similar models have been successfully implemented. Chris Long added that cities would discontinue such programs if they failed to generate sufficient revenue.

Chris Long added that existing enforcement operations in Bellevue do not cover their own costs; the revenue from parking tickets does not currently pay for the enforcement staff. The new curb pricing model includes comprehensive cost assumptions for staffing, enforcement, and physical infrastructure maintenance. The financial model assumes contracted services for cleaning graffiti from pay stations; a ten-year replacement cycle for payment hardware similar to the city's signal cabinet replacement program; and coverage for items down to uniforms and insurance. The considerations are built into the financial model to ensure no net loss.

Commissioner Keilman asked for clarification on the issue of equity in regard to paid parking. Chris Iverson explained that equity in the context of the program refers to ensuring broad and inclusive access to the curb system while mitigating negative impacts, in addition to communication approaches. The strategies include multilingual communication materials; providing multiple payment options, including credit card access for those who may not use mobile applications; and staff availability for public questions and concerns. The program also seeks to reduce burdens on vulnerable groups. This may include transportation demand

management solutions; promoting alternative commute methods; and coordinating with transit agencies and private parking owners to improve access.

Commissioner Ting asked for a clearer definition of what equity-based success looks like and which groups are considered to be the focus. Chris Iverson responded that a significant concern raised during the engagement process was the impact on hourly and low-income workers, especially in retail and restaurant sectors. Many of the individuals currently move their cars multiple times per shift to avoid tickets or pay for permits for remote parking. The team acknowledged the critical challenge and noted that success will include finding sustainable parking or commute solutions for those workers, possibly through partnerships with transit providers or parking facilities.

Chrissy Mancini Nichols emphasized that the program aims to address the needs of all users of the curb, including those affected by non-compliance like delivery drivers who block travel lanes. By implementing better compliance through pricing, the city seeks to improve safety and access, particularly for those with mobility challenges who benefit from available curb space near their destinations. The program also plans to build in a data-driven feedback loop, allowing for future adjustments and refinements as community needs evolve. The program is designed to be responsive to unintended consequences and to ensure that staff will remain engaged with the community post-implementation. Their work will include monitoring outcomes, collecting feedback, and being prepared to tweak the program to better serve affected populations.

Commissioner Ting asked if the two primary equity groups would be those with mobility impairments and low-income workers. Kenzie Coulson said the focus of the program is on all who might use the short-term curb. The program is designed to prioritize universal access, transparent operations, and ongoing public engagement, not only for current implementation but for the evolution of the program into the future.

Commissioner Ting urged the team to more clearly identify disadvantaged populations in all future documentation and to define specific equity outcomes, such as providing low-cost or no-cost parking alternatives for workers who may be disproportionately affected. Chrissy Mancini Nichols acknowledged the suggestion and reaffirmed that low-income service workers are a key consideration and the team is actively developing targeted strategies to support them. The current situation in which employees either receive tickets or constantly move their vehicles is not sustainable and must be addressed.

Commissioner Keilman acknowledged the importance of providing multilingual support in Bellevue due to the city's diversity but cautioned against using the term "equity" too broadly. The need to distinguish between what truly promotes equity and what merely enhances user-friendliness was emphasized.

Commissioner Ting said the issue of paid parking has been couched by many in terms of overall economic gain or loss for local businesses. If there are additional studies or data that might help clarify the issue, it would be useful in communicating with business owners who may be concerned that paid parking could reduce foot traffic and patronage.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 24, 2025

B. May 8, 2025

A motion to approve both sets of minutes was made by Commissioner Keilman. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rebhuhn and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Williams abstained from voting.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

Kevin McDonald took a moment to review the Commission's calendar of updating meeting dates and agenda items.

The commission briefly discussed scheduling the annual retreat. Kevin McDonald proposed November 13 as the likely date. The retreat will be held in place of a regular meeting. The Chair and Vice Chair will collaborate with staff to develop the retreat agenda.

Commissioner Williams noted the work to update the Mobility Implementation Plan and said the plan is to be commended for its clarity and the value of its prioritization metrics. However, it is difficult to understand some of the technical elements, particularly those related to bicycle facilities and striping types. The updated plan should include more visual aids or hyperlinks to improve comprehension. Kevin McDonald confirmed that the updated version of the MIP will include both photographic and graphic visuals, along with links where applicable.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Magill adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.



Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Sept 11th, 2025

Date