

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 24, 2025
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Hybrid Meeting

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

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: None

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Marciante, Kurz

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Kristi Oosterveen, Molly Johnson, Michael Ingram, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Nieuwenhuis; Chris Breiland, Fehr & Peers

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Marciante and Kurz.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

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

5. STAFF REPORTS

Senior Transportation Planner Michael Ingram shared with the Commissioners a flyer about the development of the draft of the city's hazard mitigation plan, which is currently available for public comment through early May.

Program Manager Kristi Oosterveen explained that historically the city had an annex within the county's plan, but FEMA and state guidelines now suggests each jurisdiction to maintain its own hazard mitigation plan. The city was awarded a planning grant in 2023 by FEMA,

facilitating the creation of the plan to identify hazards and propose mitigation strategies. While not yet finalized, approval of the plan is necessary in order for Bellevue to access future hazard mitigation grant funding. Comments on the draft plan are encouraged from the Commissioners and the public.

With regard to the transportation facilities plan (TFP), Michael Ingram mentioned that staff are working with the finance department to understand the financial forecast. Staff from the finance department are expected to attend the June 12 Commission meeting to provide the financial forecast. The preliminary indications suggest a constrained capital budget outlook for transportation projects.

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald informed the Commissioners that fourteen individuals had applied for the two upcoming Commission vacancies. The selection process was briefly outlined, noting that there is involvement by the City Clerk, Commissioners and the Council liaison. The goal is to finalize appointments before the June 12 Commission meeting.

The Commissioners were reminded to indicate their availability to attend an upcoming reception event on April 30, noting that catering arrangements are being finalized.

Kevin McDonald reminded the Commissioners that through election day special Washington State law rules will be in effect prohibiting public comment related to candidates or ballot issues during Commission meetings.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Transportation Improvement Program

Kristi Oosterveen said a public hearing on the Transportation Improvement Program is mandated by state law, allowing the public the opportunity to comment on projects in the recommended plan. Since the project list was reviewed by the Commission in February, one project was deleted owing to the consolidation of two related traffic engineering programs for operational efficiency. The change involves no functional changes to services.

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Vice Chair Magill. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ting and the motion carried unanimously.

Nicole Myers voiced concerns about pedestrian infrastructure, especially sidewalks, given the anticipated residential growth in neighborhood areas due to recent middle housing zoning changes. The city is looking to increase density in mixed use, neighborhood centers and other urban areas as well. Recent sidewalk improvement projects were acknowledged and the Commission was encouraged to continue efforts to create pedestrian-friendly connections to transit and rapid ride routes.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Ting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rebhuhn and the motion carried unanimously.

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Transportation Improvement Program Recommendations

Kristi Oosterveen reminded the Commissioners that TIP is a state-mandated plan. The TIP is essential for maintaining the city's eligibility for various transportation grants. The plan integrates other city documents, including the Comprehensive Plan and functional plans, and it flows through the Mobility Implementation Plan (MIP) and the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP), eventually finding integration in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which contains funded projects. Additional city initiatives, such as the transit plan and the transportation demand management program, as well as regional or agency-led projects, also contribute to the TIP.

The TIP, once completed, must be submitted by June 30 each year to the Regional Transportation Improvement Program, which is managed by the Puget Sound Regional Council, and the State Transportation Improvement Program, which is managed by the Washington State Department of Transportation.

The TIP is broken down into four sections. Section I includes 42 projects that are in the adopted CIP. Section II has 29 projects that are currently in the 2022-2033 Transportation Facilities Plan. Section III lists 65 additional candidate projects identified in planning processes but not yet funded. Section IV highlights five regional or agency-led projects that address projects for I-405, SR-520 and I-90 as well as Sound Transit 3.

There are six new projects in Section I. Fourteen projects were removed, and three projects are transferring sections. Transferred projects typically move based on their funding status. For instance, some CIP projects funded only for design shifted back into the TFP or lower sections if additional funding was unavailable. Two projects were removed from Section II, and seven projects were transferred into the CIP. Section III has 34 new projects added to it, primarily sourced from the ongoing TFP process, and three projects transitioning into the CIP. Section IV remained unchanged.

Kristi Oosterveen sought from the Commission approval of the TIP project list and the accompanying recommendation memo, noting corrections already made at Chair Stash's earlier direction, specifically fixing a spelling error in Mayor Robinson's name, and adjusting capitalization inconsistencies. Any additional Commissioner requests for changes will be accommodated.

Commissioner Rebhuhn sought clarification regarding the funding status of the projects in Section I. Kristi Oosterveen explained that Section I projects are included in the CIP but they may not necessarily be completely funded. Each project included in the section has secured funds in terms of Council approved local funding or confirmed grants or agreements. The unsecured column represents dollar amounts needed during the six-year period to help progress the projects forward. The Section I projects have the highest certainty of progressing, though projects from other sections could move up if new funding or Council priorities emerge.

Commissioner Ting requested clarification regarding project prioritization within the TIP. Kristi affirmed there was no prioritization in the listing itself; rather, the projects appeared grouped alphanumerically by type within Section I, sequentially by assigned TFP numbers within Section II, and simply by order of inclusion for projects in Sections 3 and 4.

Commissioner Ting sought confirmation that the TIP project list is in no particular order and Kristi Oosterveen confirmed the list contains no prioritization. The projects are listed by project type.

Commissioner Ting stated the understanding that the TIP is financially unconstrained and represents a general list of important projects without specific funding commitments. Kristi Oosterveen confirmed that and added that the TIP itself does not alter project status within either the CIP or TFP, each of which has its own process. Any changes the Commission may suggest to CIP or TFP-listed projects will be addressed within the respective dedicated processes. The Commission can propose additions or alterations to the TIP's broader project sections provided such projects have defined scopes and estimated costs.

Vice Chair Magill referred to TIP 19 and sought clarification on how specific projects progress through the overall transportation planning structure. Kristi Oosterveen explained that TIP 19, located on Spring Boulevard from 124th Avenue NE to 132nd Avenue NE, originated from planning associated with the Spring District development and the Bel-Red corridor and was not related to the Bike Bellevue initiative. Conversely, Project 111 emerged specifically from the Bike Bellevue process, running along NE 12th Street toward Bel-Red Road and 132nd Avenue NE. Project 111 was included as a candidate for the TFP but has not yet been formally adopted. Inclusion in the TIP allows the city to retain projects not currently funded, maintaining a comprehensive project repository.

Vice Chair Magill acknowledged the clarification and asked about the \$75 million cost associated with TIP 19 and speculated that a more limited bike-focused approach might reduce the cost. Kristi Oosterveen responded by saying that substantial cost reductions likely will be minimal because the project area lacks current infrastructure. The MIP contains conceptual projects without funding; the TFP is financially constrained with projections based on anticipated funding; the CIP lists projects formally approved and funded by the City Council. The TIP itself represents potential projects with substantial cost estimates that would ideally be funded should financial resources become available.

Commissioner Keilman asked if any projects listed in the TIP originated from or were residuals from Bike Bellevue. Kristi Oosterveen confirmed that any such projects would appear in the unfunded section given that none of them have yet been adopted into a funded plan.

A motion to recommend approval of the Transportation Improvement Program as drafted was made by Commissioner Ting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rebhuhn and the motion carried unanimously.

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

Kristi Oosterveen said the TIP will be before the Council on June 3 for adoption. Once approved by the Council, a final package will be put together for submission to the state and the PSRC.

Commissioner Ting asked if the city ever receives any feedback from the PSRC. Kristi Oosterveen explained that the agencies involved do not typically provide substantial feedback

beyond confirming project inclusion in their respective regional or state plans. The primary value of the plan lies in enabling Bellevue to confirm eligibility when applying for grants or external funding.

B. Mobility Implementation Plan Update

Kevin McDonald noted that on March 27 the Commission approved revisions to the Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (BLTS) table to include changes to speed limits and the definition of shared-use paths, which previously were referred to as physically separated bikeways. Additionally, the Commission approved an alternate bicycle route known as the East Bellevue Greenway along the Spirit Ridge/Sammamish River connection corridor. The Commission did not at that meeting reach concurrence on the issue of repealing Table 4 from the MIP and elected instead to rely on the city's Transportation Design Manual and professional association guidelines for determining intersection improvements that maintain the intended BLTS. Also awaiting concurrence is the issue of updating Figure 12 to explicitly show intersection performance targets related to BLTS along the bicycle network corridors.

Kevin McDonald explained the reasoning behind the recommendation to remove the proscriptive Table 4 from the MIP. Each intersection is unique and there are specific design concepts for each that will work to achieve the intended BLTS. There are various resources used by the city, including the Bellevue Transportation Design Manual and documents from the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), each of which guide the design of intersections to achieve the desired bicycle comfort and safety levels.

It was noted that the Transportation Design Manual exists in two parts: one part containing the standards, and in the second the drawings to be implemented in projects developed by staff or the private sectors as part of development projects. The Complete Streets Guide is more of an illustrative guide that provides narrative and illustrations for how bicycle network facilities would work along a corridor and at intersections.

Commissioner Rebhuhn observed that in an ideal world there would be all the space needed to implement projects to facilitate BLTS projects. The fact is there are design constraints at all intersections. The question asked was how the city addresses intersection designs when space limitations prevent achieving the ideal BLTS standards. Kevin McDonald emphasized the need for flexibility and context-sensitive approaches. While ideally intersections would fully achieve the intended BLTS, practical constraints, including available space, budgets, and other limitations, often require compromise. There are several components to achieving a BLTS, including spatial adjustments, increased physical separation, and temporal separation through signals granting cyclists a head-start ahead of vehicular traffic. Mixing and matching those three components is done to achieve the best possible outcome for each intersection. It is generally necessary to work within the space between the curbs.

Commissioner Ting asked how typical it is for corridors and intersections to match in terms of meeting the goal. Kevin McDonald said the intent is always for them to match, and ideally they would align avoid bottlenecks or barriers. If a corridor is BLTS-2, the design of the intersection should be compatible with that intended BLTS.

Commissioner Ting asked how close things are to achieving that outcome. Kevin McDonald said it is generally true that the corridors are more complete than the intersections.

Consultant Chris Breiland with Fehr & Peers agreed with that assessment and indicated that corridor completion historically has received greater attention compared to intersections. Historically, the industry's focus has been on getting the corridors right. The fact is intersections are the hardest place to address the BLTS due to greater complexities and space demands at the intersections. Some of the newer facilities Bellevue has have seen a conscious effort to match the corridor and intersection BLTS. The intersection of NE 8th Street and 108th Avenue NE is a case in point. While not fully implemented, the southbound side has a separated bicycle facility and a bicycle-specific signal. Clearly defining intersection performance targets is part of the update to assist city engineers and developers in meeting the BLTS goals more consistently.

Commissioner Ting asked if it is more important to tackle the intersection or the corridor first where one of them needs improvement. Chris Breiland answered that prioritization is situational. Ideally both corridor and intersection improvements would happen simultaneously. However, practicality often dictates incremental or opportunistic progress based on available resources or coinciding projects. Safety benefits depend heavily on context, and conditions at both intersections and corridors can individually present safety challenges.

Vice Chair Magill agreed with the proposed revision of Figure 12 to include the BLTS target for intersections along the bicycle network corridors, and acknowledged the clear logic behind assigning intersection-level traffic stress targets based on the lower stress rating of connecting segments. If there is a concern it is that Table 4 was clear in regard to what would be needed to meet the BLTS target. Now the focus has shifted to utilizing a number of different documents. Kevin McDonald explained that there are various levels of public engagement depending on the nature of each project. When intersection improvements are part of private sector developments, the design typically adheres directly to the city's Transportation Design Manual, with minimal public input. Conversely, large CIP projects generally involve extensive public participation during the concept design phase. In such cases, community input helps shape intersection designs aligned with the performance targets.

Vice Chair Magill asked how much public input goes into drafting the various guides, and if someone from the public could determine what an BLTS-3 intersection needs to look like from reading the guides. Kevin McDonald explained that the guides rely primarily on professional best practices and expertise rather than broad public input.

Chris Breiland agreed and pointed out that professional guidance defines potential tools and approaches, but the final design decisions remain context-specific and contingent upon on-site conditions. While the guidelines outline general options for achieving low-stress intersections, they cannot precisely define specific intersection outcomes without considering local conditions.

Vice Chair Magill requested a concrete example and referenced the intersection at Main Street and 108th Avenue NE near Bellevue High School. The intersection already includes separated bike lanes and advanced bike signals, which makes it look like a full-on bicycle intersection. The question asked was if the intersection meets the BLTS-1 standard, and how the public would be able to verify that without going into all the guides. Kevin McDonald responded by

outlining the iterative evolution of that particular intersection, noting previous designs lacked the current features, such as restricted through traffic for general vehicles and protected bike signals preventing conflicts between cyclists and turning cars. The prescriptive tables like Table 4 limit flexibility. The current approach enables creativity and improvement over time. The intersection now meets the BLTS-1 criteria. The intersection provides ample cyclist protection through space allocation, vehicular separation, and signal timing.

Chris Breiland clarified that BLTS-1 involves the maximum amount of separation possible between cars and bicycles. While the 108th Avenue NE approach meets full BLTS-1 criteria due to complete cyclist protection, the Main Street approaches do not because cyclists must still integrate with the vehicular traffic flow without any dedicated protection. The variance illustrates the nuanced, evolving nature of intersection design.

Commissioner Ting asked about the process for rating intersections and ensuring consistent evaluations. Chris Breiland replied that the city is developing intersection BLTS evaluations concurrently with specific intersection improvement projects. Currently, assessments occur during the design phase, based on detailed examinations of available space, traffic volumes, and BLTS objectives. The city does not yet possess comprehensive intersection ratings or an intersection gap map; assessments are completed primarily when individual intersections are actively addressed or redesigned.

Commissioner Ting acknowledging the issues that arise from eliminating Table 4, specifically noting that while the table is considered to be overly prescriptive, its clear criteria provided consistency in assessing the BLTS rating for each intersection. A concern was expressed that the proposed reliance on various documents, without having clear intermediate criteria, might lead to inconsistency. The question asked was how the city intends to maintain consistency in rating intersections with Table 4 removed given the need for general principles or guidelines rather than precise, restrictive criteria. Chris Breiland recognized Commissioner Ting's concern as being valid and suggested that city design engineering staff already possess a good sense of expected intersection performance levels. The staff could possibly develop a simpler evaluation matrix to clarify intersection ratings further.

Kevin McDonald suggested Commissioner Ting was asking for more specificity than the process allows for at the current stage. The bicycle network corridors previously operated under a binary evaluation of compliance or non-compliance rather than on detailed performance distinctions.

Commissioner Ting countered that the situation has shifted from being overly prescriptive to having no clear guidelines, and asserted the necessity for a public understanding of what differentiates the BLTS levels, especially at intersections. Chris Breiland said the city's engineers when asked to look at an intersection and determine the BLTS rating would be able to come to a pretty close consensus based on professional practices and the design guidelines. There is not detailed rubric currently in place, but the engineers can reasonably distinguish between BLTS levels by considering degrees of protection and facility types. For example, BLTS-1 intersections feature full bicycle protection, while BLTS-3 intersections offer basic striped lanes or sharrows. Specific intersections might require additional safety features, but overall the decisions of the engineers remain context-driven.

Commissioner Ting clarified that an exact scoring mechanism is not needed. What is needed is

something in between in terms of guidance, principles, concepts, or qualitative descriptions that explains how engineers determine BLTS levels.

Chair Stash supported the suggestion and proposed developed some broad criteria, such as spatial separation and timing, to illustrate clearly how BLTS determinations are reached. Kevin McDonald the approach is feasible in terms of identifying general performance metrics linked to BLTS outcomes. Commissioner Ting agreed that qualitative guidelines or principles can adequately convey the necessary distinctions for the benefit of the public.

Commissioner Keilman suggested that specific metrics or performance measures are not needed, the better approach would be to look at what the goal is. If the goal is BLTS-1, consistency can be achieved by marking off items on a checklist. If X and Y are not met, the intersection is likely in another category.

Vice Chair Magill agreed and added that engineers inevitably are going to use criteria internally to rank intersections. What is needed is an understanding of what those criteria are so they can be made transparent to and understandable by the public. Using broader concepts like "space," "separation," and "protection" can describe the BLTS levels, all without the public having to grasp how the assessments are made based on the extensive technical research.

A motion to release MIP Table 4 and instead reference other reference materials, and to provide some performance metrics, was made by Commissioner Ting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rebhuhn and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to add the BLTS targets to the intersections shown on the map in Figure 12, along with a reminder that where there are two different BLTS numbers, the lower one is to be provided as the target, was made by Vice Chair Magill. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keilman.

Commissioner Ting cautioned that the motion on the table involved the Commission effectively approving BLTS targets that are not yet fully understood. It is clear, however, the Commission understands the general direction the staff are looking for. In the future when asked to vote on a particular BLTS level, the Commission should have a clear understanding of all that it entails.

A motion to amend the motion to clarify that the BLTS targets in Figure 12 were to be as defined by the previous motion, which is the performance targets, was made by Chair Stash. The motion to amend the motion was seconded by Vice Chair Magill and the motion carried unanimously.

The main motion, as amended, carried unanimously.

Kevin McDonald said the Commission's May 8 meeting will include a presentation of updated maps, tables and figures for the MIP. Additionally, work on the MIP will be paused in June to allow for focusing on the Transportation Facilities Plan; it will then resume July with a preliminary document incorporating all previous input.

Without objection, the agenda was revised to allow a return to Communications from City

Council, Boards and Commissions to hear from Councilmember Nieuwenhuis.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis confirmed the retirement of Councilmember Stokes from the Council and the appointment of Vishal Bhargava, a member of the Planning Commission since 2020, to fill the vacant seat. Vishal Bhargava brings considerable experience in urban planning and community service to the table.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis also mentioned that Councilmember Sumadiwiry had already joined the Council, filling the seat previously occupied by Councilmember Zahn, who transitioned to the state legislature. Both newly appointed members will need to run for election in order to hold their seats. In all, five City Council seats will be contested during the election in the fall.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said progress is being made on the Wilburton Land Use Code update. It is essentially a transit-oriented development amendment. The Council's goal is to adopt zoning changes aligned with the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update that will promote affordable housing, sustainability, walkable neighborhoods, and increased urban density. Additional community amenities like open and green spaces, and multimodal accessibility are central to the amendment.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said King County Metro's Rapid K-Line project, which was endorsed by the Council in late March, is scheduled to begin operations in 2030. The K-Line will connect Totem Lake in Kirkland to the Eastgate Park and Ride, with stops in downtown Bellevue. Extensive community engagement has been completed involving over a thousand respondents. The plan includes the inclusion of business access transit (BAT) lanes which are expected to deliver a 24 percent travel time improvement along the corridor. It is disappointing that a proposal by Representative Zahn that would have allowed private or corporate shuttles to utilize BAT lanes failed. The Council will continue to advocate for the provision on the argument that it would significantly benefit major Bellevue employers such as Amazon and Google.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis shared that the City Council took positions relative to some state revenue proposals. The state is projecting a \$12 billion to \$15 billion budget shortfall and outlined legislative proposals addressing this shortfall. The legislative's revenue proposals are trying to address the shortfall by looking at increases to the business and occupation tax on businesses, wealth taxes, payroll taxes for large employers, and a proposal to raise the property tax cap from one percent to three percent annually. Bellevue has pushed back on the latter on the argument of the competitive advantage the city gained when Seattle imposed a payroll "jumpstart" tax, which lead companies to relocate to Bellevue. Bellevue's intent is to prevent similar actions at the state level on the concern that businesses would ultimately leave Washington entirely if taxes are increased significantly.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 13, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Ting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rebhuhn and the motion carried unanimously.

B. March 27, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Ting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rebhuhn and the motion carried unanimously.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

Michael Ingram took a moment to briefly review the Commission's calendar of upcoming meetings and agenda items.

Vice Chair Magill requested clarification regarding the micro-mobility project timeline. Michael Ingram said the narrow scope is intended to expedite the process and the aim to forward the proposal to the City Council by summer. Department of Transportation Assistant Director Molly Johnson added that scheduling challenges, exacerbated by delays and necessary work on the TFP, means Council consideration might be delayed to September.

Commissioner Ting asked for a preview of the TFP update at the Commission's next meeting. Michael Ingram indicated staff has categorized projects into three funding groups: funded projects, placeholder-funded projects, and low-priority, unfunded projects. Given the constrained financial outlook, very limited resources will be available even for high-priority projects. At the next meeting the focus will be on discussing project prioritization.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Stash adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m.