

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

February 13, 2025
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Hybrid Meeting

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

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: None

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Breiland, Fehr & Peers

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 630 p.m. by Chair Stash who presided.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald noted that all written correspondence received was pertinent to the agenda items to be discussed.

Alex Tsimerman began with a Nazi salute and called the Commissioners dirty damn Nazi Gestapo fascist cockroaches, mobsters and banditos. The remarks were at times disjointed and provocative in expressing views on transportation issues and criticisms of the Mayor. Others were referred to in derogatory terms, and some were accused of engaging in criminal behavior and misappropriating funds. Included in the comments were personal grievances and controversial statements regarding local political dynamics and transportation policies.

Maria Frost, transportation director at Kemper Development Company, expressed gratitude for the Commission's continued work on the Transportation Facilities Plan. The Commission was urged to consider prioritizing projects within the Transportation Facilities Plan that address roadway performance gaps identified as part of the 2044 growth alternative and the Comprehensive Plan update. Projects that would improve roadway performance gaps may

receive a low score under the MIP but may address multiple intersection deficiencies that impact all users of the roadway system. It was noted that additional comments had been submitted in writing.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, AND MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis noted that there are two upcoming public open houses concerning the TFP and the MIP on February 25 and on February 26 respectively.

With regard to the Rapid Ride K Route, it was explained that the service plan for 2030 will offer fast, reliable transit connecting Totem Lake in Kirkland to the Eastgate park and ride, with stops at key hubs including Bellevue College and downtown Bellevue. The proposed project is expected to reduce travel times by 25 percent compared to local bus routes. Also under consideration is the use of the BAT lanes for the K Line but also for employer shuttles. A bill before the state legislature is aimed at allowing employer shuttles to use BAT lanes, which is good first step. King County Metro has voiced some concerns but they are being addressed. Given that the area is an innovation hub, the use of autonomous shuttles should also be explored.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis highlighted the fact that the city's fleet is fully ready for adverse winter weather, with all necessary snow equipment and deicing supplies on standby.

5. STAFF REPORTS – None

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 2025 Update

Program Manager Kristi Oosterveen explained that the Transportation Improvement Program update was for 2026 to 2031. By mandate, the TIP is updated annually. The TIP is integrated into a larger planning process. The Comprehensive Plan sets the long range outlook, which is then refined through long range facility or functional plans. The plans feed into the Mobility Implementation Plan, which in turn informs the Transportation Facilities Plan. Finally, the capital improvement program, now operating on a six-year cycle, provides the funding for project implementation. The Transportation Improvement Program is unique in that it is not revenue constrained and includes projects worth a total of one billion dollars, representing all of the projects that the department would pursue if resources were unlimited.

Kristi Oosterveen reminded the Commissioners that a couple of years ago all of the projects in the Comprehensive Plan and the Comprehensive Transportation Project List were moved into the Transportation Improvement Program. The projects were placed in a specific section that houses items that have been vetted through various studies and initiatives. The program also includes additional initiatives from regional or external agencies. A designated section of the plan lists projects such as freeways and transit projects, along with their associated funding amounts. Once updated, the TIP is submitted to both the Puget Sound Regional Council and

the state agency in charge of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The submission enables the city to be eligible for grants. The program is updated annually, with projects being added or removed as necessary. There is a mandated timeline that requires the program to be submitted by the end of June, which explains why the process begins in February and is expected to be finalized by May.

The TIP is divided into four color-coded sections. The first section contains projects that are already part of the adopted Capital Improvement Program. The second section contains projects from the current 2022-2023 Transportation Facilities Plan. The third section lists unfunded local projects and candidates for the Transportation Facilities Plan update. The fourth section includes regional and external agency projects.

Addressing the changes proposed for each section, Kristi Oosterveen said six new projects were added to Section I, including five new capital improvement projects and one new subproject from an ongoing program. Thirteen projects were removed, with some of them being transferred to other sections due to completed portions under the capital plan. In the second section, two projects were removed because they had been superseded by a capital improvement project, and seven projects were transferred to the capital plan as they had become new capital projects. The third section features 34 new projects, primarily candidates for the Transportation Facilities Plan update, along with three projects transferred to the capital plan. No changes were made in the fourth section because the regional policy advisor confirmed that the existing projects remain current.

The Commissioners were asked to approve a public hearing for April 10 on the TIP. Prior to the public hearing, staff will work to confirm the new project descriptions, review the details of the capital plan including grant funding, and address cost estimates for some new projects in the Transportation Facilities Plan candidate list. The plan is not revenue constrained and any vetted project can be included. The complete draft plan will be presented at the public hearing for public comment before a recommendation is made to the City Council.

Commissioner Marciante stressed the importance of the Transportation Improvement Program and noted that in past years projects mostly came from studies, functional plans, and specialized analyses focused on operational issues and intersections. With the introduction of the Mobility Implementation Plan, there may not be a need to update the functional plans, since the Mobility Implementation Plan already provides the necessary priorities. Concern was voiced regarding where future projects will come from if not from updating functional plans. Kristi Oosterveen commented that projects and concepts will flow from the current Wilburton work. In addition, any initiatives within the department will similarly produce specific projects. The gaps identified in the Mobility Implementation Plan, which are numerous, are will also be used to determine the top projects for vetting. Commissioner Marciante observed that identified gaps in the Mobility Implementation Plan produce concepts that are then incorporated into both the Transportation Improvement Program and the Transportation Facilities Plan.

Kevin McDonald said every identified gap is considered to be a candidate and the top ranking priorities in the MIP are forwarded to the TFP for consideration. Projects that do not make it in the TFP are housed in the TIP.

Commissioner Ting asked if all transportation projects live in the TIP. Kristi Oosterveen said that currently is the case and added that no transportation projects exist outside of the TIP. The TIP functions as a comprehensive catalog and includes project concepts, descriptions, and

assumed cost estimates. Projects that have not advanced to the Transportation Facilities Plan or the Capital Improvement Program reside in the blue section of the TIP, which is why that section continues to get bigger and bigger, especially given the busy nature of the current update cycle, with many projects being vetted as candidates for the 2026-2037 Transportation Facilities Plan.

Commissioner Kurz clarified that the Mobility Implementation Plan serves as a process rather than a mere collection of projects. Kristi Oosterveen agreed, adding that projects that are recommended from various initiatives become part of the candidate list for the Transportation Facilities Plan and eventually may be funded as actual projects.

Commissioner Ting referred to project R-219, the Vision Zero Safe Speeds Program, and noted that it references “FSI.” The question asked was if “FSI” is the same as “KSI.” Kristi Oosterveen explained that “FSI” stands for fatal and serious injury crashes while KSI stands for killed and serious injury crashes. Senior transportation planner Akshali Ghandi clarified that FSI and KSI are the same.

A motion to approve the 2026-2031 TIP list for consideration and to approve a public hearing on April 10 was made by Commissioner Ting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keilman and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Transportation Facilities Plan Update

Senior Planner Michael Ingram reminded the Commissioners that work to update the TFP had been ongoing since September, with meetings held nearly every month. To a large extent the candidate project list has been established. The scoring exercise performed under the Mobility Implementation Plan framework evaluated projects based on their vehicular benefit, bicycle mode benefit, and pedestrian mode benefit. An error was identified in the vehicular mode benefit calculations for six projects, and the errors were corrected.

Kristi Oosterveen noted that a draft map had been produced but with incorrect colors. The map displayed all projects on the list, providing an overall idea of their locations. The map will be used as an online opportunity for the public to provide feedback.

Michael Ingram explained that the MIP serves as a tool to evaluate performance gaps, which are defined as areas where targets are not being met for various transportation modes. The framework includes growth goals that consider the location of projects based on anticipated growth, using designated Performance Management Area (PMA) zones that range from intensely developed urban areas to lower density residential areas. In addition, the framework incorporates assessments of access and mobility, equity, and safety, along with supplemental scores that reflect the severity of shortfalls such as intersection volume-to-capacity ratios or travel speed deficiencies. Some of the scoring work was done by the consultant Fehr & Peers.

With regard to the vehicular mode, Michael Ingram said the scoring was determined by where projects are located. The access and mobility score is tied to a reference map that relies on map data. Equity does not apply to the vehicle mode. The safety score considers whether a project is on the high injury network, which is defined as the nine percent of road segments that account for the majority of serious injury collisions. Projects not on the high injury network receive a lower score. Projects that involve widening a road, regardless of where it is located, receives a safety score of zero.

Corrections were made to the Downtown intersections of Bellevue Way and NE 8th Street, as well as 106th Avenue NE and NE 8th Street, to account for the fact that road widening had not been properly reflected in the initial scoring. A supplemental score was then assigned based on how far the performance measures fall short of targets, with reference to an environmental analysis conducted for a 2044 horizon that incorporated anticipated land use.

Michael Ingram explained that the pedestrian mode scoring follows a similar structure. The scoring considers project location within the PMA framework, access and mobility in the area as determined by map analysis, and the presence of key destinations such as schools or grocery stores. An additional evaluation of the frequent transit network is also included. Safety is again a factor, with extra points awarded if a project addresses issues like missing sidewalks on both sides of a street. The bicycle mode scoring uses the same criteria of location, access and mobility, equity, and safety. For bicycle projects, supplemental points are awarded if a project is located on a designated bicycle network or a priority bicycle corridor.

Michael Ingram explained that each mode is independently scored, with the roadway mode having a maximum score of seven, the pedestrian mode a maximum of sixteen, and the bicycle mode a maximum of eighteen. The top scoring location was identified as the intersection of NE 12th Street and 116th Avenue NE, the area located at the nexus of BelRed and Wilburton and on the edge of the Downtown near a hospital. The intersection was characterized as having significant challenges with left turns, particularly from westbound to southbound traffic. Coal Creek Parkway and the access points onto I-405 scored high as well. The state's concept of constructing a series of four roundabouts is supported by the city. Resident feedback indicates support for addressing the challenges.

Michael Ingram said the Bellevue Way HOV lane project, which involves adding a southbound HOV lane approaching the South Bellevue Station, would extend the existing HOV lane north to Winters House. An evaluation demonstrated substantial benefit from even a partial extension to Winters House, although affordability remains a concern.

Several locations were discussed in December that had been flagged by the environmental analysis conducted for the Comprehensive Plan as gaps for 2044. Some of the gaps might prove challenging to address. There may be some operational changes that could be implemented at 116th Avenue SE and SE 1st Street to improve performance.

The list is set up to prioritize first by the vehicular mode, followed by the pedestrian mode, and finally by the bicycle mode.

On the pedestrian side, the highest scoring project is 116th Avenue SE and extending up the hill on SE 5th Street toward Eastrail and the Wilburton residential area. The high score was attributed in part to the fact that there is a partial sidewalk that does not provide complete access. The Eastrail project also achieved high scores on both the pedestrian and bicycle metrics. The Grand Connection was mentioned as a priority for both the city and the community, and it too scored well. In addition, the multiuse path along 114th Avenue SE, the frontage road along I-405, from SE 8th Street to NE 8th Street, was noted for its strong performance on both the pedestrian and bicycle criteria.

Regarding the bicycle projects, Michael Ingram indicated that the Main Street corridor achieved a top score and was one of several projects that reached the highest scoring level. The corridor, which extends from the west edge at 100th Avenue NE to 116th Avenue NE, is planned to receive improvements that include the creation of a multipurpose path from 108th

Avenue NE west to 112th Avenue NE where it will connect to improvements built by the state. Also scoring high was 140th Avenue NE from NE 8th Street south to Bellevue College, a primary bicycle corridor, including an access to the SR-520 trail. The project north of Northrup Way from 136th Place NE to 140th Avenue NE also scored well.

Commissioner Rebhuhn referred to project MIP-P2 and asked about the scoring for it. Located on 148 Avenue SE where there are no sidewalks on either side, the project constitutes a major missing connection between Somerset and SE 44th Street. The gap poses safety concerns for pedestrians and children who use nearby bus stops. Michael Ingram acknowledged that the gap has been a longstanding issue. There is a new program in the Capital Improvement Program to address arterial sidewalk gaps. The new program is intended to provide a systematic way to evaluate and prioritize such gaps independent of the Transportation Facilities Plan process. MIP-P2 scored relatively high, but implementation is expensive and funding has been a persistent challenge. Commissioner Rebhuhn noted that there is plenty of room to add a sidewalk without any massive reconstruction.

Kristi Oosterveen added that the MIP-P2 gap has been on the Neighborhood Sidewalk Program list for a long time. It is high on the list of neighborhood sidewalks to be addressed once funding is available.

Commissioner Rebhuhn noted that the roadway has a curve to it and that is where people would be walking. There is no barrier and that safety factor might call for moving the project up on the list. Kristi Oosterveen said safety is one of the things taken into consideration once funding is available.

Commissioner Ting asked how the scoring worked for the MIP-P2 project in particular. Kevin McDonald said all of the MIP referral project scores can be obtained from the scoring sheet that was presented to the Commission in September 2024.

Commissioner Marciante observed that geographically the projects tend to be in growth areas. The question asked was if growth in those areas is creating needs that tends to draw the majority of the investments, leaving areas where the challenges are more stable with un-addressed needs. If that is the case, there is an issue of fairness involved. While more funding would resolve the issue, there is a question around whether investments are being distributed equitably, possibly due to an inherent bias in the scoring system that may not truly reflect the most pressing needs. Kristi Oosterveen noted that the MIP gaps for both pedestrians and bicycles are on the arterial networks. Programs like the Neighborhood Sidewalk Program has more than a 120 candidate locations. Bellevue has grown and it is no longer the bedroom community it was where people were fine without having sidewalks. People now want sidewalks in their neighborhoods. Progress has been made relative to neighborhood sidewalks because of the levy, but the need far outweighs the resources.

Vice Chair Magill voiced having struggled with how to interact with the details at the Commission level. The Commission's roll is to make sure things make sense through what is a numeric process. As such the Commission should be looking at how the scores work together and making a determination as to whether or not they make sense. It would be very helpful to see how the scores for specific projects were worked out to make sure the scoring is truly aligned with what is viewed as important for the city. Implementation Planning Manager Eric Miller responded by explaining that the scoring system serves only as an introductory step in the prioritization process. Community input during open houses and city meetings plays an essential role in reshaping the list of priority projects.

Michael Ingram said projects with existing funding in the CIP will likely stay in the TFP. Projects in the TFP for which funding has never been assigned could be dropped.

Chair Stash acknowledged that the numerical calculations represent the first step. Given a scenario in which the top five projects from each of the three groups are selected, Chair Stash asked how much that list of 15 projects would change once other factors such as community input are pulled into the mix. Commissioner Marciante pointed out that staff conducts open house events before bringing project lists to the Commission, giving the Commission the advantage of having in hand public input. While the scoring provides useful initial guidance, additional factors like community support and ongoing refinement play critical roles in determining the final rankings for projects. The process continues its cyclical review every two years, incorporating feedback and ensuring that projects are aligned with the city's growth and infrastructure improvement objectives.

Commissioner Ting noted that the current year iteration is different in that the MIP scoring is being used for the very first time. It will be interesting to compare the numerical scores against the final list. Project cost is not factored in, so where there are two equally scoring projects, it is more likely the less expensive one will be chosen. The impact of projects on other modes is also not accounted for, nor is the number of people impacted by a project. While gaps are included in some of the scoring, consideration must be given to whether gaps are highly important or less important. A project could in fact have adverse safety implications for pedestrians, and such tradeoffs should be part of the evaluation. Community input, the number of people affected by a project, and the overall network impact are factors that should be integrated into the decision-making process.

Kristi Oosterveen expressed a hope that in the coming weeks staff will be able to compile additional data regarding the secondary factors. Later in the month staff will engage in a prioritization session involving subject matter experts from transportation, parks, and utilities. The experts will review the project list, examine the scores as a starting point, and then adjust priorities based on additional factors such as community input, cost, and network effects. The goal is to develop a staff recommendation that clearly outlines the reasons behind any changes in project ordering, so that the Commission can review and either support or question the recommendations.

Eric Miller added that once there is a revenue forecast from the finance department in hand, things get tougher because lines must be drawn. In the staff's preliminary prioritization, the reasons for moving projects up or down will be made clear.

Commissioner Kurz commented that opportunistic factors should also get taken into account as they arise, such as identified state or federal funding that could make a project less expensive to construct. Michael Ingram added that decisions to move projects forward are also sometimes predicated on private development.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if consideration is ever given to stopgap or temporary solutions that might things better for the users until the full project can be built. By way of example, the Commissioner mentioned the situation on Newport Way where a temporary barrier might offer some immediate pedestrian safety until a permanent sidewalk can be built. Kristi Oosterveen explained that there are alternatives to a full permanent sidewalk, such as using paint and posts or installing bollards. While interim projects are sometimes implemented as part of ongoing programs, there has not been a comprehensive department discussion regarding larger-scale

interim projects for arterials.

Commissioner Ting pointed out that if a project is located in PMA-1, it automatically receives the highest access and mobility score, which equals eight. Similarly, a project on the high injury network automatically receives the highest equity score. That means that any project in PMA-1 will score the same to one addressing a critical equity issue and being on the high injury network. That raises a concern about whether the scoring might be biased in favor of growth areas.

With regard to the vehicular scoring methodology, Commissioner Ting note that a project on the high injury network will receive a score of four. Typically when vehicular improvements are made to add capacity, traffic volumes increase, potentially reducing safety unless appropriate mitigations are applied. That raises a question about the rationale behind prioritizing capacity problems on the high injury network. Kevin McDonald explained that the scoring process takes into account the context of each project, including whether safety mitigations are feasible or have been incorporated into the project design. If a road widening project does not include mitigations, it will receive a lower score, but the specifics of each location are considered before a final decision is reached.

Commissioner Marciante raised a concern about prioritizing capacity projects on the high injury network and questioned the logic of increasing vehicle capacity in areas already prone to safety issues. Improving vehicle capacity can potentially reduce safety unless mitigations are implemented. Commissioner Ting emphasized that widening roads should involve additional mitigation measures to address safety concerns, particularly in high injury network areas.

Consultant Chris Breiland with Fehr & Peers explained that vehicle performance targets focus on congestion from the driver's perspective. The PMAs inform prioritization based on factors like congestion and access mobility. For example, PMAs like downtown Bellevue are congested but have more alternatives for getting around compared to other areas of the city. When projects involve road widening, higher speeds often result along with wider pedestrian crossings, which contribute to higher injury conditions and which triggers the need for specific mitigations. If mitigations are difficult to build into a project for some reason, the prioritization of the project may need to be reconsidered.

Chair Stash noted the value of the discussion and commented that in future meetings the topic will be addressed in more detail. Kristi Oosterveen said there are two in-person open house opportunities coming up, one at Crossroads Mall on February 25 during the day and another at City Hall on the evening on February 26. In addition, an online open house on Engaging Bellevue has been scheduled. Work on the new online mapping platform is continuing; that will allow the community to hover over a project and view its details, then provide their comments or indicate their preferences. The goal is to launch the mapping tool within about a week and a half. Staff from various departments, including transportation, parks, and utilities, will soon convene in two separate sessions to review the project list and the scores. The staff prioritization process will help develop a prioritized list that will be presented to department leadership for further review and possible adjustments. Projects with high scores might not always be recommended first if other factors, such as community input or external funding opportunities, warrant a change of order. A public involvement report will be brought to the Commission for review.

Commissioner Ting expressed a desire to receive further feedback on the cross-modal prioritization process so that the Commission can better understand how the scoring results and

additional factors are integrated. Kristi Oosterveen said all of the scoring sheets are available for any Commissioner to view.

C. Mobility Implementation Plan Update

Kevin McDonald said the Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress (PLTS) will ultimately deliver another tool for the Commission to use in considering and evaluating pedestrian network gaps.

Kevin McDonald noted that in January the Commission approved the primary metrics for identifying the PLTS for arterials along with two types of supplemental components, one designed to add to or inform the prioritization of the performance target gaps, and the other to inform the design of projects when a high priority performance target gap is identified by the Mobility Implementation Plan. In such cases, the components will help determine the appropriate project design before a project is referred for consideration to the Transportation Facilities Plan.

The Commission in January also asked staff to prepare a specific PLTS matrix with a performance target assigned to each of the cells in the matrix using the arterial characteristics of speed and volume and the sidewalk characteristics of width and buffer size. Staff began applying the matrix to the arterials and preparing an existing conditions map. However, errors were found, and the existing conditions map will be delivered at a later date.

Kevin McDonald said the specific PLTS matrix combines arterial characteristics and sidewalk characteristics to yield an outcome of pedestrian level of traffic stress. The outcomes are not targets, rather, they indicated the expected PLTS based on current conditions encountered on site. The matrix considered arterial speed and volume along with the sidewalk width and the buffer, which is the physical distance between moving vehicles and pedestrians, analogous to the bicycle level of traffic stress, the methodology with which the Commission is already familiar.

It was noted that the staff recommendations had been vetted internally but not previously revealed to the Commission or the public. The recommendation was to assign PLTS-1 to PMA-1, which is Downtown, BelRed and Wilburton. In PMA-2, which encompasses Crossroads and other significant activity centers, the recommendation was to assign PLTS-2, except in certain commercial segments along Factoria Boulevard and 156th Avenue SE where the assignment would be PLTS-1 due to the high volume of pedestrian origins and destinations. For the remainder of the city, designated PMA-3, the recommendation was to assign either PLTS-2 or PLTS-3, depending on the arterial classification and the pedestrian destinations that the sidewalks serve.

The Commissioners were then shown the arterial network and its classifications within the city. Once an overlay of the PMAs is completed, the PMA-3 will appear as green. Within that field, the major arterials, shown in magenta, will be assigned PLTS-3, except PLTS-2 will be assigned in cases where a high pedestrian volume is expected. On the minor arterials, depicted in light blue, the assignment will be PLTS-2, and for the collector arterials, shown as green lines, the assignment will generally be PLTS-2.

Kevin McDonald shared a slide that illustrated how the assignments translate into the descriptions for PLTS-1 to PLTS-3. It was noted that the light green areas represent PLTS-1 in the Downtown, BelRed and Wilburton, and on some other arterial sections. The areas shown in teal represented PLTS-2 on collector or minor arterials, while the remaining arterials in PMA-3

were assigned PLTS-3.

Kevin McDonald said the assignment that had not yet been completed involves taking the map that identifies the performance targets and looking at actual conditions along the arterials to determine how actual conditions match up with the targets. Where actual conditions do not match up with the targets, a gap will be determined to exist.

Chris Breiland added that the targets were developed in line with the Design Manual and the Complete Streets Manual. If the recommended standards from those manuals were implemented on a given street, the targets would be met or exceeded. However, the Design Manual relative to sidewalk conditions does not control for the speed of vehicles traveling on the road. The city is actively working to identify appropriate speed limit changes and other measures to influence driving behavior. If a large funding source were to become available to build city-standard sidewalks everywhere, the targets would be achieved or surpassed. That consideration was factored into the selection of the performance targets.

Kevin McDonald stated that the standards specify an eight-foot minimum sidewalk width and a five-foot landscape planter width for all arterial classifications. In some areas, particularly near schools or other pedestrian destinations, it might be necessary to exceed those minimums to meet performance targets due to the high speed and volume of traffic. The tool is designed not only to identify performance target gaps but also to provide information for staff involved in development review and capital facilities project design. The information will be used to ensure that projects near schools, for example, achieve a PLTS that meets the safety and comfort requirements. Newport High School along Factoria Boulevard, where the existing sidewalk of approximately five or six feet in width does not provide sufficient comfort or safety, currently functions as PLTS-3 or PLTS-4. The intention is to upgrade to a PLTS-1 or PLTS-2 by installing a wider buffer and sidewalk.

Kevin McDonald described plans for public engagement, noting that the city is coordinating efforts with the Transportation Facilities Plan open houses. Feedback will be generated online through Engaging Bellevue relative to the local street network for pedestrians and bicycles. The objective of the public engagement efforts is to determine whether changes have occurred since the previous 2009 plan. The city is seeking to learn if additional streets should be added, or if certain projects should be modified or removed based on community feedback. The feedback will be integrated into the Mobility Implementation Plan so that it reflects a complete and connected system that includes both arterial and local street networks.

Chris Breiland added that the local network requires facilities that are tailored to the context of each neighborhood. For example, on a local street with a 25-mile-per-hour speed limit, a standard sidewalk might suffice, while a bicycle boulevard might be more appropriate in areas where additional wayfinding and signage are required to achieve PLTS-1. The local network has heretofore simply been inherited from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. The public is being asked to weigh in so that the MIP can offer a refreshed version that captures all of the streets in the city.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Rebhuhn about the sidewalk near Newport High School, Kevin McDonald confirmed that the current sidewalk is five or six feet wide and said that in order to meet the performance target an additional 13 feet back of curb. That would admittedly be challenging to achieve.

Kevin McDonald explained PLTS serves as a target, while the sidewalk dimensions represent

standards. A target can exceed the standard, though it may not be feasible to achieve anything more than the standard in certain cases. Even with standards there can be room to negotiate if there are immovable objects that prevent building to the standard.

Chair Stash asked how a collector arterial differs from a major arterial. Kevin McDonald said collector arterials are feeder streets that provide access to neighborhoods and connect residents to their local street network. In contrast, major arterials serve as cross-city workhorses for all modes, including freight, and provide connections to the regional system such as freeways. Minor arterials are large connectors that do not have the same freight mobility or regional connectivity functions as major arterials. The designations are functional in nature.

Chair Stash asked to what degree Bellevue is having discussions with immediately adjacent jurisdictions around how the various PLTS ratings will connect with their streets. Kevin McDonald stated that the arterials are coordinated with adjacent neighbors. However, Bellevue is the only jurisdiction employing the PLTS approach, so there is no collaboration in that respect. The conventional standards for sidewalk width and landscape strips are probably compatible with neighboring jurisdictions, especially Redmond, because of the close integration in the northeast part of the city.

Vice Chair Magill asked when the Engaging Bellevue platform will open for feedback on the local street network for pedestrians and bicycles. Kevin McDonald said it will be soon with some overlap with the open house events. It will remain open into early March, and the data will be reported back to the Commission in late March or early April.

Commissioner Ting referred to the PLTS specific matrix and inquired about the presence of anomalies, such as the occurrence of PLTS-1 adjacent to PLTS-3 in some areas without an intermediate PLTS-2. Given that the numbers are continuous over a range, one might expect to see a soft graph. Chris Breiland explained that the research demonstrates buffers play a significant role in influencing the perceptions of pedestrians in terms of comfort and safety. The wider the buffer, the greater the sense of protection. The city standard requires a five-foot buffer, which is designed to allow sufficient space for landscaping to thrive. The research indicates that the buffer is a critical element, and the variation observed in the graph reflects the importance of buffers. The valleys are actually caused by the variations between PLTS-1 and PLTS-2. The discrepancy in the lower right-hand corner of the matrix where PLTS 1 touches PLTS-3 occurs where there is a sidewalk wider than 10 feet and a buffer wider than five feet, which is typical of a Downtown sidewalk on a high-volume road with speeds above 30 miles per hour. Although the raw research might have suggested a higher PLTS value, adjustments were made based on local expectations and design standards. The debate relative to buffer width was acknowledged, and it was noted that the Development Services team values maintaining a robust buffer because it helps achieve the PLTS target.

Commissioner Marciante asked if consideration had been given to transit routes in the analysis. Chris Breiland explained that the pedestrian destinations as defined in the MIP include frequent transit network stops, schools, libraries, and similar facilities. There has been a lot of staff discussion regarding the appropriate buffers for those destinations, and there was agreement that if a transit route is in close proximity to a busy stop connected to a large apartment complex, the design should ensure a better PLTS rating.

Answering a question by Commissioner Marciante, Chris Breiland said the subject matter expert on safe routes to schools is currently going through the map. The development review team is also working on refining the specifics relative to PLTS ratings near schools.

Commissioner Keilman raised a question regarding whether it is possible to overlay two maps to visually compare the various PLTS assignments to determine if there are any gaps. Kevin McDonald said that work is in progress. The resulting map will allow the Commission to see exactly where the scoring system is effective and will help to verify that prioritization is occurring as intended.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Keilman, Chris Breiland said the team is still working on data that will illustrate where the gaps are. Fully implementing the city standards, which are based on engineering best practices and the concept of Vision Zero, will meet the vision. Currently, there are a lot of gaps and the intent is to set targets that are realistic and not so high that the key performance indicators can never be achieved. Commissioner Keilman suggested that multiple examples should be identified to serve as models for prioritizing projects throughout Bellevue in an equitable manner.

Kevin McDonald added that the Vision Zero program manager is scheduled to appear before the Commission in April to address the issues. The location of a gap on a high injury network raises a flag for the staff, creating a priority, and calls out to determine exactly what is happening so that an intervention can be developed to address the location. While there is no gap that specifically identifies where gaps exist, there are complementary programs that work together to identify problems and solutions to reduce the propensity for injuries. Success will be a high injury network map with no lines on it.

Commissioner Marciante asked if a back-of-the-envelope analysis could be done that would estimate when the high injury network might be fully addressed at the current expenditure rate. Kevin McDonald said project concepts are based on assumptions that may change over time, and funding for projects might not materialize for decades, making an analysis of that sort nearly impossible. Commissioner Marciante stressed the importance of understanding that achieving the vision will take a very long time.

Vice Chair Magill suggested it would be very powerful to have data showing that improvements for bikes on segments like Main Street led to reduced injuries. That kind of evidence could support efforts to secure additional funds.

Commissioner Ting mentioned that key safety indicators, such as KSI counts, should ideally drop to zero after improvements are made. The suggestion was made that future comparisons of pre- and post-improvement conditions could serve as useful indicators.

Commissioner Ting asked if the PLTS-3 target for PMA-3 is due to high volumes. It is interesting that the goal in PMA-1 is PLTS-1. Chris Breiland explained that it all comes down to function. The function of the major arterials is to move vehicles quickly across the city, which inherently makes them less comfortable for pedestrians. The research supports the idea that fast-moving, high-volume streets would not be able to achieve a PLTS-1 target, unless traffic speeds are reduced, which would conflict with the intended function of the road. School zones are the exception.

Commissioner Marciante observed that if the targets are mostly related to the function of the street, school zones should always be PLTS-3. During times when traffic is slowed down, a target may shift from PLTS-3 to PLTS-2. Chris Breiland said the team did not want the excuse of a school zone to allow for a skinnier sidewalk. Wide sidewalks are still needed even where speed limits are only 20 miles per hour.

Chair Stash asked if any Commissioners disagreed with the PLTS matrix as indicated on the graph.

Commissioner Marciante said it would be helpful to show some examples and concepts.

Chair Stash added that an explanation of the valleys would also be helpful.

There was consensus to approve the matrix as proposed. There also was consensus to approve the PLTS targets and map.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. January 9, 2025
- B. January 23, 2025

A motion to approve both sets of minutes was made by Vice Chair Magill. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Marciante and the motion carried unanimously.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

Kevin McDonald took a moment to review calendar of upcoming meeting dates and agenda items.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Stash adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.