

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 23, 2024
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Hybrid Meeting

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

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: None

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Ting

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Amanda Mansfield, Bradley Brashears, Paula Stevens, Andrew Singelakis, Michael Ingram, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: None

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.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Stash acknowledged the Commissioners having received from staff all written communications submitted since the Commission's last meeting in April.

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald provided the Commissioners with an additional written communication from Stu Vander Hoek.

Mariya Frost, transportation director for Kemper Development Company, noted having earlier in the week submitted a written communication jointly with Wallace Properties that included a proposed map for bicycle corridor enhancements throughout the city's growth corridors. With regard to NE 2nd Street between 100th Avenue NE and Bellevue Way, Corridor 6A. Staff are proposing to redesign the corridor with sharrows. Kemper Development Company strongly supports the alternative and the staff recommendation. The roadway already has slow-moving traffic and heavy pedestrian activity. Younger bike riders have the option of using the wide sidewalks adjacent to the park. Staff have proposed additional treatments that will ensure the sharrows will be a safe solution for bicyclists while preserving general purpose capacity for vehicles and emergency responders. The consequences of converting the roadway to one-way

eastbound as originally designed would be severe. Old Bellevue is already a traffic nightmare and loading more traffic onto Main Street is not tenable. The Commission was urged to keep in mind the staff still need to complete the redesign of NE 2nd Street from Bellevue Way to 112th Avenue NE without removing right-turn pockets, left-turn lanes and any other general capacity. The city was encouraged to add sharrows to NE 2nd Street between 112th Avenue NE and 114th Avenue NE in order to complete the important east-west connection through the Downtown between 100th Avenue NE and the Lake Washington Loop Trail. The staff report indicates that the interim bike path on Spring Boulevard is over \$18 million and not forward compatible. That is hard to understand as the potential for a bike trail connection needs only to span a few feet between an existing hardpack path and the adjacent Sound Transit property. The Commission should probe for more cost-effective, forward-compatible alternatives.

Vic Bishop, chair of the legislative committee of the Eastside Transportation Association, and a long-term traffic engineer, noted having provided the Commission with a copy of the ETA's Better Bike Bellevue plan that includes a primary core through the city using NE 2nd Street and up the Eastrail to Spring Boulevard. It is good to see the staff recommendation for Corridor 6A is consistent with the ETA recommendations. The ETA is urging the city to aggressively think about extending NE 2nd Street across I-405 to connect directly with Eastrail. While clearly a long-range plan, it should be on the city's planning radar. With regard to the extension of Spring Boulevard from 124th Avenue NE to 130th Avenue NE, the Commission was encouraged to look at the forward compatible alternatives. The proposed interim trail will be a throw-away project ultimately and the focus should be on a permanent design.

Karl Vander Hoek with Vander Hoek Corporation in Old Bellevue expressed full support for staff-proposed redesign of Corridor 6A with sharrows. The roadway is already achieving an LTS 3, which is the target for the stretch. Sharrows are the safe and low-cost solutions for bicyclists, and they preserve general purpose capacity lanes for vehicles, freight and emergency responders. Converting NE 1st Street to one-way eastbound, access to Downtown park, Inspiration Playground and Main Street would be crippled, negatively impacting events in the park, and the diverted traffic would be pushed to adjacent streets and neighborhoods. Introducing a one-way street would result in traffic circling the block and increase the demand on the side streets. Old Bellevue is dependent on adequate vehicle throughput and inhibiting roadway capacity would be shortsighted in light of Bellevue's projected growth.

John Zulanis, who lives, works and cycles in Bellevue, pointed out that in the entirety of the Bike Bellevue proposal, sharrows were not included as infrastructure because they are not. They do not offer any protection for conform to Vision Zero or best practices. They are ineffective at best and according to multiple studies, they make some areas even more dangerous. Simply putting a logo on the ground does not shield cyclists from harm. Bike Bellevue was a plan that underwent a lengthy design process involving city engineers, landowners and residents. Data-driven safety designs should not simply be pushed aside for a mere painted logo.

Ben Mickle, a Downtown Bellevue resident, voiced support for the original Bike Bellevue plan for NE 2nd Street. Lately there have been far more people riding bikes in the Downtown, and they are overwhelmingly using the sidewalks instead of the roadways. At the Commission's previous meeting, the Council liaison said the worst thing the city could do would be to create a facility that people do not use. The sharrow proposal for NE 2nd Street is just that. It was also explained that what the Council meant by last resort was to consider alternatives before repurposing a travel lane. The speaker noted having done that by using Google earth and considering removal center turn lanes, street parking, expanding sidewalks, narrowing the

median, and narrowing the travel lanes. One design emerged as the clear winner, preserving the median and the popular midblock crossings, keeping bikes out of the parked car door zone, and using the existing barrier to create a safe and comfortable experience for cyclists. The design is the original Bike Bellevue proposal. The design is in fact very thoughtful. The main thing that draws people to Downtown Park is the safe and welcoming atmosphere. People can take a rest, watch the ducks and forget about the traffic. That welcoming spirit is a favorite thing about Bellevue. The Bike Bellevue proposal preserves and expands that spirit by extending a safe and welcoming path to the park for people on bikes. The primary objection to the plan has been its adverse impact on access to the playground parking lot, something that could be largely mitigated by keeping the street as two-way to the west of the parking lot entrance. The unneeded center turn lane could be moved to create space for the bike lanes in that section. Some have expressed concerns that a one-way street would increase traffic congestion, but those fears were actually put to the test last Sunday evening when a work crew closed the 102nd Avenue intersection to power wash it. Even with both lanes closed, and with the park busy as usual, there were not traffic problems whatsoever. The city's children will be using the bike facility to visit the park, and their health and safety should not be sacrificed on the altar of maximizing vehicular throughput.

Chris Randall spoke on behalf of Complete Streets Bellevue. The organization has been involved in Bike Bellevue from the first day. The vision put forward by the Council of a safe, comfortable and protected bike network is something the city can and should attain in order to meet its Vision Zero goals. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis is on record calling for facilities the family would feel comfortable using. The city should want to provide infrastructure for people of all ages and ability. Unfortunately, the proposal for sharrows on NE 1st Street and NE 2nd Street do not accomplish that goal. They will have bike riders navigating in mixed traffic alongside much heavier motor vehicles. Every cyclist experienced with sharing the road with motorists has a story of drivers exhibiting aggressive or unsafe behavior toward bike riders who have dared to share the street. With a speed limit of 25 miles per hour, the few bikers who will share the road are likely to be going much slower than the surrounding vehicle traffic, making aggressive behavior by drivers all but inevitable. There has not been a full evaluation of options that could maintain the cycle track and the safety it provides by addressing legitimate concerns about access. Complete Streets Bellevue has submitted in writing a proposal that representatives from the future development project on NE 2nd Street and Bellevue Way has said would likely address their concerns around vehicular access from Bellevue Way NE. The proposal would also improve the access to Downtown Park. The option is a viable and cost-effective alternative that complies with the Council direction around and merits further study. Precedent has been set through the staff's feasibility analysis of a half-mile, \$18.5 million connection that they have wisely concluded is not worth the significant investment. Having staff conduct a technical analysis and scoping of the proposal would represent equal treatment for all stakeholders. Before any vote is taken, the Commission should conduct due diligence by asking if any other alternatives that contain LTS-1 conditions, while addressing stakeholder concerns around access, have been evaluated. The Commissioners should ask how paint alone will materially protect people on two wheels from cars many times their size.

Kyle Sullivan said the proposed changes to Corridor 6A should not be approved. The existing design as of November 2023 would result in a two-way bike lane on the north side of NE 1st Street alongside Downtown Park and it would be an LTS-1 facility. The proposal is to merely paint sharrows on the travel lanes and make no other changes, leaving cars and bikes to share the same space where there is a speed limit of 25 miles per hour. The result would be an LTS-3 environment, only suitable for riders who are enthused and confident. That would result in a

huge loss for bike connectivity in the Downtown as it will deprive many people of a comfortable route to Downtown Park and the surrounding businesses. The 6B corridor will still be built to LTS-1 standard, but west of Bellevue Way the riders will simply be dumped into traffic. The staff report indicates that sharrows will help reinforce a calm traffic environment that will be comfortable for most users. However, the city's published standards clearly show that the sharrows are not expected to improve conditions for bikes. Table 3 in the 2022 Mobility Implementation Plan states that a 25 mile per hour street with no bike markings and a daily traffic volume of about 4000, which describes the conditions on NE 1st Street currently, is considered an LTS-3 environment for bikes. The table also states that adding sharrows to the same street would still result in an LTS-3 environment, which is explicitly not comfortable for most users. The new proposal for Corridor 6A recommends spending money on bike markings that will not improve the comfort or safety for bikes on the street. Sharrows do nothing to make riders feel more comfortable. They do nothing to ease the unsettling experience of hearing a car approaching in the rider's lane and having to anticipate what it will do. Given even a brief opportunity, cars will pass bikes that are in the same lane, even if there are sharrows, and even if the car needs to cross a double yellow line. On NE 1st Street, however, there is no opportunity for cars to pass due to the median, which means someone on a bike will have a car closely following them for up to four blocks. Riders might feel pressured to move over for the car, or to ride on the busy sidewalk. If the rider stays in the lane, car driver will likely be frustrated by having to go slower. No one will have a good time. Painted sharrows should not be considered bike infrastructure since they do not change the LTS rating of the street. Bike Bellevue's goals cannot be achieved on Corridor 6A by merely painting sharrows. NE 1st Street is on the high-injury network and leaving the street as an LTS-3 environment will do nothing to improve safety, connectivity or comfort. The Commission should reject the staff proposal for Corridor 6A and pursue alternatives that will build more infrastructure and result in at least LTS-2 on NE 1st Street.

Cameron Cast, a resident of and daily bike commuter in Bellevue, voiced concerns regarding the proposed sharrows on Corridor 6A. Bellevue and all its previous work to build dedicated bicycle infrastructure, such as the two-way cycle track currently present on 120th Avenue NE, is the main reason the speaker took up cycling in the first place. Separated bicycle infrastructure makes cyclists feel safer, creating a more pleasant environment in which to bike. In turn, pleasant biking environments lead to fewer cars in the city, reduced traffic, and movement toward sustainability goals. The speaker noted, however that cycling is not the only way of getting around the city. From time to time it is necessary to drive a car, and as a driver it has been found to be easier to navigate around pedestrians and cyclists when they have dedicated and separate spaces for movement, such as some of the areas along 108th Avenue NE Downtown. Dedicated space makes pedestrian and cyclist spaces more predictable, and makes the driving environment less stressful and easier. Safety is a shared priority with great importance for the community. The proposed sharrows on Corridor 6A contradict that vision of safe and inclusive transportation network. Sharrows by themselves and not accompanied by wayfinding signs, narrow streets and lower speeds do not offer a safe environment for vulnerable road users. Bike Bellevue's proposal for a two-way cycle track on the corridor is data driven, the product of extensive analysis and community engagement highlighting the safety, mobility and environmental benefits of a more inclusive transit system. Well-rounded transportation infrastructure, supporting all modes of transportation, is desirable. Data published with the pedestrian/bicycle imitative shows that biking increased over 30 percent in Downtown Bellevue due to the implementation of the 108th Avenue NE bike lane. Additionally, there have been zero collisions reported. The Commission was urged to keep the Bike Bellevue plan for Corridor 6A.

Armond Verdad, a Bellevue resident, said NE 2nd Street currently operates at LTS-3, which is only comfortable for enthused and confident riders. The original plan was to bring the roadway to LTS-1 by adding a two-way bike lane, which is comfortable for people of all ages and abilities. The is a very good idea given the location of the road near Downtown Park. Going with sharrows will not move the needle and the road will remain at LTS-3. If car drivers would respect sharrows, such facilities would be safe, at least for LTS-3 riders. That, however, is not always the case. Drivers honk or try dangerous passes. To ride in a sharrow means being really bold. There was a pedestrian killed in the corridor in 2016. A change must be made to make it safe. The 2 Line has opened and it would be wonderful to have LTS-1 facilities connecting with light rail.

Absent disagreement from the Commissioners, the 30-minute time period for oral communications was extended.

Willow Cells asked the Commissioners to allow that the majority of drivers do not exceed the speed limit, and asked them to consider whether or not the presence of a sharrow would make a driver in a 25 miles per hour speed zone coming up behind a bike traveling at 12 miles an hour less frustrated, or any less eager to pass the biker and get back up to speed. The speaker noted riding daily on a roadway as described, complete with sharrows and the same speed limit. There is no divider between the lanes, it is a windy road, and has blind corners. There are no hills on the road and on fair weather days there are often more bikes than cars. Even so, a countless number of times cars have attempted to pass riders on the road, even when they are going above the speed limit, and despite lacking good visibility for oncoming traffic. The experience of riders, coupled with the latest research, makes it clear that sharrows do not make roads safer. The question the Commissioners were asked to think about was whether bike riders deserve to not be tailgated, to be given ample passing space, and to not be honked at only on roads with sharrows. Adding sharrows along the 6A corridor is not the right approach. After spending time watching the NE 1st Street Avenue NE 102nd Avenue NE intersection at rush hour, it was clear that the two-way cycle track is the appropriate treatment for the highly pedestrianized corridor, not just for those on bikes but for those who are walking.

Kris Wallen, a resident of Bridle Trails who bike commutes to the Spring District, said the staff recommendation to downgrade Corridor 6A to sharrows is inconsistent with City Council direction for the Commission to rely on data in making decisions. Bellevue has more than a hundred parks, yet only four of them rely on sharrows. Of those four, zero of them use sharrows near the parking lot entrances, yet dozens of the parks are accessible by bike lane or shared use paths. Many have bike paths crossing the parking lot entrances. From the city's own actions, it is clear that sharrows are not an appropriate tool at one of the most popular parks. Staff have also mentioned adverse impacts on private parking lots. The developer of the parking lot projects no more than one car every two minutes at peak hours. Every action has adverse impacts, but things are done because the good outweighs the bad. If the staff's standard for adverse impacts is accepted, the city might as well be frozen in amber. Staff's proposal is novel in Bellevue. It is an experiment but it has not been acknowledged as one. The development in question will likely block off parts of NE 2nd Street for construction logistics for many months. A better approach would be to place Corridor 6A in Category 3 and that the construction period be used as a testing period for a two-way protected bike path. If the staff are right, they'll have the data to prove it.

Abraham Wilbur Martin, a Bellevue resident, said the most important aspects for those testifying in a court of law are their credibility and their qualifications. The lobbyist for Kemper Development Company did not list qualifications such as living, working or spending

time in Bellevue. The only qualification mentioned is representing the company. All those who have spoken on behalf of the original Bike Bellevue plan live in Bellevue, work in Bellevue, and spend their time in Bellevue. Bellevue takes great pride in being safer than Seattle, and welcoming to suburban families. There is more to safety than what people like Mariya Frost says there are. Mariya Frost's qualifications start and end with the business day. The qualifications of those live in and love Bellevue are more far reaching. Sharrows do nothing to achieve the goal of safety.

Nicole Myers noted being excited about the potential connection through Spring Boulevard. In considering how to make things pencil out, the Cross Kirkland corridor should be studied. That part of Eastrail is an example of a functional bike and pedestrian connection that can work with gravel. It is likely the segment will need lighting. It appears as though the route could cross on the existing bridge, follow just north of the tracks for a little while, and then come back through on Sound Transit property. With regard to the proposed Corridor 6A sharrows, they should be given a shot. They will avoid the necessity of having eastbound cyclists and cars crisscrossing each other as they cross Bellevue Way. The sharrow design is straightforward and easy for people to understand. As someone who lives near that part of the Downtown and rides the route, the speaker indicated an expectation of using the sharrows a lot. Sharrows along NE 2nd Street is preferable to something along Main Street that is technically LTS-1 but which interferes with pedestrians and driveways.

Ed Wang, a Bellevue resident for ten years and father of a young son who likes parks, playgrounds and biking, commented that the city's flagship destination, Inspiration Playground in Downtown Park, is simply not safe to access by bike. The staff memo claims that NE 1st Street and NE 2nd Street in front of Downtown Park is a calm traffic environment. Personal experience would say that is not true. As one bikes toward the park, one experiences a line of cars backed up behind while waiting for the light to cross Bellevue Way. On NE 1st Street and NE 2nd Street, there is no space for the cars to pass. For the entire stretch, riders are followed by a line of angry drivers. It is not a situation anyone should subject themselves to, certainly not when with children. Bike Bellevue Corridor 6A as originally proposed addresses the issue without triggering parking impacts or impacts on vehicular levels of service. The staff proposal to use nothing but sharrows is extremely disappointing. Sharrows do nothing for safety or comfort. If two directions of vehicle travel must be maintained, there is more that could be done. A safe environment for riders requires cars to be moving slower under a reduced speed limit of only 20 miles per hour, a measure that was supported by Kemper Development Company and Wallace Properties. Traffic calming measures would also be required to ensure cars cannot exceed 20 miles per hour in the form of speed humps and narrower lanes. Something needs to be done to make the corridor safe to bike to the park.

Jackie Kimsie asked the Commission to implement the original Bike Bellevue plan for Corridor 6A without compromising safety for pedestrians and bikers. It was sad to learn the city plans to abandon the two-way protected cycle track on NE 1st Street and NE 2nd Street instead of conforming to the Vision Zero best practices. The proposal to add a bit of paint to create sharrows that offer no protections whatsoever for vulnerable users is a dangerous alternative. Painted lanes provide no protection for bikers. They are more like a cruel joke when a rider is trapped between large trucks and speeding cars. The city's own MIP standards state that adding sharrows to the roadway would not change the LTS metric, thus the stretch of road would remain at LTS-3. Drivers are often distracted and impatient with slow-moving riders. Drivers have been observed texting, drinking coffee, eating breakfast, talking with their kids, and with dogs in their laps not paying attention. Drivers express frustrations at being held up by cyclists. Many cyclists have stories about cars harassing them on the roads in Bellevue.

Sharrows force cyclists into the path of those drivers. Paint on the ground will not make the drivers any happier. The original Bike Bellevue plan was thoroughly researched for the high-injury network, and the majority of persons providing comments in the current meeting and in previous meetings voiced support for Bike Bellevue. Somehow, unknown detractors behind closed doors have more influence. It is incredibly frustrating to watch the city compromise the safety of cyclists in favor of car convenience, chipping away at the original Bike Bellevue plan.

Rod Vinden, president of the Meydenbauer Bay Neighborhood Association, said the issue for the organization is planning for access to the park for those living in highrises in the Downtown and for those who live in the uplands around the park. Restricting access for the bulk of Bellevue residents by closing NE 1st Street would be a mistake. The intersection of Main Street and 100th Avenue NE is one of the most congested areas of Bellevue, with traffic backing up to the Meydenbauer bridge at times. Closing one lane of 100th Avenue NE to accommodate bicycles would restrict access to Downtown Park, the multimillion dollar waterfront park, the children's play area, and severely limit access to restaurants, parking garages and buildings built or planning along NE 1st Street. The choices are to leave things as they are; paint portions of NE 1st Street with colored sharrows, confusing all drivers; or close the road to vehicular traffic. The MBNA supports leaving things as they are. Sharrows would be the second choice. The organization is vehemently opposed to closing the road.

Ann Marie Dulee, a doctor practicing at Overlake and a member of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, voiced support for the original Bike Bellevue project. As a doctor, the decisions made every day impact people's lives. The decisions the Commission makes on behalf of the city will impact people's lives as well, possibly resulting in the loss of limbs or life. Much of the testimony has been driven by feelings rather than by facts. With all due respect to the person from Kemper Development Company, the most cost-effective approach is actually to build bike lanes. Secretary of Washington State Department of Transportation Roger Millar recently testified that the cost alone of vehicles crashing into each other is \$20 billion annually. There has been emotional testimony about increased congestion, but according to the data, one pedestrian or cyclist gets hit by a car and ends up in the emergency room every single week. It is known that bike lanes do not increase congestion; they do decrease the number of car crashes and the number of injuries treated by hospitals. The work of the Commission will affect whether or not people will lose their limbs or their lives or family members. The Commission should push back against the small minorities who oppose safety and who oppose reducing carbon emissions. Maintaining the status quo will be expensive and will cost people their lives. The Commission was urged to support the original Bike Bellevue.

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

5. STAFF REPORTS

Kevin McDonald reminded the Commission that the city previously won a state award for the installation of the raised intersections at the Bellevue Transit Center, and then reported that the project has since won a national award from the American Public Works Association. It was the Transportation Commission that in 2013 had the vision for the project in the first place.

Kevin McDonald announced that the sign-up for oral communications, which used to be an hour before each meeting, has been extended to 12:00 noon the day of the meeting, giving more people a chance to sign up.

A recruitment process is under way to fill the vacancy created by the departing Vice Chair Helland. From the robust application pool, Councilmember Nieuwenhuis has selected a short list of applicants to be interviewed. A new Commissioner could be on board in time for the June 13 meeting.

The Commission's annual elections for Chair and Vice Chair will be on the agenda for the June 13 meeting. To date, Chair Stash has been nominated to continue serving as Chair, and Commissioner Magill has been nominated to serve as Vice Chair.

With regard to the Commission's annual retreat, Kevin McDonald noted that typically the event has been held on the fourth Thursday of July. However, full attendance by the Commissioners on that date cannot be achieved. A different date will be sought, hopefully ahead of the start of the fall season in September. The Commissioners were asked to indicate their available dates.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Transportation Demand Management Plan

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program Manager Amanda Mansfield explained that the city's TDM program is called Choose Your Way Bellevue. The bulk of the program is related to specific requirements. The regulatory components of the TDM program are the state-mandated Commute Trip Reduction (CTR), and the Transportation Management Programs (TMP). The CTR program requires all employers with worksites in Bellevue having a hundred or more full-time employees who arrived at the site between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. to comply with the law and show reductions over time in commute trips and single-occupant vehicle trips. The TMP program is required by city code and is a condition of development for large buildings in the city. Under the CTR, employers are required to establish a staff member to develop, implement and administer a program to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips to and from the work site, and to produce biannual surveys and reports to the city. City staff provide assistance in both developing and implementing the programs. Similarly with the TMP, new large-site developments must also identify a transportation coordinator, develop programs to provide information about sustainable transportation to and from their properties, and they must develop programs that encourage sustainable transportation to and from their properties. City staff help develop the programs, conduct a site analysis, and implement the programs.

Vice Chair Helland asked what the threshold is to be deemed a large development. Senior Planner Mike Ingram said the threshold sizes varies according to land use. There are some variations in terms of the level and types of requirements according to the various land uses.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if there is any discipline involved in not meeting the targets. Associate Planner Bradley Brashears said under the state-mandated CTR there is a fine for companies that are not in compliance. City staff works with the companies to the extent possible and gives them leeway, but the non-compliance fee is \$250 per day, though the fine is not largely enforced. The CTR surveys conducted on a biennium basis are used to determine compliance.

Commissioner Marciante asked if there is a sense as to why some companies have lower rates

of compliance. Bradley Brashears said each company is different and staff works with each to understand their pain points and to assist in formulating solutions for increasing their non drive-alone rates for their work sites. Amanda Mansfield added that there are several non-compliance triggers, including the culture of the worksite, where the employees tend to live, if they are in close proximity to transit, if they can safely walk or bike to the site, or if they have access to a vanpool or carpool. It also depends to some extent on how vigorously the employee transportation coordinator and the employer push the sustainable solutions.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if there are any incentives for companies to exceed their requirements. Bradley Brashears said there are several companies that go above and beyond the level of their requirements. The CTR surveys strive to achieve a 70 percent response rate. Some companies exceed that mark, while others do not meet the threshold. Staff works with the companies to make sure the employees at affected sites are participating in the surveys. Amanda Mansfield added that for companies that go above and beyond expectations, staff communicates to them how great that is for them from a marketing perspective.

Chair Stash asked when imposed penalties are actually enforced. Mike Ingram said what determines compliance is a good-faith effort. Sometimes companies need help in understanding why a good-faith effort is in their best interest. The code provision that allows for penalties can be helpful in that regard. To date, the city has never had to impose penalties and the hope is it never will have to.

Amanda Mansfield said the other side of the program are the non-required components. Much of the focus is on outreach done to businesses that are not required by state or city law to comply. Choose Your Way Bellevue has a business services program to reach out to businesses not required to comply to encourage them to set up programs to reduce commute and travel trips. The Employer and Property Manager mini-grant program provides up to \$10,000 to purchase and install capital items such as bike racks with bike fix-it stations and transit screens. Assistance is also provided in helping employers and property managers set up Orca transit subsidy passes for their employees, and to help them navigate the complicated world of tax credits for the work done to reduce commute trips to their sites. There is also a section of the Choose Your Way Bellevue program dedicated to commuter outreach to help them learning how to navigate Bellevue via bike, bus, walking and vanpool/carpool. Commuters are assisted in accessing great gift cards and gifts for doing a sustainable trip, and logging the trip on a website. There is also an excellent school pool program in partnership with the Bellevue School District to encourage parents and students to go to and from school in a sustainable way.

Vice Chair Helland asked if the grant dollars are available only to those on the voluntary side or if they are also available to those who are obligated to comply. Amanda Mansfield said the funds are available to any employer or property manager. However, CTR companies cannot use the funds to pay for something they must otherwise do as part of the CTR program. The grant dollars are provided by WSDOT.

Bradley Brashears said the 2024-2033 TDM plan update will yield a document to guide the city's efforts over the next ten years to implement programs to help reduce driving within Bellevue. Development of the plan includes the establishment of a vision statement and goals, as well as drive-alone modeshare targets. The work will include a deep dive analysis of the last TDM and CTR plans to determine how well they performed. A demographic analysis will also be conducted along with a survey and review of other surveys for input into the plan. Industry best practices will be reviewed, and the current transportation planning conditions will be

looked at. The guidance document, once endorsed by the Commission, will be shared with the City Council through an informational memo.

The proposed vision statement reads “A city in which travelers are well aware of and consistently use modes of transportation that are convenient, timely, affordable, and good for the environment, supporting the city’s growth by helping to minimize added congestion thereby preserving mobility.” The five supporting goals are: 1) Increase awareness and usage of non drive-alone travel options in Bellevue as normal, commonplace ways to get around for commuting and other trips; 2) Create an environment for workers, residents and the general public that is increasingly supportive of non drive-alone travel options; 3) Increase transportation system efficiency and preserve mobility as Bellevue’s residential and worker populations grow; 4) Improve transportation access to employment, education, health care, and other essential goods and services for city residents and workers through increased viability of multiple travel options through increased viability of multiple travel options; and 5) Develop TDM programming that meets the traveling needs of marginalized populations.

Bradley Brashears said the TDM staff work closely with the modeling staff to develop modeshare drive-alone targets for the Comprehensive Plan. The modeling inputs include the land use scenario for the Comprehensive Plan in 2044, as well as various inputs such as US Census data, American Community Survey data, and census data that reflects work from home. The exercise yielded modeshare targets for the 2044 Comprehensive Plan for citywide workers, 45 percent; citywide residents, 40 percent; and Downtown workers, 30 percent. The intersect between the baseline year of 2020, which is based on ACS data actual results, and the year 2023 is used to come up with the TDM plan modeshare targets, which for citywide workers is 53 percent; for citywide residents is 43 percent; and for Downtown workers is 44 percent.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if any target groups are performing better than the others. Bradley Brashears said Downtown workers have and are performing better than the rest of the population, although citywide residents also do quite well in terms of achieving non drive-alone modes. Citywide workers is the most challenging area for several reasons.

Bradley Brashears said performance measures are needed to track and determine progress toward achieving the targets. US Census data is used, including the ACS five-year estimates, and Census Transportation Planning Package data based on five-year estimates. The CTR survey results are also used, specifically the biennium results. Other data used includes TDM program metrics, specifically company/organization consultations and engagements; program participation; and website activity.

There are 27 different strategies in six categories in the plan, each of which is detailed in the draft plan. Category 1 houses the requirement-based programs. Category 2 has the product subsidies and discounts. Category 3 has the education and assistance elements. Category 4 holds the incentives and rewards. Category 5 has the marketing and promotions programs. Category 6 includes the research, planning and coordination elements.

Commissioner Marciante asked how the requirement-based programs differ from the education and assistance programs. Bradley Brashears said the first are required by state law and Bellevue city code, while the second entails city staff working with employers and property managers, and with commuters as well, to guide and provide the resources needed to complete

the requirements.

Commissioner Kurz asked if the city works with the school districts to expand bus services. Amanda Mansfield said staff works with the schools to develop education and encouragement programs.

Commissioner Kurz said it seems as though the standards might eventually need to be differentiated by industry as well as by company size given that it is easier for certain industries to have their workers work from home. Amanda Mansfield agreed, noting that it is much more difficult for companies that employ a lot of retail workers or those in the hospitality industry. Hospitality workers tend to have odd schedules, multiple jobs, and may not live close to the city or near a transit line. Much of the focus moving forward will involve outreach to historically underserved employee groups and business types.

Chair Stash asked if there is much participation by small companies with fewer than a hundred employees. Bradley Brashears it is challenging to determine that given the focus on CTR affected companies. It has been recognized, however, that the city needs to do a better job of reaching out to those smaller companies.

Commissioner Magill noted staff had previously indicated that tech and hospitality companies had been included in the same category, and asked if the data could be broken out separately. Bellevue's tech job sector is growing rapidly and that might affect the trendline. Bradley Brashears said there is data in the plan from the Puget Sound Regional Council by performance management area that is also broken down by industry. Many of Bellevue's industries are in the service category, which includes IT. Mike Ingram added that the government's categorization of industry type does coningle the service industries with software, which is not helpful for the situation in Bellevue.

Bradley Brashears shared that the public input process began in December 2022 with the Community Input Survey that wrapped up in April 2023. The public engagement period via Engaging Bellevue kicked off the first of March 2024 and wrapped up on May 15, 2024. The draft plan was uploaded to the website for public review along with several guided questions. During the month of March presentations were made to the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee and the Bellevue Downtown Association TDM Focus Group.

Staff has been sifting through the responses and addressing the public and stakeholder comments by cataloging them and identifying themes. All of that work, once completed, will be posted to the Engaging Bellevue platform, and from there to the Choose Your Way Bellevue website. There are in the mix comments that do not fit into any of the themes, many of them addressing issues outside the scope of work; those will be forwarded to the appropriate city staff and agency partners. Ultimately the input will be used to color modifications to the TDM plan and program. The process will be fully documented within the plan.

The most prevalent theme has been the need for faster, more frequent, and more conveniently located transit service, and the need for expanded micromobility and micro-transit service. The micro-transit service BellHop serving the Downtown area has been very popular. Other themes highlighted are transit rider safety concerns; the need for more city-provided non drive-alone incentives; the need to do a better job of communicating Choose Your Way Bellevue and capturing the attention of the public; the need to provide more disincentives for people driving solo to and from worksites, which can be addressed through innovative parking management strategies;

Commissioner Marciante commented that early bird parking incentivizes people to travel during peak hours. Staff was asked if consideration has been given to disincentivizing that. Bradley Brashears said that issue has not been looked at specifically but agreed it should be. The intent is to not have a lot of people all driving to work at the same time.

Commissioner Magill noted that the new early bird days are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Bradley Brashears said best practices will be sought for disincentivizing peak day travel.

Commissioner Marciante urged the staff to work with the Bellevue Downtown Association on in regard to their ideas around activating the Downtown. Bradley Brashears said the city has a good working relationship with the BDA. Commissioner Marciante said currently there is a funding gap when it comes to fixed-route micro-transit. Employers are providing much of the funding. The city should do more to assist in that effort. Bradley Brashears allowed that that does happen in other areas. More research is needed to see what resources other jurisdictions are providing for the services.

Commissioner Magill asked if the city is looking into things like bike and scooter share programs. Kevin McDonald said there was a bike share program operating in Bellevue for a couple of years with specific areas set aside where people could expect to pick up and drop off bikes. The program was reasonably successful. The vendor wanted to expand by including scooters, but shared scooters is not something Bellevue currently allows.

With regard to input heard from the public, Bradley Brashears said the themes included the need for more ped/bike infrastructure with a focus on safety; the need for more electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the city, including in multifamily areas; the need to develop more innovative campaigns based on best practice research; the need for a Commute Trip Reduction dashboard; the need to improve non drive-alone options for retail and hospitality workers who have alternative schedules.

Amanda Mansfield said modifications to the strategies have been proposed based on the public input, and they are outlined in the body of the memo. It was noted that by the end of the month all of the input from the BDA, the Chamber of Commerce and the public, along with the input from the Commission, will have been incorporated into the plan. The final version of the plan will be presented to the Commission in June. Once endorsed, the plan will be forwarded to the Council in an informational memo.

B. Bike Bellevue

Chair Stash noted that at the Commission's April 11 meeting staff provided recommendations in regard to the three Bike Bellevue corridors that were ready for immediate action without repurposing any travel lanes. One additional corridor is now being recommended for implementation.

Kevin McDonald noted the Commission had previously approved early implementation for Corridor 6B along the NE 2nd Street corridor between 112th Avenue NE and Bellevue Way, and said staff was seeking a recommendation for Corridor 6A, the segment between Bellevue Way and 100th Avenue NE. On March 25 the City Council approved seven Bike Bellevue corridor categories. The intent is to match each of the corridors with one or more of the seven categories.

Corridor 6A lies to the west of Corridor 6B and Bellevue Way. Its implementation would provide for a connected bike corridor between 100th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE. The Bike Bellevue draft design guide provided for converting the westbound travel lane into a two-way cycle track, configured to connect with the directional bike lanes on the segment of NE 2nd Street to the east of Bellevue Way. Photos taken along the corridor were shared with the Commissioners, along with the artwork to be installed at the intersection of 102nd Avenue NE and NE 1st Street to the south of Downtown Park.

Kevin McDonald said the staff recommendation is to proceed with final design on NE 2nd Street using sharrows lane markings and potentially other corridor enhancements. The Mobility Implementation Plan shows a rating of LTS-3 for the segment. The MIP fully recognizes that sharrows are not a facility, rather they are only a pavement marking. The rationale for the recommendation include the fact that a travel lane would not be repurposed; it would have minimal impact to existing and planned driveways; and it would with the sharrows achieve the LTS-3 performance target. Sharrows are components of the National Association of City Traffic Officers, International Transportation Engineers, Manual of Uniform Transportation Control Devices, and the city's Street Design Standards. They are intended for low speed, low volume streets. The existing design considerations include the all-way stop at 100th Avenue NE, and the Pride intersection at 102 Avenue NE and NE 1st Street. Potential additional considerations include corridor wayfinding, a reduced speed limit to 20 miles per hour, traffic operational improvements at Bellevue Way, modifications to the center lane curb, traffic calming measures, and evaluating performance and safety with an eye on a more permanent facility in the future.

Commissioner Marciante asked if other concepts had been considered. Kevin McDonald agreed it is a giant leap from the cycle track to sharrows. Modifications to add enhancements were considered.

Chair Stash asked what the main driver was behind the change. Kevin McDonald said the Council's direction on March 25 was to consider lane repurposing as a last resort. The corridor had previously been identified as problematic with respect to driveway ingress and egress from planned developments on the corner of Bellevue Way and 100th Avenue NE. The driveway there only accesses off of NE 2nd Street, not on Bellevue Way. There are also vehicle access constraints associated with the Inspiration Playground parking area.

Commissioner Magill asked if there had been any discussions with Bellevue fire concerning the impacts of taking out a lane. Kevin McDonald said emergency services was only marginally consulted.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if there is a protected bike lane westbound on NE 2nd Street before Bellevue Way. Kevin McDonald said bike infrastructure currently under design for Corridor 6B includes a number of options for bike lanes, including regular bike lane markings and sharrows. The available width and the topography differs along the corridor. A facility that provides more protection may be included for the uphill portion. A final design has yet to be determined. Riders on Corridor 6B who cross over to Corridor 6A will at 100th Avenue NE encounter a multipurpose path if they turn either northbound or southbound.

Commissioner Magill asked if the actual speeds have been measured on Corridor 6A and Corridor 6B, and asked what dropping the speed limit from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour would do to the LTS. Kevin McDonald said there would be no change in regard to the

LTS from lowering the speed limit. Sharrows will not achieve either LTS-1 or LTS-2 according to the MIP.

Commissioner Kurz asked if there would be any advantage to simply a striped bike lane over a sharrow. Kevin McDonald said there simply is not enough room for a separate bike lane, even though there is no parking along most of the corridor.

Commissioner Marciante asked why consideration was not given to removing the median. Kevin McDonald said the median is a neighborhood amenity that also serves as a traffic calming measure. Commissioner Marciante pointed out that the community has not even been asked about that option.

Vice Chair Helland suggested that given the Council's direction not to repurpose a lane except as a last resort, staff should at least have in its pocket an analysis for removing the median. Kevin McDonald pointed out the city has a program in place that seeks to add medians in the Downtown, so removing the median would likely be a last resort.

Commissioner Rebhuhn pointed out that the street in its current configuration almost organically lowers traffic speeds to 20 miles per hour. The question asked if the bicycle infrastructure that is in place is looked at when reviewing bicycle accidents that happen in the city. And if so, is there data showing there are more accidents occurring where there are sharrows. Kevin McDonald said there are few locations where sharrows exist in the city and they are all on low speed, low volume streets where typically if a collision were to occur it might not result in a serious injury or fatality.

Commissioner Marciante asked if completing Corridor 6A by simply putting in sharrows will mean the city will be done with the corridor, or if the sharrows will be considered to be an interim solution. Kevin McDonald said the corridor would be considered complete for the present. That is not to say some future capital project will yield a back-of-curb facility on the north side of the roadway.

Department of Transportation Assistant Director Paula Stevens said the Commission could forward a recommendation that calls for giving consideration to how the street could be more fully designed with bicycle infrastructure. The conveyance of such an aspiration could be shared with Councilmembers as part of the next Bike Bellevue update.

Commissioner Magill commented that there is a very large sidewalk to the north, and one option would be to repurpose it to accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians.

Chair Stash voiced support for not removing the median, which adds to the park and acts as a calming feature.

Commissioner Marciante said the sharrow approach for Corridor 6A is not in the spirit of Bike Bellevue. It should be considered to be an interim step; it should not be called a Bike Bellevue corridor. NE 2nd Street is primarily for local access. More can be done, particularly around signage. Having the median is nice, but there are real transportation challenges to be addressed that may trigger a need to carefully consider whether it should be removed as part of a real solution.

Commissioner Magill suggested the sharrow approach would fall into Category 6 of the Council's Bike Bellevue categories. Commissioner Marciante argued that Corridor 6A should

be considered to be part of the Bike Bellevue network, but the sharrows should not be considered as completing the corridor. It should be considered to be a gap in the network under Category 7.

Chair Stash said the city could choose to put in the sharrows along with other calming infrastructure, have it be part of Bike Bellevue in terms of providing connectiveness, and then step back and see what the data shows in terms of usage and traffic speeds. It could be that drivers and bicyclists will learn to share the space, or they might just avoid the corridor.

Commissioner Marciante agreed. The sharrow approach could be taken and then analyzed, all before deciding if the requirements are satisfied. The city should not, after installing the sharrows, immediately say that the corridor is done.

Additionally, Commissioner Marciante suggested there should be citywide campaign undertaken to explain what sharrows are and what drivers and bicyclists are supposed to do and not do. Paula Stevens said a citywide educational program for the public is part of the Vision Zero program. Enforcement is also part of the Vision Zero program.

With regard to the speed limit along Corridor 6A, Paula Stevens pointed out not being in a position to modify it currently. Currently there is a focus on modifying speed limits on local streets, and in 2025 the city will tackle arterials. If the Commission wants to see a speed limit change on the roadway in question, it should include a notation in its recommendation.

There was agreement to recommend lowering the speed limit from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour.

Absent objection, the meeting was extended by 15 minutes

A motion to recommend to staff that Corridor 6A proceed with sharrows, that the speed limit should be lowered to 20 miles per hour, and that additional traffic calming measures should be employed, and that later, based on an analysis of the usage data, a determination should be made as to whether permanent bike facilities should be provided, was made by Chair Stash. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Marciante and the motion carried unanimously.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 11, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Rebhuhn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Magill 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 the Commission's calendar and upcoming agenda items.

Commissioner Marciante suggested the city should explore having a design class at the

University of Washington focused on solving bicycle problems through creative and original solutions.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Stash adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.



Secretary to the Transportation Commission

June 13, 2024

Date