

## CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Downtown bikeway projects: assessment and proposed next steps.

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## DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

### DIRECTION

The Transportation Commission seeks direction from the City Council to evaluate a potential Main Street bike lane project, followed by an update to Council.

## RECOMMENDATION

Direct the Transportation Commission to evaluate a potential Main Street bike lane project, followed by an update to Council.

## BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Bellevue's 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan commits to implementing complete continuous, cross-city, bicycle priority corridors, including one north-south and one east-west bikeway in Downtown by 2014 (Policy PB-2). Both 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Main Street are identified as components of the bicycle priority corridor network; respectively the NS-1: Enatai-Northtown Connection and EW-3: Lake-to-Lake Trail.

The following timeline reflects the City's deliberations on Downtown bikeway projects after adoption of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan (see Attachment A):

- February 9, 2015 – The City Council approved Implementation Principles that direct the Transportation Commission and staff to work with community stakeholders to advance the projects identified in the 2009 Plan.
- April 28, 2016 – The Transportation Commission endorsed the Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program which includes Citywide investments in bicycling infrastructure on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE (identified as Project PBC-2) and Main Street (identified as Project PBC-13).
- November 8, 2016 – Bellevue voters approved the 20-year Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion Levy. Bicycle network improvements are one of the six programs funded by the levy.
- During 2017 and early 2018 – Staff worked with the Transportation Commission, Bellevue Downtown Association, and broader community in a discussion about how to make downtown a comfortable, safe, attractive place for people to bike.
- January 11, 2018 – The Transportation Commission voted to proceed with implementing a demonstration bikeway project on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE (see Attachment B).

- February 5, 2018 – The City Council voiced support for implementing the downtown demonstration bikeway project on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and conducting a study to assess outcomes.
- July 31, 2018 – A celebration marked the opening of the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE bikeway.
- April 12, 2018 – The Transportation Commission endorsed an assessment framework.
- March 28, 2019 – The Transportation Commission voted to retain the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE bikeway with refinements to the design per community feedback.

At its May 13 meeting, Council will receive an update on the Transportation Commission's assessment and proposed next steps on the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE bikeway. No action is sought from Council on this first presentation topic as there is policy support for the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE bikeway in both the 2009 Plan and 2015 Implementation Principles.

On the topic of a potential Main Street bike lane project, Lei Wu, Chair of the Transportation Commission, seeks Council direction to evaluate alternatives to fill the gap in the existing bicycle lanes between Bellevue Way and 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

### **108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Bikeway Project**

At the Transportation Commission's March 28 meeting, staff shared the results of the Downtown Demonstration Bikeway Assessment Report (Attachment C) and Technical Appendix Report (Attachment D). These reports provide insights into community outcomes in safety, efficiency, and livability. Here are some key findings:

- No change in police-reported collisions (Source: collision database).
- Eighty-seven percent of people who bike on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE feel safer and more comfortable. Sixty-four percent of people driving on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE like that bikes and cars are more separated (Source: online questionnaire).
- Riding bicycles on the sidewalk on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE decreased by 18 percent. (Source: traffic camera observations).
- Motor vehicle throughput was maintained at intersections along 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE in the morning and afternoon peak periods. (Source: turning movement counts).
- Driver travel times, for both cars and buses, were maintained along 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE in the morning and afternoon peak periods. (Source: bluetooth readers and on-board systems).
- Avoided shifting traffic to parallel streets in Downtown Bellevue. (Source: adaptive signal system)
- Bicycle ridership increased by 35 percent. (Source: thermal video detection).
- About 4,500 bike share trips used 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE in the first six months, the most along any street in Bellevue. (Source: GPS-enabled bicycles).
- 56 percent of people who have biked along 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE agree that additional physical separation is warranted to enhance the bicycling experience. (Source: online questionnaire).

Following its consideration of these and other before/after results, the Transportation Commission voted four in favor and two opposed to retain the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE bikeway and to implement refinements to the corridor per community feedback and staff observations (Attachment E). At the Bellevue Downtown Association's (BDA) request, staff responded to member questions raised at an

April 10 BDA Transportation Committee meeting where its members reviewed the findings and finalized a recommendation to the Board of Directors.

Since Transportation Levy funds were set aside for 2019-20 to either remove or refine the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Demonstration bikeway, staff, having received an endorsement from the Transportation Commission, now intends to move forward with the following improvements:

- Add bicycle signals and evaluate signal phasing adjustments to enhance safety and traffic flow.
- Adjust midblock crosswalk layout at 108<sup>th</sup> and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Place to provide space for a northbound bike lane. This work would be done in conjunction with Traffic Engineering's project to upgrade the flashing system to a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon.
- Enhance signage, pavement markings, and physical separation in select locations to help bicyclists navigate the corridor. These improvements will visually indicate to motorists that they are driving along a bicycle route and should use caution.
- Evaluate opportunities to create buffered/separated bike lanes for the south half of the block between Main Street and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Implement as funding allows.
- Explore and implement solutions to increase planter box visibility (e.g. reflective tape, paint, delineators).
- Explore opportunities to reduce conflicts with pick-up/drop-off activities on the corridor.

Each of these refinements to the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE bikeway, and others still under consideration, allow for flexibility to adapt to Bellevue's evolving downtown construction cycle. Implementation is anticipated between Summer 2019 and Summer 2020.

### **Main Street Bikeway Project**

The 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan identifies Main Street as a component of the Lake-to-Lake Trail, a bicycle priority corridor that completes a continuous east-west route between Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish. This bicycle priority corridor connects parks, schools, neighborhoods, and urban areas with separated pathways, bike lanes, boardwalks and gravel trails as one traverses the City through 800 acres of interconnected park and open space property.

With Transportation Levy funding available to build on the downtown bikeway network in 2019, staff brought forward a preliminary assessment of two Main Street alternatives for Transportation Commission consideration at its March 28 meeting. Currently, a westbound bike lane on Main Street exists between 103<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and an eastbound bike lane exists between 103<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 105<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Both directions feature dedicated bike lanes through the Bellevue Way intersection today. The Main Street bike lane project alternatives build upon these existing bike lanes on Main Street and would establish a continuous east-west connection to the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE bikeway (Attachment F).

At its March 28 meeting, the Transportation Commission voted to table discussion of Main Street bike lane alternatives pending Council direction. Pending Council direction at its May 13 meeting, staff will return to the Commission on May 23 to vet alternatives to fill the gap in the existing bicycle lanes between Bellevue Way and 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Among other items, staff will address requests for

additional details on the existing Main Street bike lanes (implemented in September 2017) on traffic operations at the Bellevue Way intersection.

## **POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS**

### **Policy Impact**

#### Comprehensive Plan

Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan aims to "maintain and enhance a comprehensive multimodal transportation system to serve all members of the community" (Transportation Element Goal). Policy directs the City to: "Implement the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan and prioritize projects that address safety issues, provide access to activity centers, provide access to the transit and school bus systems, complete and connect planned pedestrian or bicycle facilities, [and] develop primary north-south and east-west bicycle routes through the city" among other considerations (TR-105).

#### Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan

On February 17, 2009, Council adopted the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan (Ordinance No. 5861). The 2009 Plan establishes specific short- and mid-term performance targets relating to the implementation of priority bicycle corridors including having one north-south and one east-west bikeway in Downtown Bellevue by 2014 (Policy PB-2). Annual progress reports indicate that the City is not presently implementing improvements at a rate consistent with its targets.

#### Implementation Principles

On February 9, 2015, Council approved implementation principles to guide staff in fulfilling the projects and programs identified by the 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan. The principles include a commitment to: "Advance the implementation of Bellevue's planned Bicycle Priority Corridors to facilitate continuous bicycle travel along a connected grid of safe facilities throughout the City and the region."

### **Fiscal Impact**

Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity, and Congestion Levy funding is available to implement projects in the Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program including both the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE bikeway (identified as Project PBC-2) and the Main Street bikeway (identified as Project PBC-13).

## **OPTIONS**

1. Direct the Transportation Commission to evaluate a potential Main Street bike lane project, followed by an update to Council.
2. Provide alternate direction to staff.

## **ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS**

- A. Project Timeline
- B. Transmittal letter from the Transportation Commission (February 5, 2018)
- C. Downtown Demonstration Bikeway Assessment Report
- D. Downtown Demonstration Bikeway Technical Appendix Report
- E. Transmittal letter from the Transportation Commission (May 13, 2019)

F. Preliminary assessment of Main Street bike lane alternatives

**AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY**

Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan (February 2009)

Implementation Principles (May 2015)