

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES

October 10, 2024  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Hybrid Meeting

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

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: Commissioner Ting

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Stash, Commissioner Marciante

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Michael Ingram, Kristi Oosterveen, Jay Backman, Andrew Singelakis, Eric Miller, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Nieuwenhuis

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Vice Chair Magill noted that all written communications received had been forwarded by staff to the Commissioners.

Vice Chair Magill reminded those wanting to address the Commission that all comments must be related to city of Bellevue business and to the roles and responsibilities of the Transportation Commission.

Craig Spiezle, a car owner, a cyclist, a business owner and a resident on 99th Avenue NE, spoke with regard to Bike Bellevue Corridor 8. Appreciation was voiced for Mariya Frost of Kemper Development Company for identifying a potential alternative. At first glance, one might assume that routing cycles through a residential neighborhood would improve safety, but based on analysis of the attached table in the handouts, Alternative 4 introduces other issues that may negate the benefits. The additional length, elevation gain and grades approaching 10 percent may result with it being underutilized, ultimately impacting vision zero goals. It is important to recognize that the LTS ratings do not reflect the deficiencies nor provide an apple-

to-apples comparisons on these routes. For example, based on the analysis, Alternative 2, including directional bike lanes and flexible delineator posts, may actually be safer due to vehicles and cyclists having a nonobstructive line-of-sight of each other, superior street lighting, and fewer driveway to navigate. Further, by reducing the speed on 100 Avenue NE to 25 miles per hour it is likely Alternative 2 as proposed by the city could achieve an LTS 2 rating. Before a decision on Corridor 8 is made, staff and Kemper Development Company should also evaluate utilizing the existing mall entrance on the southwest corner of NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The entrance has been blocked to the general public for nearly a decade. Using it would reduce traffic entering the mall from 100th Avenue NE. Also, to address some of the risks identified in Alternative 4, the city requires unanimous support of residents to approve additional street lights and 65 percent approval for parking revisions and speed humps. Assuming that is achieved, the real question is whether after spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to widen sidewalks, reduce lane widths and move utilities, cyclists will use the alternative, or if they will opt to choose 100th Avenue NE for the convenience and greater predictability. As the Commission moves forward, it will be important to understand who is Bike Bellevue is being designed for and what constituency should be prioritized: commuters, young families, older adults, e-bike riders, enthusiasts, wheelchair riders, or all of the above.

Chris Randels spoke representing Complete Streets Bellevue and expressed strong support for bicycle facilities on 100th Avenue NE, which is between NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street. Action on 100th Avenue NE is most in line with previous Council direction from the 2009 Pedestrian Bicycle Master plan, the 2022 Mobility Implementation Plan, and Council comments on the Bike Bellevue program from March and August of this year. The due diligence of staff is to be applauded. Their memo clearly explains the policy and situational justification for high quality bicycle facilities on 100th Avenue NE. Their findings show that repurposing the vehicle travel lane on 100th Avenue NE, the last resort option to create bike facilities on the street, would not negatively impact cars and their movements, but would positively impact people on two wheels. The facility contributes to Council's goal of safe and connected routes. A cyclist would now have another north-south option directly through Bellevue's downtown core. With current facilities dead-ending on NE 4th Street, riders currently on 100th Avenue NE will be less stranded. Mayor Robinson on August 6 indicated support for a pilot of on-street facilities on 100th Avenue NE, providing better connections and safety by creating facilities for people on two wheels. The Commission was urged to honor that perspective and the intent of Bike Bellevue by approving bicycle facilities on 100th Avenue NE. With regard to the Transportation Facilities Plan, Complete Streets Bellevue strongly supports the staff's proposed outreach and engagement plan. The city's policies and facilities plans must be informed by robust community input, and staff's proposed suite of outreach actions will put the city on a great path towards hearing a diverse array of perspectives. City leaders and staff correctly understand the importance of equitable outreach and undertaking extra efforts to ensure that the perspectives from BIPOC, LGBTQ and other underserved communities are heard and respected. However, because of access to institutional barriers, it is important to meet those communities where they are at by taking outreach directly to them. Community-based organizations, especially those serving historically marginalized populations, can be great outreach partners as they are best equipped to understand and communicate the transportation needs that their communities are experiencing. Staff was urged to conduct explicit outreach with equity-focused CBOs to ensure that perspectives from all Bellevue voices are adequately represented in the Transportation Facilities Plan.

Mariya Frost, Transportation Director for Kemper Development Company, suggested everyone is on the same page in wanting a safe multimodal network that accommodates all modes. No

one here wants to see cyclists and pedestrians get needlessly hurt; everyone should be able to navigate the city and return home safely. In that context, support was voiced for Alternative 4, the only alternative that would provide a safe LTS-1 bicycle route via NE 8 Street and 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, where speeds and volumes are considerably lower than on 100 Avenue NE. The alternative would also provide an additional connection to Meydenbauer Bay Park and Downtown Park, with an additional potential connection at NE 4th Street. While recognizing that 98 Avenue NE is slightly less direct and adds some elevation, it is a marginal price to pay for a truly safe and connected route that achieves both the city's LTS and Vision Zero goals. Electric bikes can also help bridge that gap and make cycling in the Puget Sound's hilly geography a bit easier. Respected Eastside engineering consultant TenW has provided an analysis that was shared with the Commission in advance of the meeting. That analysis shows that thanks to extra wide lanes, there is more than adequate space available on the north side of NE 8th Street to create a 10- or 12-foot shared-use path for pedestrians and cyclists that would achieve LTS-1. It would not require tree removal or affect the bus shelter, and it would connect with the city's planned enhanced crosswalk at 98th NE and NE 8th Street, facilitating safe crossings, a key advantage of the option over 99<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Alternative 4 is also the only build option that avoids high volume driveways and intersections. Any cycle track or even directional bike lanes on 100th Avenue NE would encourage people to bike along three high volume driveways where over 1.6 million vehicles enter and exit the Bellevue Square garage each year. While some experienced cyclists may feel comfortable cycling in this kind of environment, most would not, especially those who travel with their children. If the intent is to build bike lanes for users with varying levels of experience, bike lanes on 100th Avenue NE would be incredibly high risk. Alternative 4 is also the only build option that does not remove a travel lane, which consistent with Council direction should be a last resort. If the section of 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE between NE 8th Street and NE 4th Street is reduced to having only one northbound lane, any NE 8th Street eastbound backup would stop northbound traffic completely, worsening traffic congestion and mobility for visitors, residents and workers. It would also severely disrupt traffic flow from the Bellevue Square garage, affecting regular operations in every community event the Bellevue Collection hosts or sponsors, including the 4th of July and the Bellevue Arts Fair, both of which occur in the summer when the Bellevue Square accommodates thousands of customers and visitors, and when bicycling tends to increase. The Commission was urged to remove 100th Avenue NE from consideration for bike lanes and to instead advance the proposed route on 98th Avenue NE to the TFP for study and implementation.

Michael Vaschillo urged the Commission to prioritize protected bike lanes on the critical corridors outlined in the Bike Bellevue plan. For decades, the city and its residents have recognized the need for bike routes to increase ridership and combat growing city gridlock. It is essential to make it easier for commuters to switch from cars to more efficient modes like walking, biking, and transit, and to make it safer for those sharing streets with cars.

Unfortunately, the city has yet to address key corridors that prevent bike paths from being well-connected corridors, such as Northrup Way, Bel-Red Road, and 140<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. The gaps severely limit the mobility of bicyclists and force many to risk their lives. The speaker shared having been struck by a car on September 19 while biking home on 140th Avenue NE. The collision resulted in several broken bones in his leg, including an open fracture, and significant muscle damage. After major reconstruction surgery and an anticipated year-long recovery, there is still the possibility of permanent limitations. While the driver was held liable, the city's lack of infrastructure, despite years of acknowledging the need, is equally to blame. Such collisions

will continue as long as the city's infrastructure prioritizes shaving seconds off commute times instead of ensuring safety for residents. The Commission has the power to influence Bellevue's future biking infrastructure by prioritizing the bike facilities in the Transportation Facilities Plan and aggressively addressing Bike Bellevue's critical corridors. That will result in easing traffic for drivers by reducing the number of cars on the road and protecting those who bike from fearing for their lives. Every delay in building bike projects will lead to more injuries and fatalities. The infrastructure is needed now. Strong support was voiced for the directional bike lanes on 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Any bike lane alternative to 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE will see reduced use because they are not connected to key amenities in the area. People bike to get places, not just for fun. A bike lane placed further away will not be used if it is not convenient.

Christopher Whelan noted being an all-weather bike commuter with a commute from Bridle Trails to the Spring District that includes NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street and Northup Way twice a day. A segment of Northup Way has bi-directional cycle track infrastructure, but with a speed limit of 35, it is rated LTS-3. That level of traffic stress is dangerous. Just this past Monday, a motorcyclist was killed by a driver there. The driver also ran through a section of the 520 trail that Bellevue considers LTS-2 or LTS-3. Having ridden through the same intersection earlier that day, the orange chalk lines from the investigation are visible on the pavement. Recently a group ride was taken with Eastside Urbanism that explored the alternative routes. What stood out in all cases was traffic speed. Northup's 35 mph limit allowed a DUI to kill someone on a Monday morning. The existing 30 mph limit on 100th Avenue NE prevents reaching the goal of LTS-1. Alternative 4 benefits from the existing 25 mph limit on 98th Avenue NE, making it LTS-1. The best idea from Alternative 4 is reducing speed limits to 25 mph on 100th Avenue NE. Modest as it is, the change would reduce the likelihood of fatalities. A successful corridor would allow residents to reach parks and shops without mixing with car traffic downtown. Support was voiced for Alternatives 2 and 3, and it was stated that Alternative 4 should be discarded. Speed reduction to 25 mph should be implemented as part of the pilot and further lowered as feasible.

Kurt Dresner asked how many of the Commissioners have decided not to go somewhere because it was known that traffic would be bad, and if they had chosen to leave earlier or later to avoid traffic. Transportation affects how everyone lives. There is an urban planning concept called the Downs-Thompson Paradox. It essentially says that traffic gets worse until it becomes faster to use public transport or an alternative mode. Expanding roads only makes things worse long-term as more people are encouraged to drive. There are not really "car people" or "bike people." Most people just want to get where they are going as quickly as possible. So if buses are stuck in traffic and biking is not convenient, everyone ends up driving. Making alternatives like biking or transit viable for even a portion of the population will ease traffic for everyone, including those who need to drive. So when discussing congestion, remember the only real solution is making alternatives to driving viable.

Ben Mickle, a resident of Downtown Bellevue, spoke in favor of directional bike lanes on 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and noted that the cycle track also seems good. Strong opposition was voiced to the detour along 98th Avenue NE. Repurposing a lane on 100th Avenue NE would

not cause a major traffic impact. 108th Avenue NE has similar traffic volumes but manages just fine with three lanes. The Complete Streets project in that location was a huge success, so it makes sense to bring something similar to 100th. As for safety, the 98th Avenue NE option is too confusing. It is an unnatural, permanent detour that people will avoid. Detours are supposed to be temporary, and this one goes around nothing. It would be better to fix the design of 100th Avenue NE with a simple direct route to the park would be much better and safer than a detour through suburban streets, which most people will not use. In August, the Council rejected a similar idea on Bellevue-Redmond Road, where they did not want to push bikes onto dangerous roads. The question is why the same should be considered for 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Downtown Bellevue is more than just a commercial hub; it is a neighborhood where 10 percent of the city's population lives. Bellevue's streets should be calm and safe. The Commission was urged to support bike lanes on 100th Avenue NE.

Nicole Myers hoped the Commissioners had had time to review the presentation submitted earlier in the month. The cycle track alternative is a safety risk, and minimally buffered directional lanes do not offer much more protection beyond the status quo. It was noted that there is a new driveway at Washington Federal Bank on 100th Avenue NE that was not included in the meeting materials. Crossing driveways is highly stressful for pedestrians. Additionally, the sidewalks on the west side of 100th Avenue NE are subpar. Using space for the cycle track limits future improvements for pedestrian options. 100th Avenue NE is not as dangerous as others have made it out to be, and since the trees will not be removed for the multi-use path along 98th Avenue NE, the neighborhood greenway option should be supported. One more thing of note is the fact that the new bike lanes on Lake Washington Boulevard are planned to take the space where sidewalks should be, and the mature trees along the boulevard are going to be cut down. That is very sad, and hopefully there is room to reconsider. The Wilburton route should be reconsidered because it does remove travel lanes.

Valentina Vaneeva stated that in 2017, about 60 percent of respondents said they felt unsafe riding bikes in downtown Bellevue. Many said they would ride more if there were safer bike lanes. Physically separated lanes also made drivers feel safer. In November 2022, the Council adopted the Capital Investment Program, which included Bike Bellevue, a plan to rapidly design and implement bike infrastructure on existing streets in downtown, Wilburton, and BelRed. The plan was based on the 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan, the 2016 Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program, and the 2022 Mobility Implementation Plan. The goal was a safe and connected network of bike routes. The original plan identified 11 corridors, but during reviews, they were divided into 14 total segments. Of those, only five segments have designs that meet safety goals and implementation plans. Two segments depend on private partnerships, and five have been deferred to the Transportation Facilities Plan. So instead of a connected network, all that is left is just random segments. Since Bellevue adopted its Vision Zero program in 2020, the number of people killed or seriously injured has increased. Now the Commission is charged with discussing another segment, but none of the options provided meet safety targets. The Commission was urged to focus on the options that seek to increase safety for streets that people actually use, rather than diverting cyclists to a random parallel street. Bike lanes are traffic calming devices, and when built, they can reduce car speeds.

Alex Tsimerman began with a Nazi salute and called the Commissioners dirty damn Nazi antisemite cockroaches. As a candidate for the City Council with support from 20 percent of the population, the speaker said Bellevue is going in the wrong direction. Over the past 10 years, the city has spent \$120 million on bikes. That is a lot of money. There are also 30,000 red light cameras, and half of that revenue goes to Arizona. Bellevue's white community is now a minority, and the Council supports Iranian Muslims who are backed by China and Russia. The Council does not care about the people of Bellevue. It supports anti-Semitic policies. All of the money spent is not going to help the people. The Council is corrupt, and it is wasting taxpayer dollars. It needs to be held accountable.

#### 4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis complimented the Transportation Department and Director Andrew Singelakis on doing a great job of presenting the transportation budget to the Council. The Commissioners were encouraged to review the document, which outlines future projects and maintenance.

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald reported that work has begun on the final design phase of the early implementation of Bike Bellevue corridors that the Commission recommended for approval in April. An engineering firm has been brought on board to prepare the final design and construction is anticipated to begin in 2025.

#### 6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

#### 7. STUDY SESSION

##### A. Bike Bellevue

Kevin McDonald noted that Corridor 8 is on 100th Avenue NE between NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street on the west end of downtown. Once the Commission provides a recommendation regarding Corridor 8, only Corridor 11 on 116th Avenue NE north of NE 12th Street will remain to be decided.

Four alternatives are provided for consideration. Alternative 1 is the "no-build" option that involves taking no action on the corridor. Alternative 2 involves repurposing a northbound travel lane to provide directional bike lanes on either side of the street. Alternative 3 would also repurpose a northbound travel lane and insert a bi-directional cycle track on the east side of 100th Avenue NE. Alternative 4 suggests an alternative route that diverts bicycles to 98th Avenue NE, with connections to 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE at NE 1st Street and NE 8th Streets. Alternative 4 has not been studied in detail, especially the segment between 98th Avenue NE and 100th Avenue NE along NE 8th Street, where there are no bike facilities. This stretch of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street presents topographical challenges and right-of-way constraints. Additionally, the residents along 98th Avenue NE have not been approached about the possibility of a bike route, thus neighborhood outreach would be part of any recommendation.

Kevin McDonald shared with the Commissioners photos taken during a bike tour with three Commissioners earlier in the month of 100th Avenue NE, and the 98th Avenue NE alternative. It was noted that the multipurpose path on 100th Avenue NE south of NE 4th Street is an LTS-1 facility. Further north there are driveways that serve the Bellevue Square parking garage, and additional driveways. As a condition of development approval, a bike facility will be built along the east side of 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. A turn must be made at NE 8th Street to get to 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. To the west along NE 8th Street there is a narrow section with a bus stop and tight sidewalks . Moving up 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, the road serves local residential traffic and has a much quieter, low-stress environment compared to 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The intersection has been considered to be a reasonable approach because the city has an investment going in 2025 to create a signalized pedestrian crossing at NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. South of the intersection with NE 4th Street there is a driveway entrance into Meydenbauer Bay Park, which could be an attraction for some bike riders. At the southern end of 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE the road turns into NE 1<sup>st</sup> Street and becomes more of an east-west corridor. At 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, there will be an intersection improvement in the form of an all-way stop to address documented safety concerns.

The No Build alternative, Alternative 1, is similar to Alternative 4 in that it would not alter 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Alternative 2 provides directional bike lanes on 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE without a buffer. Alternative 3 offers a cycle track with a buffer, but it may have safety concerns due to bicycles traveling in both directions on the same side of the street.

Under Alternative 1, without any bike facilities 100th Avenue NE will remain at LTS-4, meaning it is comfortable only for advanced cyclists. The directional bike lanes in Alternative 2 improve the corridor to LTS-3. The cycle track in Alternative 3 brings the corridor to LTS-2, thanks to the protective buffer between cars and bikes. Alternative 4, the route along 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, provides an LTS-1, which is optimal, except for the segment between 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 100th Avenue NE along NE 8th Street where additional design work would be needed to maintain a low-stress environment.

Continuing, Kevin McDonald said the Volume-to-Capacity (V/C) ratios and average speeds were also studied. Each of the alternatives, including those that repurpose lanes, would meet the city's performance targets for vehicle operations given that congestion is not anticipated to increase significantly, even with a lane removed.

Commissioner Rebhuhn referred to a footnote that indicated that with a speed limit of 30 miles per hour, the performance target for vehicle speed would be six miles per hour. Kevin McDonald said that is determined by calculating 40 percent of the speed limit, which is deemed to be the typical urban travel speed. In the Downtown, there is an additional deduction based on a number of factors, including the number of driveways along the corridor.

Commissioner Kurz asked if the cycle track option would involve riders having to switch from one side of the road to the other. Kevin McDonald said that was correct, adding that that would not be factored when determining the LTS. There are, however, other considerations \,

including driveways.

Commissioner Ting raised a concern about drivers exiting driveways and not expecting cyclists to be coming from the opposite direction from traffic. There is a known risk with bi-directional cycle tracks, and while it can be mitigated with signage and design treatments, the safety risks remain higher compared to directional lanes. Kevin McDonald confirmed the point.

Senior ITS Engineer Jay Backman allowed that there are few cycle tracks in the city from which to pull data. The closest thing are multipurpose paths crossing driveways and intersections for which there is experience in assuring sight lines and using different driveway treatments to alert drivers and cyclists to the need to look both ways. Any alternative chosen that would repurpose a vehicle travel lane would be implemented as a pilot project first, allowing for monitoring, collecting data and making adjustments as needed.

Commissioner Rebhuhn commented that 1.5 million cars entering and exiting the Bellevue Square driveways annually present that many possible conflict opportunities for cyclists, and that is concerning.

Commissioner Kurz suggested Alternative 4 essentially is notice that the city does not want people to bike to the mall. People should be facilitated in biking to the mall. It is entirely possible riders will not choose the detour as outlined.

Commissioner Keilman noted having participated in the bike ride with staff and reported having been out of breath going up the incline on NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. A safer route, even if more difficult, is better than to just follow the path of least resistance. Drivers coming out of the Bellevue Square parking garage and having to look out for bicycle riders will tend to create backups and more carbon emissions. The alternative may discourage some from taking a bike to Bellevue Square, but at the same time no one's free will is being taken away. Alternative 4 is the best option.

Vice Chair Magill noted that Alternative 3 is the original concept. From the standpoint of being safe, however, it does not seem like a viable option. Alternative 4 has a number of advantages, including being a far less stressful experience for cyclists. The garden greenway option is also intriguing. Meydenbauer Bay Park is an attraction that must be kept in mind.

Commissioner Ting agrees with the focus on safety that Alternative 4 presents. It is understandable that people are concerned about the longer route and the grade. The fact is Bellevue is a hilly place, but bike lanes can be built in hilly cities, particularly as e-bikes become more popular. LTS focuses on the level of stress for cyclists, but there are interesting nuances in terms of safety, including driveways and left and right turns. There is a clear need to keep in mind the target audience for bicycle facilities, be it cyclists out for recreation or to commute to specific destinations. Alternative 4 is the safer option.

Commissioner Rebhuhn commented that taking away a travel lane could lead to more traffic congestion. If 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE gets jammed up, there is really nowhere for the overflow



traffic to go. It would be much better for residents along the side streets to have cyclists passing by than cars.

Commissioner Kurz pointed out the need to encourage people to use alternative forms of transportation in order to change the mix of traffic, and safety should be used a driving factor in selecting bicycle routes. The alternative route will always exist, but it may not actually be in the spirit of making the Downtown bike friendly. Mixing bikes with traffic raises the possibility of conflicts, but at the same time the approach serves to calm traffic to some degree. While initially taking away a lane in Factoria to accommodate construction made things worse, people ultimately adjusted and things got better over time. Alternatives 2 and 3 are worth trying, at least on a temporary basis.

Commissioner Keilman said traffic calming does not always solve traffic congestion and gridlock. Repurposing a traffic lane will make things worse. The focus should not be on making things worse for one type of commuter over another. A balanced solution is needed for all types of commuters.

Jay Backman clarified the issue of the directional cycle track swapping sides of the road. The cycle track would continue the multipurpose path on the east side of 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE south of NE 4th Street and it would need to switch to the directional facilities at NE 8th Street. Some intersection improvements may be needed at that location to direct cyclists. The directional bicycle facility alternative would use a recently implemented a pedestrian all-way walk phase at NE 4th Street and to move the bicyclists between the multipurpose path to the directional facilities.

With regard to the LTS scoring of Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, Jay Backman clarified that it is based on the 30 mile per hour speed limit. If the speed limit were to be reduced, the LTS scoring would improve. If the arterial traffic volume is equal to or exceeds 7000 cars per day, Alternative 2 would become LTS-2, and Alternative 3 would become LTS-1.

Commissioner Ting said one key tenet is that there should be a separation between vehicles and bikes. Intuitively, fast-moving cars should be kept away from cyclists and pedestrians. Any network that separates the two would be safer. In building networks, the focus needs to be on accommodating everyone, not any one specific group. It might be the case, however, that for a particular route the focus should be on one group or another given the local circumstances.

Commissioner Kurz pointed out that for the corridor in question the issue is not fast-moving cars next to bikes. It is a slow-moving street with cars going sixteen miles per hour on average. The most important data is that removing a lane would reduce vehicle speed by just one mile per hour. That is an important metric that should be guiding the worries about congestion. The question is whether or not cyclists should be pushed onto a longer detour so that cars can go one mile per hour faster.

Vice Chair Magill asked if there is solid data about where people are cycling. Kevin McDonald said there is no clear data indicating where riders are coming from or going to, but there is

some quantitative data on ridership for some corridors. One of the comment letters shared with the Commission included a Strava heat map showing that more cyclists ride on 100th Avenue NE compared to 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. While there is some bike traffic on 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, 100th Avenue NE currently has more cycle riders.

Vice Chair Magill asked if the city is planning to collect more data as part of Bike Bellevue. Kevin McDonald said any alternative that repurposes a travel lane would involve an interim pilot facility and usage would be monitored. For Alternative 4, which does not involve repurposing lanes, the use of the facility would still likely be monitored, although perhaps not as part of a formal pilot. The city generally focuses on collecting quantitative metrics rather than the specific purpose of a trip.

Jay Backman added that the traffic data the city currently has includes the average daily vehicle travel along 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and along NE 8th Street. There is no clear data for 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Additional turning movement counts will be collected as needed. As for bicycles, the city currently only has a small sample from turning movement counts taken during peak hours. Alternatives 2 and 3 will need bicycle protection included with the traffic signals, and with that protection will come some data in regard to how often the bike protection is activated. Eco counters, which are permanent bike count loops, could also be installed.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked those Commissioners who elected to take the bike tour of the area to describe their experiences. Commissioner Keilman noted observing that drivers on 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE do not go the speed limit even if cyclists are present. One car came in fast and turned into a driveway or a parking garage. Most accidents involving bicycles happen at driveways. Knowing that, cyclists may be put at greater risk by placing bike lanes in front of driveways.

A motion to recommend the 98<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE route shown in Alternative 4 for Bike Bellevue Corridor 8, and consistent with Category 5, to recommend referring Alternative 4 to the TFP, was made by Commissioner Ting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Keilman.

Commissioner Ting said the motion could potentially be amended to include investigating the design of the NE 8th Street segment to achieve LTS-1, and to include an investigation of the Vuecrest option between ne8th and NE 10th Street.

Commissioner Kurz voiced concern that Alternative 4 had not been given as much focus. If something should come up that would make the option infeasible, Alternative 2 should be the backup.

A motion to amend the motion to indicate Alternative 2 as the second choice in the event Alternative 4 becomes infeasible, was made by Commissioner Kurz. The motion to amend failed due to lack of a second.

The motion on the table carried 4-1, with Commissioner Kurz voting against.

Vice Chair Magill took a moment to thank the staff for their work on the issue, and to Eastside Urbanism for their input. Kevin McDonald thanked the engineering staff for coming up with all the data.

## B. Transportation Facilities Plan

Program Manager Kristi Oosterveen reminded the Commissioners that the TFP serves two primary purposes. First, it is an intermediate-range planning tool that helps set priorities for transportation improvements over the next 12 years. Second, it establishes the foundation for the Impact Fee Program, which helps to fund those improvements. The TFP is informed by long-range plans like the Comprehensive Plan and the Mobility Implementation Plan. Once a project is selected for the TFP, it can then be considered for funding in the CIP.

It was originally thought the CIP would transition to a 10-year plan, but after further discussions, it will be a six-year plan, and therefore the TFP will remain a 12-year plan.

With regard to the public involvement process, Kristi Oosterveen allowed that it is critical to gather feedback from the community on the projects considered for inclusion in the TFP. The plan calls for holding both virtual and in-person open houses. The virtual open houses will be hosted on the Engaging Bellevue platform where residents can review maps, submit comments, and take a survey on their priorities for transportation projects. The in-person open houses will provide similar opportunities but will allow attendees to speak directly with staff, ask questions, and provide feedback on paper if preferred. Information will also be shared with the public using tools like Nextdoor, *Neighborhood News*, *It's Your City* and press releases to inform the public about the engagement opportunities. The outreach will ensure that residents from all over Bellevue are aware of the projects and how they can participate. One key feature the online interactive map will have is being able to hover over the proposed project locations, learn about them, and leave comments. Unlike the Mobility Implementation Plan map, which allowed people to suggest new projects anywhere, the map will focus specifically on the candidate projects already identified. The approach will help the city gather targeted feedback on what is already under consideration.

Continuing, Kristi Oosterveen explained that after collecting all feedback, a public engagement report will be compiled summarizing the community's input. The report will be presented to the Commission to allow for an understanding of what residents are prioritizing before the TFP is finalized. Also being worked on are flexible engagement times, including holding some open houses during the day and some in the evening as a way to reach as many people as possible, especially those who work non-traditional hours or have other commitments.

Experience has shown that the Engaging Bellevue platform has been very successful. It allows people to participate at their own convenience and has been a key tool for gathering online feedback. The in-person open houses draw in people who prefer face-to-face interaction and the opportunity to ask more detailed questions. Both methods complement each other well, but online engagement has generally had the highest participation rates.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked about outreach to the business community and business owners. Senior Planner Mike Ingram said the city has typically reached out to the business community through their associations, including the Chamber of Commerce and the Bellevue Downtown Association. Staff attends their meetings in person and provides the same information that is shared with residents about projects, how to give feedback, and why the TFP matters for their businesses. That ensures that business owners are aware of the impacts and benefits of the projects.

Commissioner Ting asked if the interactive map will show more than just the candidate projects and include other planned transportation projects in the area, such as those already funded in the CIP. It would be helpful for people to see the entire network being built out, not just isolated segments. Kristi Oosterveen agreed having all the information in one place would be a good idea, but it would take a very long time to input. The interactive map will only focus on the candidate projects within the TFP, but links to other resources can be included, such as the existing infrastructure maps or the city's Pedestrian and Bicycle Story Map, which shows both pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure already in place. That way people can access that information if they want to see how the TFP projects fit into the larger network. Effort is put into making sure the TFP project list includes Neighborhood Sidewalk Program projects and Congestion Reduction Program projects that are in the pipeline.

Kristi Oosterveen said the city intends to improve its mapping over time to allow the public to gain a fuller overall picture. For the short term, links to the broader maps will be made available in the public engagement materials.

Mike Ingram said there are a lot of candidate projects on the list. There are 53 projects in the current TFP, and the candidate pool for that update process had upwards of 80 projects. The projects that will by default automatically be carried forward into the TFP are those the Council has fully funded or is anticipated to fully fund. The first page of the project list shows those projects that will be completed by the end of 2025 and as such will not be included. The projects that are fully funded in the current CIP, and those that are recommended for full funding in the currently ongoing budget process, will carry over into the new TFP.

SE 16th Street (TFP 158), between 148th Avenue SE and 156th Avenue SE, will add pedestrian facilities on the north side and bike lanes or wide shoulders on both sides of the street. The segment is key to the East-West 3 bicycle corridor, which largely parallels the Lake-to-Lake Trail. The project has been discussed for years, with mixed community reactions, but it has Council support and is now fully funded in the proposed 2025 CIP.

The area near Lake Sammamish in which the SE 34th Street (TFP 175) project is located was annexed into Bellevue about 20 years ago. The corridor continues to lack basic infrastructure like sidewalks. The project will finally construct a continuous pedestrian facility on the north side and wide shoulders on both sides for bicycles. The community has been asking for the improvement for a long time, and it is now fully funded in the new budget.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if SE 34th Street is part of the route that connects Eastgate to Lake Sammamish. Mike Ingram allowed that it does, noting that the route is quite steep in some areas. The steepest part of the road already has some sidewalks and a shoulder, but the project will focus on the flatter, lower section.

Kristi Oosterveen added that the area recently participated in the Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP), and the community was strongly in favor of completing the pedestrian connection. Accordingly, there is a lot of support from the local residents for the project.

Mike Ingram said the project on 150th Avenue SE (TFP 195) focuses on reducing congestion around the I-90 interchange. The project will widen the road, add a third southbound lane, and improve the flow of traffic from the eastbound I-90 off-ramp. The configuration of the off-ramp will be adjusted to make it more efficient, eliminating the existing left-turn option to improve overall traffic flow. Vehicles wishing to turn north will need to use the existing loop ramp from eastbound I-90 to northbound 150<sup>th</sup> Ave SE.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if the project will reduce congestion in the area. Mike Ingram said that is the goal. Adding a third lane and optimizing the off-ramp should significantly improve the traffic situation during peak hours. The simulations that have been run show a notable reduction in delays, particularly during the evening commute when congestion is at its worst.

With regard to Eastgate Way between Richards Road and the Sunset Corporate campus (TFP-247), Mike Ingram said the pedestrian improvement addresses a sidewalk gap at the crossing of Richards Creek.

The projects TFP 257 and TFP 267 are along West Lake Sammamish Parkway where the historic road has concrete panels and a paved shoulder on the west side. Two segments with full improvements have been done already, including the addition of a separated path on the west side up from the roundabout north of I-90 to SE 34<sup>th</sup> Street, and to the north near NE 8th Street. The proposed project will fill in the gap between those two segments, leaving only a piece at the north end near the border with Redmond.

The project by Highland Community Center (TFP 291) utilizes the existing stub road that ends by the playground. Connecting to the parking lot to the north is currently possible but involves crossing private property. Redevelopment is happening on the west side of the northern parking lot. The proposal is to develop a public street through the area, with the new development funding a new road along its frontage at the north end and the city building a signal at Bel-Red Road and filling in the gap between the end of the existing public road and the new north street segment.

Mike Ingram said the final project is on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE in the Downtown (TFP 294) between NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street, the site of the main high-comfort north-south bicycle facility,

and where many come and go by transit. There are new buildings going in with large parking garages and their associated ingress and egress. The city desires to see the bicycle and transit functions continue operating in a satisfactory way while also accommodating the parking garage access, and to that end the proposed project will set the curb line along the east side, including for the new Tower 555 project opposite the transit center. New development will address some of the work, but not all, thus the city needs to step in to get the work done. The project is proposed for full funding in the new budget.

There are three Congestion Reduction projects that are fully funded, namely TFP 263, TFP 276, and TFP 278. One is at 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 8th Street where all four of the legs will be converted to dual left-turn lanes. Another is at 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Main Street and involves signaling the south driveway into the shopping center. The third project addresses the Lake Hills Connector northbound approaching SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street by increasing the length of the left-turn lane and putting in dual left-turns.

Commissioner Ting referred to TFP 263 and asked if there are any downside to the project aside from cost. Mike Ingram said for the most part the curb-to-curb distances will not be widened. Some of the median space will be eliminated. Expanding all four legs will make the pedestrian exposure somewhat greater.

Commissioner Ting asked if it will become more difficult for people coming out of the neighborhood. Mike Ingram said that question would need to be answered by Jay Backman.

Mike Ingram said staff intends to tie back to the MIP as the Commission digs more fully into reviewing the projects and scoring them. For all of the candidate projects, the MIP score will be considered.

## 8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

### A. September 12, 2024

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

## 9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

## 10. NEW BUSINESS – None

## 11. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

Kevin McDonald briefly reviewed the calendar of upcoming meetings and agenda items. It was proposed that November 14 be slated for the Commission's annual retreat, to which the Commissioners agreed.

## 12. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Magill adjourned the meeting at 8:54 p.m.