

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

June 13, 2024
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Hybrid Meeting

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

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: Commissioner Ting

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

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

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

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Marciante who arrived at 6:35 p.m.

A. Commission Elections

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald noted that nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair had been solicited, and one nominee had been received for each position. Absent additional nominations, Karen Stash was confirmed to serve as Chair, and Drew Magill was confirmed to serve as Vice Chair.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Cameron Kast expressed the importance of the city's dedication to Vision Zero, Bike Bellevue and alternative transit investments in the city. The collective goal to eliminate all traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 is both commendable and achievable with human-centered street design. Previous city investments in cycling, pedestrian and transit infrastructure have allowed many to live car-light in. The speaker noted being a daily commuter via bike or transit from Bridle Trails to Downtown Bellevue. Accordingly, Bellevue's street improvements have been experienced firsthand, including the two-way cycle

tracks on 120th Avenue NE, and the separated bike lanes on 108th Avenue NE. The lack of protective bike lanes in other parts of the city often put riders in harm's way, highlighting the need for infrastructure that protects and supports all modes of transportation. Despite previous measures, there has been a persistent flat trend in the number of serious injuries and fatalities on the city's streets, signaling that the approach has been insufficient. Moving into the second half of 2024, the city has the opportunity to leverage extensive research done by the city and implement changes, such as those described by Bike Bellevue, that will make a real difference in protecting the community. Everyone should have the freedom to choose the mode of transportation that best fits their needs. For some, however, it is not a choice, and it is critical to continue to provide options for everyone to get around the region safely and efficiently. It is critical for the city to demonstrate organized urgency, financial investment, and the political will to transform Bellevue into a city where zero is the only acceptable number of fatalities on the streets.

Mariya Frost, transportation director for Kemper Development Company, strongly supported the staff recommendation for NE 12th Street to complete and install a permanent multipurpose path rather than repurposing vehicle travel lanes. The Commission was urged to support the staff and to encourage funding for the project in the upcoming 2025 capital budget. With regard to the Mobility Implementation Plan scoring, appreciation was voiced for what the staff were trying to achieve in prioritizing a long list of very different and unique transportation projects based on performance gaps and policy goals. However, there is room to improve the scoring and making it less of a blunt instrument. For example, vehicular mode projects are excluded from an equity score entirely, and are also not given points they may qualify for under safety. They are excluded from an equity score on the basis that vehicle access is not as critical to transportation disadvantaged populations relative to pedestrian and bicycle access. That focuses only on disadvantaged people without access to a car and effectively excludes the much larger proportion of disadvantaged people who depend on a car for mobility. TFP projects that improve vehicular travel, which the majority of low-income or economically disadvantaged people rely on, should not be excluded from receiving an equity score. The issue should be addressed directly and honestly. The implied policy direction appears to orient around helping the city meet its modal goals rather than helping the greatest number of economically disadvantaged people have more reliable and better access to jobs and an improved quality of life. An equity score should be given to projects that improve mobility under the vehicular mode. Such a score could vary by Performance Management Area based on employment density. Projects that result in widening or higher speeds are given zero points in MMA-3. The staff should be asked to provide data that shows a given intersection improvement that includes widening is automatically less safe. There should be a project-by-project evaluation. Well-designed intersections improve sight distance, crosswalk markings, and include things such as pedestrian-activated signals and signal timing that make the intersections safer and less frustrating for both pedestrians and motorists.

Valentina Vaneeva asked the Commissioners not to change the score. Noting having on three occasions recently having almost been hit by a car, each time in a marked crosswalk, it was stressed that the incidents are not isolated. Drivers often block crosswalks and also sidewalks when leaving driveways. Those who walk, jog or cycle in Bellevue get the impression that drivers can get away with almost anything as long as they do not actually hit anyone. It is that way largely because there is no enforcement of violations. The city has often demonstrated that people not in cars are not a priority. Two years ago the Transportation department collected public opinion about the walking experiences of city residents. The biggest complaints were around drivers turning right on red, and left on flashing yellow. The Mobility Implementation Plan has all the right words and has a great scoring scheme, but it will not go far enough. As it

always has, the city will stop at guidelines and recommendations and things will not actually be improved to the benefit of cyclists and pedestrians. The residents want the city to make them proud by making the necessary changes.

Vic Bishop, a traffic engineer and former member of the Transportation Commission, reminded the Commissioners to keep in mind the mode split of how people actually travel in the city. The travel forecast models shows trips will increase by 25 percent by 2035, by which time 75 percent of all trips will be by car, 18 percent will be by walking, and smaller percentages will be by transit; bikes will account for only one percent. The old Comprehensive Plan policy TR-2 calls for aggressively increasing funding to reduce congestion. That is what the TFP is all about, funding projects to reduce congestion. It is concerning that the system of scoring underscores vehicle projects to the benefit of other modes. The overall scoring system should be given another hard look. The idea that equity should not be applied to vehicles is nonsense. Low-income persons predominantly travel by car and they use up road space just like everyone else. It is also nonsense to believe that widening a roadway will make it less safe. The Eastside Transportation Association supports the staff recommendation for NE 12th Street.

Ben Mickle, a Downtown resident, said the Kemper Development Company-proposed map claims the city already owns the land needed to complete a multipurpose path along NE 12th Street, but a glance at satellite imagery strongly suggests otherwise. There is a house near 106th Avenue NE that has a wall only 25 feet from the NE 12th Street curb. The house has two small sheds next to it that are only 12 feet from the curb, sitting atop a four-foot-tall stone wall. Unless the private sheds are built on city property, the city does not own the land needed to build a proper LTS-1 multipurpose path. On the other side of 106th Avenue NE there is a very nice sidewalk, but it is definitely not maintained by the city, so it is questionable whether or not the city owns it. There are good reasons why the original Bike Bellevue plan did not envision extending the multipurpose path. The proposal is to repurpose the northbound lane to a two-way cycle track, a particularly good idea for a segment west of Bellevue Way where the right lane no longer even has a lane leading into it. For the segment, the most recently available traffic data shows only 6800 vehicles per day. Some parts of 148th Avenue, which has the same five-lane design, sees over 40,000 vehicles per day. Simple math would indicate the segment of NE 12th Street has six times more capacity than it needs. The Federal Highway Administration says that any road with less than 10,000 vehicles per day is a great candidate for a simple three-lane configuration. The Bike Bellevue proposal would pursue the most logical course of action by bringing the roadway design more in line with industry standards. To fully follow the Federal Highway Administration guidelines, the roadway would be reduced to only three lanes. The original Bike Bellevue proposal is well thought out and deserves serious consideration.

Arman Bilge, a Bridle Trails resident who bikes, walks and occasionally drives, noted having enjoyed the conversation about NE 2nd Street at the Commission's previous meeting. The focus of Bike Bellevue is improving safety with rapid implementation, it is not just about putting down sharrows. One idea that came up at that previous meeting in talking about NE 2nd Street was exploring options for permanent structures beyond sharrows. With regard to NE 12th Street, a permanent structure has been proposed, but it may not be in the spirit of Bike Bellevue in that it may not be implemented rapidly and may not be cost effective. Rapid implementation of projects is needed to meet the Vision Zero 2030 goals. If all of the challenges can be overcome, by all means the multipurpose pathway should be worked on, but the real focus should be on addressing the safety issues and achieving Vision Zero. Changes to NE 12th Street will be needed, and if those changes happen to include a bike lane, so be it.

Jacquelyn Kimzey spoke in support of Vision Zero and Bellevue's infrastructure. Vision Zero

is a strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy and equitable mobility for all. Every 15 days in Bellevue someone is either injured or killed in a collision with a vehicle. It is obvious to anyone outside of a car that there is a long way to go toward achieving the Vision Zero strategy. Vision Zero is not a slogan or a tagline or a program, it is a fundamentally different way to approach traffic safety. The data on the city's high-injury areas is in hand, and in fact the Bike Bellevue plan would have addressed a great number of those areas. That is why it is so maddening that the Transportation Commission has abandoned so many of the recommendations in favor of more convenience for cars. Equity is about providing safe transportation options for all modes. When the focus is on commute times and adding more lanes, all other modes of transportation are made way too dangerous, and that is the complete opposite of the Vision Zero goals. Bellevue is in dire need of protected bike lanes, buffered pedestrian paths, and road diets. Low-income people are struggling enough, and it is embarrassingly cruel to force them into car dependency. Without multimodal transportation options, Bellevue's traffic will only get worse, and low-income people will suffer the most. The safety of cyclists and pedestrians should not be compromised only to create more convenience for cars.

Alex Tsimerman began with a Nazi salute and called the Commissioners dirty damn Nazi garbage rats, human garbage and Zombies. Every year 10,000 tickets and 30,000 red camera tickets bring in almost \$10 million. But what is done with that money? Fifty percent of the red camera dollars go to Amazon corporation. The red cameras do not change anything. Everybody knows that. The city should make the decision to take the red cameras out. Five years ago Seattle started a redemption plan where low-income and disabled people can cut their tickets by a large percentage. Ten tickets have been received over the last year, and each time the judge has been asked to change the rules, but the judge has done nothing. There are three branches of government operating the Bellevue. The Commission operates like a Nazi Gestapo. It can change the rules by recommending to the City Council, making poor people feel a little bit better. The red camera dollars flow to Amazon corporation, but why spend so much money for Amazon. Bellevue needs a redemption plan like Seattle has for poor people. And the red cameras should be removed.

Nicole Myers said the walkway on the north side of NE 12th Street between Bellevue Way and 106th Avenue NE is one of the highest-quality pedestrian experiences in the city. It is lovely and if at all possible there is no need to change it. If consideration is going to be given to widening it to 10 or 12 feet, there should be strong outreach to the neighboring community. There are trees and plantings along the route. There is great opportunity to change the sidewalk path between 102nd Avenue NE and Bellevue Way into a multiuse path with more trees. There is also an opportunity to make a good connection between 106th Avenue NE and 108th Avenue NE. Changes that will reduce the pedestrian experience should be avoided.

Max Brook, who has studied transportation planning at the University of Washington and who regularly uses public transportation to go shopping, noted at times being forced to drive, either due to a lack of a bus route, a painfully slow bus, or infrequent or otherwise not being useable. The same is true when trying to ride a bike from the bus stop. Many problems could be solved by creating more bike infrastructure and more public transit routes, such as the new 2 Line, which has improved the ability to use transit and reduce car usage. Adding transit and bike infrastructure creates something called induced demand, something that impeaches the idea that just because cars are a high modal share they should be given the focus. Lowering the equity scoring system for cars should not be carried out. There is no such thing as a cheap car. Low-income persons have to pay the same amount of money for cars and the associated expenses as anyone else. They pay the same high prices for gas and insurance. They pay the

same bridge tolls. Less expensive cars likely have higher maintenance costs. It is completely false that there is a group of people forced to use a car because of other economic incentives. It is because there is no other alternative in the infrastructure. It is important to focus on pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure as part of Vision Zero because they are the ones getting killed.

Gavin Johns voiced the personal goal of being able to get around safely and effectively, noting usually relying on public transportation. There have been times, however, when a commute has been delayed by over an hour due to a canceled bus run. The state of public transit in Bellevue is very bad. Biking is an option, but since being hit by a car, followed shortly after by a friend also being hit, using a bike has triggered fears. Cars are expensive and many cannot afford them. It is clear that the focus that has been on cars should be shifted to Bike Bellevue projects and more frequent and reliable public transportation.

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

5. STAFF REPORTS

Kevin McDonald announced that the city would be moving away from the Zoom platform for Transportation Commission meetings to the Teams platform beginning in September.

Senior Transportation Planner Michael Ingram commented that Eastrail is currently open between the Wilburton station at NE 8th Street north into Kirkland and beyond. That segment opened along with the station in late April. On May 30 there was a groundbreaking ceremony for the two-year Wilburton trestle project; the project will allow for crossing over the trestle and over I-405, connecting with Mercer Slough. The crossing of NE 8th Street and the trail down to NE 4th Street will open on June 23 and there will be a celebration at noon that day to which the public is invited; the event will be at the Wilburton station.

Commissioner Magill asked if the work will include paving over the trestle. Mike Ingram said there will be a paved surface from SE 5th Street at the north end of the trestle across the trestle and south across the I-405 right-of-way to 118th Avenue SE. The segment from Coal Creek Parkway south to Renton is also paved.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. 2024-2033 Bellevue Transportation Demand Management Plan Update

Transportation Demand Management Manager Amanda Mansfield sought the endorsement of the Commission for the update to the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan. The purpose of the update is to guide the city in implementing the TDM program for the next ten years. The plan includes a vision statement and goals, and drive-alone modeshare targets and accompanying performance measures. The work to date has included a review of the TDM outcomes from the last plan, a review of surveys, and a review of industry best practices and current conditions. The culmination of the work is the implementation strategies and a framework through which the TDM strategies are implemented. As a guidance document, it is not adopted by the City Council.

Associate Planner Bradley Brashears noted that the public input process started in December 2022 with a community input survey that garnered over 320 respondents. The public engagement period wrapped up on May 15 as the draft plan was posted to the Engaging Bellevue platform for public review. The public was invited to answer a series of guided questions and to offer suggestions. Two mini-workshops were held in March for the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce and the Bellevue Downtown Association.

The public input received was catalogued by theme. The staff are currently working to post responses to Engaging Bellevue. Once the plan is finalized and endorsed, the public input will be archived on Engaging Bellevue and will be transferred to the Choose Your Way Bellevue website.

With regard to strategy adjustments, Bradley Brashears noted having received a lot of comments that mirrored some of the strategies in the draft plan. Comments were received about the need to improve transit service and infrastructure, along with micromobility and microtransit options, and while beyond the scope of the TDM program, the comments offer valuable information. Strategy 3.7 addresses the need to educate all stakeholders about the benefits of micromobility and microtransit options. Transit does not go everywhere people want it to go, and micromobility and microtransit can complement the city's transit options.

The need to improve incentives and rewards was voiced. Folks want them and they want them to be fun and enticing. Peer agencies across the nation as well as locally are being looked at to see what incentives and rewards programs could be contextualized in Bellevue.

It was heard across the board that the city needs to improve its communications, and Strategy 5.3 seeks to do that. One way to do that is to expand and enhance the social media presence. The Twitter/X, Facebook and Instagram platforms are currently underutilized. The original Strategy 5.6 was only about promoting the 2 Line, which is very important. The intent is to make the strategy more comprehensive as new services come online.

With regard to program adjustments, Bradley Brashears said some are the result of strategy adjustments and some are simply program adjustments within themselves. Currently within the strategies there is a ride matching program, but across the board it was heard that hospitality, retail, healthcare and shift workers need better options to get to and from work. All too often transit does not serve their needs and there is a need for better carpool, vanpool and vanshare options for them. King County Metro has some exciting vanpool and vanshare options that will be coming online soon, and the program will work with them to promote those services.

There was input received regarding the development of a Commute Trip Reduction dashboard. It is encapsulated within Strategy 1.1 which focuses on working with large employers through the CTR city and state mandates. What people said they wanted was greater transparency and the ability to share data, and to learn from the dashboard what is working and what is not working.

Also heard from the public was that folks do not feel safe using transit. While the problem is not unique to Bellevue, it was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. When encouraging people to ride transit, it will be necessary to include safety messaging and to utilize industry best practices. There is a program work element, the How To Ride A Bus campaign, will include safety messaging.

Commissioner Marciante asked if there is any bicycle messaging that promotes commuting by bike. Bradley Brashears allowed that there is. Much was heard from the public and stakeholders about the need for better bicycle infrastructure and protected bike lanes. There are safety messages included in all communications that encourage people to ride their bikes. Commissioner Marciante asked if the messaging could be enhanced to include bicycle safety for all and the notion of sharing the road. Bradley Brashears agreed with the need to have messaging that is clear and effective in helping everyone understand the rules of the road.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if the Bellhop is an example of microtransit and Bradley Brashears said it is and is the only example in Bellevue. Mike Ingram said from time to time there have been other microtransit options offered, but only Bellhop is currently active. Amanda Mansfield added that there are existing microtransit options in some surrounding municipalities, including in Kirkland and Issaquah.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said the company that operates Bellhop is Circuit. The company recently received a major infusion of capital from Visit Bellevue and from Amazon. They will be expanding their services to include a fixed route to help with the morning commute. How to expand the offering is an ongoing conversation.

Commissioner Magill asked if there is any integration with King County around micromobility services such as DART. Bradley Brashears allowed that it would be a good idea to follow up with King County Metro and Sound Transit on the topic. Where there are micromobility options, they ideally should complement the existing transit system.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis asked if attention has been given to other core issues that are causing those who use transit to not feel safe. Bradley Brashears answered that part of the program involves doing that research. Amanda Mansfield added that both King County Metro and Sound Transit have data regarding safety on their vehicles. To the extent that the services are safe, even though people may feel it is unsafe, the focus will be on how to deliver the data to alleviate the fears that might not be reflective of reality.

Commissioner Ting asked if the city works with other cities and their TDM efforts. Amanda Mansfield said the TDM and CTR work is only done with Bellevue companies. Commissioner Ting pointed out that a huge number of cars pass through Bellevue in order to get to the Microsoft main campus and there may be opportunities to coordinate, for example, with the city of Redmond to share best practices and hopefully reduce some of the load of vehicles going through Bellevue. Amanda Mansfield said regular meetings are held with Redmond staff to that end.

Commissioner Ting asked if as a result of meetings with Bellevue companies there is any data indicating which facilities should be looked at for improvements in order to increase non-SOV motorized transportation. Bradley Brashears said the CTR program works with large companies. That work includes biennium surveys that result in a wealth of data. That data will be used for the CTR dashboard and includes mention of facilities and locations that need more attention, including bicycle infrastructure. While lacking data regarding specific locations, there has been information collected by the general need to upgrade and improve transit infrastructure and facilities.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked how big the Bellhop operation is. Kevin McDonald said there are eight vehicles in the fleet, six of which are in service all the time while the other two are being charged. All of the vehicles are electric.

Amanda Mansfield said staff will be revisiting the May 23 Transportation Commission comments and where appropriate they will be incorporated into the program. Once endorsed by the Commission, an informational memo will be sent to the Council. The plan will then be posted online for all to see along with the public comments.

Commissioner Ting encouraged the staff to think about identifying the top three long-term things not currently being done that could be done from a TDM perspective.

Commissioner Marciante said there needs to be a clear understanding of how TDM fits into the vision and goals for the future of the city. It should be clear that the various programs are not siloed but rather work to reinforce each other. Bradley Brashears said Chapter 5 of the plan does talk about alignment with other city plans.

Absent objection, the plan was endorsed by the Commission.

B. Bike Bellevue Transition: Corridor Categories and Implementation Recommendations

Kevin McDonald shared with the Commission a map showing the Bike Bellevue corridors and noted that the Commission had previously made recommendations regarding the Wilburton corridor, the NE 2nd Street corridor, the segment of NE 1st Street/NE 2nd Street, and the Lake Washington Boulevard segment. None of those corridors require repurposing a travel lane.

The Commission's recommendation for the NE 1st Street/NE 2nd Street corridor was to proceed with sharrow lane markings, a speed limit reduction, and other traffic calming measures between Bellevue Way and 100th Avenue NE, and to evaluate the performance of the facility in terms of traffic speed and volume and any collision history, as well as the usage of the corridor by bicycles.

For Corridor 2, NE 12th Street, the Bike Bellevue proposal was to repurpose an eastbound travel lane to provide a two-way cycle track between 108th Avenue NE and 102nd Avenue NE. Also recommended are intersection improvements to improve the transition and the connection between NE 12th Street and the bike facilities on 108th Avenue NE through the Downtown. The proposal would provide continuity to the existing multipurpose path all the way to the Spring District. Photos taken along Corridor 2 were shared with the Commission. It was noted the existing path between 100th Ave NE and 102nd Ave NE would be amended to be more accessible in terms of grade and direction. There are nice sidewalks along NE 12th Street and the proposal would widen them as needed to provide for both bicycle and pedestrian mobility. The multipurpose path would be accompanied by crosswalk improvements at NE 12th Street at Bellevue Way to add width and a little extra buffer. The existing path on NE 12th Street east of Bellevue Way would be widened to 10 to 12 feet while protecting trees and not encroaching on steep slopes.

Commissioner Ting asked if all the right-of-way needed is in hand. Kevin McDonald allowed that a survey has not yet been done, but it does appear that there is only one location for which access rights would need to be acquired. There is a driveway that has a property line extending out to the street, cutting through the public sidewalk.

Commissioner Ting asked about installing raised crosswalks, particularly across roadways that have lower speed limits. Kevin McDonald said raised crosswalks could be considered across

driveways and side streets. With regard to intersections, it would depend on the speed and volumes of traffic on the street.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if the usage of multipurpose pathways by bicycles and pedestrians works itself out without any markings. Kevin McDonald said from the beginning there were concerns about mixing pedestrians and bicycles along the corridor. The existing path along NE 12th Street has been in place for two or three years and there have been no incidents involving it. People seem to negotiate the space well.

Kevin McDonald said the recommendation of the staff with regard to Corridor 2, NE 12th Street, is to pursue the NE 12th Street corridor as a multipurpose path between 108th Avenue NE and 102nd Avenue NE, tying into a planned facility between 102nd Avenue NE and 101st Avenue NE. No travel lane would need to be repurposed, and the result would be a permanent multipurpose land that achieves LTS-1 that extends an existing multipurpose path east of 108th Avenue NE, and connections to a planning multipurpose path between 100th Avenue NE and 102nd Avenue NE.

Commissioner Marciante allowed that the proposal offers a great solution but the time it takes to implement it may not fit with the Bike Bellevue objectives of rapid implementation. Kevin McDonald said one of the limiting factors is coordination with a private developer between 102nd Avenue NE and the wooded area where a project is currently going through the development review process. Having the path installed by 2026 is realistic.

Commissioner Marciante voiced the understanding that there have been some fatal accidents along Corridor 2 and suggested the Commission would benefit from having more information to better understand the real risks and the tradeoffs.

Chair Stash said the city is in great need of an east-west corridor. This proposal connects to existing facilities and the library. It is good that the path will be a permanent structure.

Commissioner Ting asked if approved, would work on the proposal start immediately. Kevin McDonald said the project is already in the design queue as a priority project. The design work will be done in house. Implementation would go forward as quickly as possible given the constraints and coordination with private development.

Commissioner Rebhuhn voiced support for the alternative and appreciation for staff bringing it forward.

Commissioner Marciante urged the staff in sharing the Commission's recommendation with the Council to also outline the tradeoffs involved. Kevin McDonald said staff are working with the Council office to determine when to bring the recommendation to the Council. All information, including tradeoffs, will be shared with the Council.

A motion to recommend approve the multipurpose path on the north side of NE 12th Street with permanent infrastructure for bicycles and pedestrians, in support of Vision Zero, and to be completed as soon as possible, was made by Commissioner Marciante. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rebhuhn and the motion carried unanimously.

Kevin McDonald informed the Commission that on July 11 and September 12 staff will bring to the Commission the recommendations for the remaining Bike Bellevue corridors.

C. Mobility Implementation Plan

Kevin McDonald stated that the MIP plays an important role in the transportation planning process by identifying and prioritizing performance target gaps, preparing a prioritized list of project concepts for each mode, and informing the update of the Transportation Facilities Plan. The gaps, identified through the Environmental Impact Statement for the Comprehensive Plan, were discussed and screened by the Commission on April 11. The next step will be to develop project concepts, and that will be followed by prioritizing those project concepts to inform the TFP. The project performance target gaps are evaluated with respect to the four goals of supporting growth, improving safety, considering equity and improving access and mobility.

Consultant Chris Breiland with Fehr & Peers pointed out that each mode is screened independently. Determining how to prioritize modes between one another is done within the TFP. The initial focus is on identifying which of the vehicle system performance target gaps are most readily advancing the goals outlined in the MIP. The mode-specific approach is a best practice component of a lot of rating programs.

The Commissioners were shown a chart indicating the growth goal scores categorized by Performance Management Area. It was pointed out that the growth score for the vehicle mode was higher for PMA 3 than for PMA 1, in recognition that the dominant mode in PMA 3 is vehicular travel; PMA 3 has fewer other travel options. The access and mobility score is biased for PMA 3 in recognition that the auto mode is more predominant; therefore projects with congestion relief benefits are given more weight. Congestion relief is commonly addressed through widening intersections, but that may make it more difficult for pedestrians to cross the intersections..

There is no equity score for the vehicle mode. It is true that low-income persons use vehicles as their predominant mode, but it is also true that they use the mode the least compared to all other income groups. They are less reliant on vehicle trips and more so on walking and biking. Also, when looking at the length of trips, it can be seen that vehicle trips are fairly long in the city. Accordingly, an equity score would wash out given that most vehicle trips have a pathway through lower income areas.

With regard to the safety score, projects on the high-injury network are scored higher to address potential safety issues. However, projects that widen an intersection or that would result in higher vehicle speeds are given a neutral score in recognition of the fact that absent a countermeasure, wider roads lead to higher speeds, and higher speeds are inherently more hazardous to vulnerable road users. The entire context of each project is taken into account in the scoring.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Rebhuhn, Chris Breiland said the mode most used by low-income persons in Bellevue is driving. However, their modeshare for driving is 12 percentage points lower than for folks who are not in the low-income group. That means they do not drive as much, and they walk, bike or take transit. Transit usage is higher for low-income people than for high-income people. Commissioner Rebhuhn suggested that from an equity standpoint, given that the majority of low-income persons choose to drive or take transit, modes that both use a vehicle lane, repurposing a travel lane for some other purpose would have a negative effect on the equity of low-income persons. Chris Breiland said it is not quite that straightforward. Low-income persons do take transit, walk and bike at higher rates. Low-income persons are proportionately using the benefits of widening a roadway less than higher income persons, therefore weighting equity for congestion relief does not necessarily

equate to benefit; they get less benefit for dollar invested than a high-income person based on the percentage of usage.

Commissioner Ting suggested that with regard to the safety score, the focus should not be on wider roads or higher speeds and should in fact be on whether or not a project reduces or improves safety. It is true that higher speeds are probably less safe, but there could be good reasons for why a wider road might be safer.

On the equity score, Commissioner Ting said there is the notion of theoretical value and actual value to someone who is marginalized, low-income, or in some other disadvantaged category. The focus should be on how they can be helped the most by the dollars spent. Other categories may also benefit, but that should just be viewed as a bonus. Equity needs to be a little more crisp. It is a nuanced idea to say that equity really does not matter for the vehicular mode. When looking at the vehicular mode specifically, there should be an equity consideration.

For access and mobility, comparisons are being made with non-vehicular modes within the scores. It is important to understand that the scores will not be used in a cross-mode manner; there might be a tendency in the future to make that sort of comparison. However, cross-mode statements are being made in the access and mobility score given the focus on non-vehicular mode options. Everything in the category should be kept specific to vehicles since there is not to be any comparison across the modes. Kevin McDonald agreed that in terms of value for the dollar spent a person with a mobility challenge who needs to drive a car might be proportionately more benefited than another person; they may need a car to access a low-wage job, or to get to a park and ride lot to access transit. However, it is not necessarily true that any particular intersection provides a proportionately different value for a commute trip than any other intersection. An equity value cannot be assigned to any particular intersection due to the unknown nature of the origins and destinations of the trips.

Commissioner Ting asked if there is any best practice literature that talks about how vehicular dollars should be spread throughout the city in an equitable fashion. If the decision were made to put all vehicular improvements in the richest part of town, the people living in that part of town would not necessarily benefit; everyone would in fact benefit. Any literature explaining why there should not be an equity score for vehicles would be helpful.

Commissioner Kurz said the explanation of the longer trips is on the right track. Trips do not just start and end in a high-income neighborhood or a low-income neighborhood. If they did, a split could be made. Trips across the city go through a number of neighborhoods and areas, thus it makes sense one group cannot be helped more than another by focusing investments on intersections in one particular area.

Commissioner Magill agreed with the need to see more studies on the subject given all the questions about how to serve the lower income population. The fact that low-income persons use mass transit at higher rates could be part of the study. Those who use light rail probably also will use a bus, and identifying ways to improve the efficiency of buses on the roads makes sense in the spirit of the MIP.

Commissioner Marciante said low-income persons who must rely on their vehicles and live in PMA 3 are more likely to need vehicle network improvements because there are fewer options. There is potentially the opportunity to say that people in low-income communities who live in PMA 3 are going to use an intersection that is close to an equity community to get in and get out. Accordingly, applying an equity score in such cases should be considered in the spirit of

what the city is trying to do with scoring. It just does not sit right to have no equity for vehicles. Boosting the score for projects in low-income areas could help relieve the burdens of low-income communities.

Chair Stash suggested that to some degree, the fact that the growth score for PMA 3 addresses the equity issue, especially given that there are fewer options in PMA 3.

Chris Breiland reminded the Commissioners that what is being scored are the performance target gaps. The focus is not on every intersection in the city, the focus is on identifying which of the gaps the Commission might want to consider advancing in the TFP. The high-scoring tier of intersections are Main Street at 148th Avenue SE and Lakemont Boulevard at Newport Way. Taking into account lower-income areas by allowing an equity score would likely bump the intersections along 148th Avenue SE, possibly displacing the Lakemont Boulevard intersection. The fact is, however, that the PMA 3 area is biased favorably, the scores are all going to be pretty similar. The city has been working to address V/C issues for decades, and the MIP is a way to add some modal balance. There is a TFP project identified for each of the performance target gaps, with the exception of two intersections: 148th Avenue SE at SE 16th Street and 115th Place NE at Northup Way.

Commissioner Magill pointed out that there is subsidized housing within PMA 1 so it cannot be said there is no equity issue in that area. That calls for putting an equity score into specific areas.

Commissioner Ting voiced being open to modeling an equity score along the lines pointed out by Commissioner Marciante. Commissioner Ting also asked if the V/C performance target gap score could include two significant digits rather than just a plus one or plus two. The difference between a nine percent and a ten percent is the difference between a one and a two, and 11 percent has the same plus two score as 19 percent. Chris Breiland said those numbers could certainly be shown, but urged the need to shy away from false precisions. The focus is on prioritizing against broad policy goals. Assigning a number can help do that. There is importance in knowing how much over the V/C gap an intersection is, but the information is given at face value to the Commission and can be used however the Commission wants, but a 10.8 is not much difference from a 9.6.

Chris Breiland said a cluster analysis was done in light of the best practices across the country. The scores tended to bunch up into natural breaks. The high-scoring intersections were those that were only a bit higher than the next mid-tier scoring. Decimal points can be interesting, but not necessarily determinative. The V/C scores are pretty accurate. The performance target gaps are based on degrees of exceedance. The intersections are shown as green or yellow based entirely on their V/C numbers relative to the performance targets adopted for each PMA. The numbers are updated every TFP cycle, and projects on the threshold may be performance target gaps in the future.

Commissioner Kurz asked if the effects construction are accounted for in calculating V/C numbers. Chris Breiland said the transportation department handles the modeling work. There is construction somewhere in the city all the time, and where lanes are missing from a roadway under construction might be captured in the underlying volume counts, but the construction effects themselves are not specifically accounted for.

Turning to the bicycle network, Chris Breiland said the scoring is related only to the bike performance target gaps. Per Commission recommendation, the focus is only on the total

facility gaps where there is no existing facility. The scoring works inversely to the auto scoring. Performance Management Area 3 has a lower score, and thus there is a higher priority for addressing bicycle performance target gaps in PMA 1 where there are more multimodal connections. The equity score ramps up on the degree of concentration of low-income populations. For safety, the focus is on whether or not facilities are on the high-injury network. Bicycle corridor priorities are determined by the pedestrian and bicycle transportation plan, and projects in those corridors get a scoring bump. As expected, the results are more concentrated in PMA 1 given the higher weighting there. For PMA 2 and the few corridors that stretch into PMA 3, the driving factor is equity, being on a high-injury network corridor, and some adjacent community destination, particularly for PMA 3.

Commissioner Ting asked how the MIP takes into account the curb management plan in terms of corridor prioritization. Chris Breiland said the MIP does not look at the curb management plan in terms of specific prioritization. As projects emerge and move toward implementation through both of those programs, they are rectified through later planning phases.

Commissioner Ting asked how the MIP describes prioritization between modes. Chris Breiland said it does not. The TFP has a prescribed way for funding the modes, and how projects are advanced tilts how that works. Kevin McDonald added that the MIP is built on the notion of a layered network, which is applied to the PMAs. That helps to identify the priorities for the different modes.

With regard to the pedestrian network, Chris Breiland said the growth goal score weights PMA 1 more heavily. For the accessibility score, the multimodal parts of the city have a higher weight, but so do destinations in PMA 3. The equity score is similar to that for bicycles, with the higher concentration of low-income residents scoring higher, as well as the high-injury network. The focus is on where sidewalks are missing on both sides of arterial streets. There are fewer pedestrian network gaps in PMA 1 than elsewhere.

Chris Breiland said public engagement through the Engaging Bellevue platform will kick off on June 17 and will run for about three weeks. The public feedback will be shared with the Commission in July and September. The Engaging Bellevue interactive map will show all of the gaps for anyone to comment on.

A motion to extend the meeting by ten minutes was made by Commissioner Marciante. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ting and the motion carried unanimously.

Chris Breiland said project concepts for the high-scoring performance target gaps will be brought before the Commission for review at an upcoming meeting.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 23, 2024

Commissioner Magill pointed out that Commissioner Ting, shown as present for the meeting, was in fact not present.

A motion to approve the minutes as corrected was made by Commissioner Magill. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Marciante and the motion carried unanimously.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

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

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Stash adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.



Secretary to the Transportation Commission

07/11/2024

Date