

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES

February 12, 2026  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Hybrid Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Stash, Vice Chair Magill, Commissioners Keilman, Rebhuhn, Williams

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: None

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Ting, Welcher

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Michael Ingram, Molly Johnson, Kristi Oosterveen, John Murphy, Chris Long, Department of Transportation; Heather Jones, Assistant City Attorney

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting is 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 Commissioners Ting and Welcher.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Vic Bishop, a former Transportation Commission chair and a professional traffic engineer, cautioned against reducing speed limits throughout the city without careful adherence to established traffic engineering principles, particularly the use of the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed standard derived from spot speed surveys. Drawing on prior professional experience conducting speed studies across the state, it is asserted that lowering speed limits significantly below prevailing speeds often results in noncompliance and can even increase actual speeds. Past work in other cities is cited in which raising the posted speed limits led to lower actual driving speeds. The Commission is urged caution regarding proposals to reduce speed limits on major corridors, including West Lake Sammamish Parkway and Bel-Red Road. The recommendation is made to conduct follow-up speed studies after any changes and to allow time for traffic patterns to stabilize before evaluating the outcomes.

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

Chair Stash announced that the Commission's new Council liaison is Councilmember Dave Hamilton.

## 5. STAFF REPORTS

Assistant City Attorney Heather Jones is introduced to provide an overview of required amendments to the Commission's bylaws that stemmed from changes adopted by the City Council in September 2025. It is noted that formal action on the amendments is scheduled for the March meeting

Heather Jones said the first two amendments concern the rules of decorum, specifically extending the maximum exclusion period for individuals who disrupt meetings from 60 days to up to 180 days. The second amendment relative to decorum is needed to clarify the appeals process for exclusions; it establishes a three-day window before a Council meeting to allow adequate time for review of appeal materials. If that window is not available, the appeal is to be scheduled for the subsequent Council meeting.

Heather Jones said the amendment involving term limits restricts service on the city's boards and commissions to two consecutive terms, followed by a required two-year break before serving on another board or commission. The change is intended to broaden opportunities for public participation. The non-substantive revisions include such things as correcting typographical errors and modernizing language, including updating pronouns to more inclusive forms.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked what constitutes disruptive behavior under the revised decorum provisions, and asked how exclusions will be determined. Heather Jones explained that the existing bylaws define disruptive conduct. Decisions regarding exclusion remain at the discretion of the presiding officer, typically in consultation with legal counsel and based on the severity and pattern of behavior.

Commissioner Keilman asked about the pronoun updates and their relevance. Heather Jones said all references to "he/his" and "she/her" are changed to "their." The same change is implemented across all city boards and commissions to align with the Council's broader inclusion goals.

Commissioner Williams sought clarification on whether the revised term limits also apply to elected Councilmembers. Heather Jones explained that the provisions apply to the city's boards and commissions only, not to elected officials.

Vice Chair Magill asked about the reasoning behind the proposed term limits structure and whether it is to be being applied uniformly across all boards and commissions. Heather Jones explained that the primary rationale is to broaden opportunities for community participation and confirmed that the changes were being implemented consistently across all boards and commissions.

Chair Stash asked about the effective date of the proposed amendments. Kevin McDonald said the changes will become effective immediately upon the formal vote to approve the amendments. That will occur at the Commission's next meeting in March.

## 6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

## 7. STUDY SESSION

### A. Safe Speeds Bellevue

Neighborhood Traffic Safety Services Manager John Murphy said the Safe Speeds Bellevue initiative is launched by the City Council in May 2025 to evaluate all posted speed limits of 30 MPH or higher. The effort is intended to address longstanding speed limits that have not been comprehensively reviewed despite significant changes in population, land use, and transportation patterns. The initiative forms a key component of the city's Vision Zero strategy to eliminate serious traffic injuries and fatalities by 2030 using a safe systems approach that emphasizes safe vehicles, safe streets, safe people, and safe speeds.

The data presented by John Murphy indicated that recent years have seen a troubling increase in fatal and serious-injury crashes, with 2025 representing a high point over the past decade. Although higher-speed streets constitute only about one quarter of the city's total street mileage, they account for nearly 90 percent of locations where serious or fatal crashes occur. Reducing speed is central to improving safety outcomes given that both crash likelihood and severity increase with higher travel speeds.

John Murphy said the focus of the approach is on streets with posted speed limits of 30 MPH and higher, which accounts for 25 percent of the city's street network. The concept of setting lower speeds on arterials was tested beginning in June. Four corridors across the city were identified as fitting the criteria. Using a new context-based methodology for setting speed limits, the city reduced the posted speeds on those corridors to either 25 or 30 MPH. After allowing approximately two months for traffic patterns to stabilize, staff measured the vehicle speeds and observed substantial reductions in high-end speeding, defined as travel at 40 MPH or higher. The reductions ranged from 19 to 42 percent across the corridors and were achieved solely through speed limit changes and enhanced signage, without additional police enforcement or roadway design modifications.

Concurrent outreach efforts included two community surveys that generated nearly 500 responses, and engagement at public events such as festivals and farmers markets. The survey results indicated broad recognition among respondents that vehicle speed directly affects safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. The respondents expressed particular concern about speeding near schools and commercial areas and generally supported speed limit reductions when informed of the potential safety benefits, while also acknowledging that speed limits alone will not fully address all safety issues and should be complemented by engineering and enforcement measures.

John Murphy outlined the methodology for determining appropriate speed limits based on two primary factors: conflicts and activity. It was noted that conflicts refers to the frequency of interactions among roadway users, such as the number of driveways, crosswalks, and modal mixing between vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. Activity references the surrounding land uses and the number of persons present. Streets with higher levels of conflict and activity generally warrant lower speed limits, while those with fewer conflicts and lower activity could support higher limits. Applying the framework to the city's arterial network resulted in a draft proposal under which approximately 60 percent of the affected streets will see a 5 MPH reduction; 20 percent will see a 10 MPH reduction; and the remaining 20 percent will remain unchanged. The proposal also eliminates 40 MPH speed limits within the city. Most streets will be set at 25 or 30 MPH, though a smaller portion will see 35 MPH.

Additional considerations include a proposed 25 MPH limit for the Downtown core and a 20 MPH limit in the Old Bellevue area due to its distinct character and activity levels. There has been coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, particularly in regard to shared roadways with the city of Redmond. The coordination is essential to maintaining consistent speed limits across municipal boundaries. There is a clear relationship between posted speed limits and the level of traffic stress experienced by pedestrians and cyclists; lower speeds support safer and more comfortable multimodal travel.

John Murphy said staff anticipates presenting final recommendations to the City Council in June. If approved, implementation will likely occur in phases, beginning in the urban core and on the high-injury corridors before expanding to other areas. The measures planned to reinforce the new speed limits will include increased and larger signage; the potential use of speed safety cameras and radar feedback signs; and roadway design interventions such as lane narrowing, speed cushions, and medians. There will be continued community outreach and feedback collection, which is integral to refining the implementation strategy and ensuring public understanding of the initiative's safety objectives.

Vice Chair Magill sought clarification regarding the metrics used to evaluate the success of speed limit reductions, pointing out that public acceptance appears to depend on the demonstrated safety benefits, even though the presentation emphasized reductions in vehicle speed rather than reductions in fatalities or serious injuries. John Murphy said both types of metrics are relevant but they operate on different timeframes. Speed reductions can be measured immediately following implementation, whereas meaningful changes in collision severity or fatality rates require a longer period of data collection due to the relatively infrequent and geographically dispersed nature of such incidents. Collision frequency and severity will be monitored over time to determine any longer-term outcomes.

Vice Chair Magill asked if the long-term safety data will be needed before making changes permanent, or if reductions in travel speed alone will guide the decisions to proceed. John Murphy explained that speed limit changes are generally made with a high degree of confidence and are not typically reversed, but if speed reductions do not ultimately yield safety improvements, additional interventions such as engineering modifications, enforcement, or technology-based measures will be considered.

Commissioner Keilman raised a concern regarding the use of data and questioned whether more granular, location-specific analysis, such as existing accident patterns, enforcement statistics, and traffic behavior, should guide decisions before implementing speed reductions. Using a major arterial corridor as an example, Commissioner Keilman expressed concern that lower posted speeds might divert traffic into adjacent neighborhoods, potentially increasing congestion or aggressive driving behavior. Also asked was if public input from affected businesses and residents will be gathered prior to implementing any changes. John Murphy acknowledged that the potential of seeing some traffic diversion into neighborhoods is a concern that will be monitored. The data drawn from the pilot corridor showed minimal impact on travel times and significant reductions in high-end speeding behavior. Collision data and enforcement metrics are being considered in related initiatives, such as speed safety camera placement. Police enforcement will go hand in hand with any speed limit changes. Commissioner Keilman emphasized the value of incorporating police enforcement data into the analysis, and John Murphy agreed that such information will be useful.

Chair Stash sought clarification on the data regarding higher-speed streets comprising roughly

a quarter of the street network but accounting for nearly 90 percent of fatal and serious-injury crashes. John Murphy confirmed that figure. Chair Stash requested additional breakdowns, specifically the proportion of serious incidents occurring on roads posted at 35 MPH or higher, adding that such information could inform the prioritization of interventions. John Murphy allowed not having that information in hand.

Chair Stash raised a question about potential bias in the enforcement data, noting that police citations tend to occur in locations where officers can safely conduct stops, which may not necessarily align with the most dangerous areas from a traffic standpoint. John Murphy acknowledged the observation and indicated that it will be conveyed to the police department partners for consideration.

Commissioner Rebhuhn referred to the slide showing the corridors where the trial speed reductions were implemented and asked if the collision data, in addition to the speed data, has been analyzed for those locations. John Murphy explained that the historical collision data has been reviewed to establish baseline conditions, but reiterated that the short time since implementation makes it difficult to draw reliable conclusions about changes in crash frequency. For the corridors with relatively few incidents, meaningful statistical comparisons will require longer observation periods, whereas corridors with higher baseline collision rates might yield clearer trends after approximately a year of data collection.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked about the scope of public outreach, specifically asking if staff have engaged with civic or business organizations. John Murphy said the outreach efforts have included surveys, participation in community events, invitations to neighborhood associations, and briefings to certain community groups. Although not all invited groups requested presentations, there have been numerous interactions at public events. Many have expressed a willingness to continue engagement as the project advances.

Commissioner Rebhuhn referenced the concerns expressed about speeding near schools and remarked on the fact that when school is in session the speed limit is 20 MPH. John Murphy said there is an inherent recognition that children are especially vulnerable. That came through clearly in the survey results. Commissioner Rebhuhn said the primary concern is not limited to the posted school-zone limits themselves, but rather the speeds on adjacent roadways outside those restricted zones where children may still be walking or biking to and from school.

Commissioner Williams referenced the city's Vision Zero framework and said from an engineering perspective, the goal of eliminating serious injuries and fatalities by 2030 is unrealistic. However, taking the safe systems approach and the role of safe speeds helps to reconcile the concerns and provides greater confidence in the overall strategy. Efforts to address the issues should begin with locations already known to have the greatest safety issues based on the historical data. The underlying rationale for lower speeds has become clearer through familiarity with the survivability thresholds and the concept of conflict zones, where higher levels of interaction among roadway users warrant lower speeds, while lower-conflict settings may allow higher speeds.

Building on that framework, Commissioner Williams presented Lakemont Boulevard for discussion. Lakemont Boulevard lies between I-90 and the area near Village Park. The corridor is a long stretch with few intersections. It has varying lane configurations, downhill segments where drivers naturally gain speed, a limited pedestrian presence, and the existence of sidewalks and bike lanes. Based on the perceived low number of intersections and conflicts, the corridor might warrant a higher posted speed. The higher traffic volumes or activity levels

may have influenced its placement within the proposed speed limit category. John Murphy reiterated that the proposal eliminates 40 MPH speed limits as a general policy direction. Survivability risks increase sharply with lower speeds; there is a markedly higher fatality risk for pedestrians struck at 40 MPH compared to 20 MPH. The survivability rationale is a principal reason for reviewing the city's current 40 MPH corridors, including Lakemont Boulevard and several other roads proposed to be reduced to 35 MPH. Commissioner Williams agreed that a reduction from 40 MPH to 35 MPH reflects a deliberate move toward greater survivability rather than a corridor-specific endorsement of higher speeds.

Answering a question asked by Vice Chair Magill, John Murphy confirmed that the downhill section of Lakemont Boulevard is currently posted at 40 MPH. Under the proposal it will be reduced to 35 MPH. The proposal suggests the removal of all 40 MPH postings citywide. Vice Chair Magill asked if the reduction for Lakemont Boulevard is driven primarily by a broad decision to remove 40 MPH designations or by the corridor's specific context. John Murphy said the approach is grounded in a model that has been successfully applied nationally to identify the safest speed for a roadway based on its context. The city has adapted the best practice model to Bellevue conditions and is aiming for a more tailored outcome than a uniform citywide speed limit.

Vice Chair Magill pointed out that Lakemont Boulevard includes a multiuse path that can make bicycling feel safer under certain conditions, and suggested that such features could shape perceived conflicts in ways that might not be obvious from the map alone. John Murphy said a detailed dataset underlies the mapped recommendations, including quantified conflict and activity measures. More review of the specific corridor analysis for Lakemont Boulevard would be needed to explain precisely how the decision point was reached, adding that there is some flexibility within the categorical ranges allowing for limited adjustments to ensure the recommendations fit the local context.

Chair Stash emphasized a desire for a clearer definition of conflicts and how it is applied. Downtown streets with frequent driveways, deliveries, and pedestrian crossings feel materially different from larger arterials with fewer intersections, yet both could appear to fall within the same proposed speed category. Clarification was sought as to how differences in driveway density, crossing frequency, and multimodal conditions were weighed; a clearer explanation of the thresholds will strengthen an understanding of the model's outputs, particularly for corridors that appear near the margins of the categories. John Murphy confirmed that the methodology does use ranges within each attribute and acknowledged that while the system allows for gradations, posted speed limits must ultimately be expressed in standard increments rather than highly granular values. Further review of the underlying data will be necessary to fully explain specific corridor outcomes in more detail.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if staff could point to peer cities similar to Bellevue that have implemented comparable speed limit evaluations, and asked what results they have experienced. John Murphy said Seattle is the most visible nearby example. Seattle adopted a broader approach by setting most arterials at 25 MPH, and then later refining elements of that strategy while increasing sign density. Seattle observed reductions in high-end speeding and, because Seattle implemented its changes in 2016, now has sufficient time-series data to examine collision trends. They report having seen reductions in the number of crashes over time. Bellevue has sought a more context-sensitive and granular methodology over a single uniform limit applied across most arterial streets. Commissioner Rebhuhn expressed concern about comparing Bellevue to Seattle, noting that Seattle's scale and urban conditions differ significantly from Bellevue's. Comparisons to cities such as Kirkland or Redmond might be

more relevant.

Commissioner Keilman noted that at the intersection of Bel-Red Road and 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE there is an existing traffic enforcement camera and asked if such sensors include speeding. John Murphy explained that the existing cameras at certain intersections monitor red-light violations. The approach has not been expanded citywide, but there could be consideration down the line to add locations with automated enforcement.

Kevin McDonald offered to provide the Commissioners with detailed corridor-specific analyses outside of the meeting if additional information is wanted.

Vice Chair Magill revisited the topic of performance metrics and asked how staff balances the anticipated safety benefits of lower speeds against the potential negative impacts such as increased congestion or traffic diversion. John Murphy said signal timing throughout the city plays a significant role in regulating traffic flow. Signal timing will be reviewed and adjusted in coordination with any speed limit changes to maintain efficient movement while supporting reduced speeds.

#### B. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Annual Update (2027-2032)

Program Manager Kristi Oosterveen said the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a six-year planning document. The current update covers the years 2027 through 2032. The TIP draws from the city's functional long-range plans, the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP), and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Each of those long-range plans feed into the priority guidance in the Mobility Implementation Plan, the TFP and ultimately into the Capital Improvement Program for implementation. Projects from those sources, along with other identified initiatives and potential regional partnerships, are included in the TIP, which functions as a comprehensive list of potential transportation projects.

Kristi Oosterveen emphasized that the TIP is unconstrained by funding and therefore serves as a broad wish list of projects that could be implemented if sufficient resources became available within the six-year time period. Inclusion in the TIP is also important for grant applications, as many funding opportunities require projects to be listed in a local TIP. Once completed, the city's TIP is submitted to both the regional Transportation Improvement Program administered by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), and the state Transportation Improvement Program administered by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The TIP update must be adopted by the City Council and submitted to PSRC and WSDOT by June 30 each year.

Section I of the TIP contains projects already included in the adopted 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Program. Section II includes projects from the recently adopted 2026-2045 Transportation Facilities Plan. Section III lists additional unfunded local projects identified through various planning efforts, and Section IV contains regional or externally led projects in which the city may want to participate.

Kristi Oosterveen said the update proposes to add six new projects, and to remove one project, from Section I; the addition of one project and the removal of six projects from Section II; the addition of three projects and the removal of 23 projects from the Section III, along with the transfer of 19 projects from Section III. No changes were proposed for Section IV.

Kristi Oosterveen requested two actions from the Commission: 1) approval of the

recommended project list with stated changes to proceed to a public hearing; and 2) approval of a proposed public hearing date of May 14.

Kristi Oosterveen said staff will return to the Commission in May with the finalized list of projects and conduct a public hearing at that same meeting. The comments offered by the Commission and the public will be taken into consideration ahead of forwarding to the City Council with their recommendation. The City Council is slated to act on the recommendation on June 9 in time to meet the required submission deadline.

Chair Stash noted that a number of Vision Zero-related safety projects had found their way onto the TIP. That appears to have been done in response to a call at the Commission's annual retreat for more transparency in regard to what is going on in other arenas. The issue, however, is that the Commission sees the TIP all the time, and such projects should already have been reflected in the TIP regardless of the level of day-to-day reporting on Vision Zero activities. Kristi Oosterveen explained that some initiatives associated with Vision Zero and related safety efforts had previously been operational rather than capital in nature and therefore may not have appeared in the TIP. Additionally, certain projects were newly included as stand-alone items to improve their visibility as potential grant candidates. The inclusion of more specific project descriptions can strengthen grant applications by allowing reviewers to more easily identify the nature of the proposed work, rather than relying on broader Capital Improvement Program descriptions.

A motion to approve the 2027-2032 TIP project list, and to set a public hearing on May 14, was made by Vice Chair Magill. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and the motion carried unanimously.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 9, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Keilman. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rebhuhn 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 7:53 p.m.