

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

March 25, 2024
6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Malakoutian and Councilmembers Hamilton, Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Stokes and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding. She noted a number of events this week, which began over the weekend, celebrating the Holi Festival of Colors, which marks the end of winter and the welcoming of spring. It is celebrated every year in India and by individuals of Indian descent and others around the world. She invited everyone to the Holi Festival of Colors celebration at Crossroads Park on March 30 sponsored by Beats of Redmond.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll and all Councilmembers were present. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis led the flag salute.

(a) Sexual Assault Awareness Month Proclamation

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian read the proclamation declaring April 2024 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Bellevue and asked everyone to commit to a safer future for children, youths, adults and families in our community.

Andrew Popochock, Assistant Chief of Police, thanked the Council for the proclamation and for raising awareness about sexual assault. He encouraged survivors of sexual assault to contact the Bellevue Police Department (BPD) to access services.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the agenda, amended to add Agenda Item 7(c), direction to staff regarding ethics officer services. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4. Oral Communications

City Clerk Arredondo said the total time for oral communications is for a period not to exceed 30 minutes and topics must relate to City of Bellevue government. Persons speaking to items on the agenda will be called first and if time remains, others will be called. The presiding officer is authorized to give preference to individuals who have not spoken to the Council within the past 60 days or who are speaking to items that will come before the Council in the upcoming 60 days.

- (a) Gina Kavesh, Board Member and Co-Chair for the Cascade Bicycle Club, expressed support for the Bike Bellevue plan to improve safety. She commutes by bike through Bellevue twice per week and also visits downtown Bellevue by car. She said she appreciates the need to balance mobility for both cars and bikes. She asked the Council to implement the full Bike Bellevue plan. She said staff must be empowered to apply best practices, including vehicle travel lane reductions if deemed appropriate for a given corridor. She said it has worked well on 112th Avenue and 108th Avenue.
- (b) Trevor Reed, speaking on behalf of Eastside Urbanism, indicated his strong support for the Bike Bellevue plan. He said the organization submitted a letter signed by more than 190 residents and 14 businesses and organizations in support of the plan. He noted an article in The Seattle Times that stated that 2023 was the deadliest year on Washington's roads since 1990. He said providing better bike infrastructure will encourage people to use bikes instead of cars. He asked the Council to complete the full Bike Bellevue plan and to track the safety and travel impacts on the selected corridors. He said four corridors are buildable with existing funding without removing any travel lanes.
- (c) Robert Shen expressed support for the Bike Bellevue plan and noted that he rides his bike from the Bridle Trails neighborhood to Seattle every day to work. He described an incident on January 29 in which he was hit by a car while riding northbound on a two-way bike lane on 120th Avenue NE. He said it took him weeks before he was able to go back to his normal riding. Mr. Shen said there has been discussion about building bike infrastructure off-street to avoid removing vehicle lanes, and he does not agree with that solution. He said off-street bike lanes take longer to build and are more expensive. He encouraged the City to move forward as quickly as possible to implement the Bike Bellevue plan.
- (d) Carl Vander Hoek, representing Vander Hoek Corporation located in Old Bellevue, asked the City to expand the bike network only if vehicle lane capacity is not removed. He urged the City to avoid negative impacts on emergency response times or on traffic in the growth corridor. He asked the Council to require transparent, consistent and measurable industry-standard data for assessing the impact on each travel lane. If a pilot project is implemented, Mr. Vander Hoek asked staff to ensure that consistent data is measured before and after the project. He said the current information presented by staff combines bi-directional data, which allows the misperception that there is excess vehicle capacity on the entire road. Mr. Vander Hoek suggested that evening peak hour traffic should be

measured separately for each direction. He expressed concern that the proposed one-way street next to Downtown Park is short-sighted. He asked the Council to categorize Corridor 6 (NE 1st/NE 2nd Street) as a corridor no longer under consideration.

- (e) Derek Geldenhuys said he is an avid bike rider and he is concerned about the number of near misses he experiences when riding his bike. He has lived in Bellevue for 40 years and is surprised he has not been hit by a car. He said he is in favor of bike lanes while also keeping vehicle traffic moving in a safe manner.
- (f) Jaskaran Singh said he wanted to comment on the human cost of unpaid rent. As an immigrant to this country 18 years ago, he has worked hard to secure a better future for his family. He is a responsible person who pays taxes and follows the law. He said, however, that the legal system has failed him. He has been trying unsuccessfully for months to collect rent from a tenant. He said there needs to be better protections for small landlords and people should not be allowed to stop paying their rent while continuing to occupy the space.
- (g) Manpreet Kaur said it is unacceptable that their tenant has the right to live for free and a landlord does not have a right to ask for overdue rent. She said their tenant in Bellevue has not paid rent for nearly two years, which seems to be accepted as normal. She asked how this can be considered right and justified. She said this situation is costing them in legal fees while the tenant receives free legal aid. She expressed concern about the limits on conducting background checks for potential tenants. She said they have had 12 court hearings and the next one is April 5. She noted that a number of landlords are suffering from similar situations.
- (h) Mariya Frost, Kemper Development Company, thanked the Council for its continued engagement regarding the Bike Bellevue plan. She thanked Transportation Director Singelakis for pausing this project to seek additional direction from the public and the Council. She expressed concern about the bike plan's removal of vehicle lanes on certain arterials. She asked the Council to direct staff to redesign the Bike Bellevue plan to develop an alternative that will expand the bike network without affecting arterial lanes. She said many of the corridors in the plan should be removed or modified due to the impact on traffic congestion. She said safe and well-connected alternatives do exist. She asked the Council to consider the maps jointly submitted by Kemper Development Company, Wallace Properties, Vander Hoek Corporation and Woosley Properties.
- (i) Warren Halverson, a Bridle Trails resident for more than 50 years, said he generally supports biking. However, he cautioned against taking actions that are financially unsupportable by Bellevue taxpayers. He suggested that staff prioritize the 11 corridors identified in the Bike Bellevue plan and provide the rationale for the prioritization. He requested the collection of data regarding car and bike usage. He expressed concern about unintended consequences related to the reduction in vehicle travel lanes. He reiterated his concern about the project costs.
- (j) Alex Tsimerman urged the Council to allow more time for oral communications.

Mayor Robinson noted that Bellevue is one of the most educated and innovative cities in the country. She said she appreciates that most of the individuals who speak to the Council are able to express their opinions and suggestions in a civil and respectful way.

5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.

6. Report of the City Manager

(a) Medical Benefits for Employees Experiencing On-the-Job Injuries

Acting City Manager Diane Carlson said the City has been reviewing the policy for medical benefits for employees who experience serious on-the-job injuries. She recalled a previous update regarding Officer Bereta who was injured while on duty last year. She said a near-term, two-year solution has been presented to the City's bargaining units, which has been agreed to by the Bellevue Police Officers Guild and most of the other unions.

Ms. Carlson said the City will cover the cost of COBRA extended medical benefits for employees seriously injured on the job and has extended approved leave. The current medical coverage extends for six months. The new policy will cover the cost of COBRA benefits for six more months with an option for an additional six months in an extraordinary situation. She thanked BPOG for working through this issue and for their support of the solution. She said the new policy will apply to Officer Bereta and all employees while the City continues to explore a long-term solution.

(b) Federal Funding Update – Bellevue Requests in Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

Ms. Carlson introduced staff's update regarding federal funding requests by the City.

Genesee Adkins, Chief of External Affairs, said the federal earmarks process is a recurring annual process that returned in 2021. Requests are typically submitted in February or March and the current requests were submitted in early 2023. Ms. Adkins noted that the earmark requests are guided by the Council's adopted federal legislative priorities.

Andrew Popochock, Assistant Chief of Police, said U.S. Representative Suzan DelBene and U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell requested and secured \$963,000 for the purchase of Bellevue Police Department body-worn cameras. He said body worn cameras have been deployed to more than 75 percent of Bellevue officers and the department is on track to complete the deployment by the first week in April. He said the department also deployed new tasers to more than 80 percent of the officers and will complete that deployment to all officers by early April. He said these resources protect officers and provide transparency for the community. He thanked the Council, community and other City departments for their support as the police department researched, selected and deployed the new program.

Sabra Schneider, Director, Information Technology Department, noted that all three of the funded requests reflect Bellevue's commitment to implementing smart technology to better serve

the community. She thanked U.S. Representative Adam Smith and Senator Cantwell for securing \$500,000 in funding for a digital equity pilot project to provide high-speed internet access to certain affordable housing properties. The grant will provide free internet access for subsidized affordable housing in Bellevue. Ms. Schneider thanked the Eastgate Housing Roundtable, the 5G Innovation Labs, T-Mobile, Trident, King County Housing Authority and Plymouth Housing for their partnership in submitting the grant proposal. She thanked the City's Community Development Department staff for their involvement as well.

Fire Chief Jay Hagen said the cities of Bellevue and Redmond will receive \$1 million (\$500,000 for each city) to purchase electric fire engines and charging infrastructure. He thanked Representative DelBene for her request of this funding. He said the new fire engine will be operated from Fire Station 1 and Fire Station 10. He thanked the Council for its support of public safety and environmental responsibility.

7. Council Business and New Initiatives

(a) Council Liaison Recommendations for 2024 Reappointments to Bellevue's Boards and Commissions

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the following reappointments to Bellevue's Boards and Commissions: Monik Martinez, Arts Commission; Eileen Chou, Parks and Community Services Board; Jonny Lu, Planning Commission; and Nik Rebhuhn and Drew Magill, Transportation Commission, all with terms ending on May 31, 2028. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

(b) Council Liaison Recommendation for Appointment to the Parks & Community Services Board

Councilmember Hamilton thanked Parks and Community Services Director Michael Shiosaki, Assistant Director Camron Parker and Board Chair Paul Clark for assisting with the selection process. Mr. Hamilton said there were numerous strong candidates and he encouraged interested individuals to pursue seats on the boards and commissions.

- Councilmember Hamilton moved to appoint Steve Chianglin to the Parks and Community Services Board for a partial term expiring on May 31, 2024 and a full term expiring on May 31, 2028. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

(c) Direction to Staff regarding Ethics Officer Services

- Councilmember Zahn moved to direct staff to proceed with negotiating a contract with Hillary Evans for ethics officer services. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

8. Consent Calendar

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:

- (a) Council Minutes
Minutes of March 4, 2024 Regular Meeting
- (b) Ordinance No. 6783 amending Bellevue City Code Section 2.04.010 to change the day of regular Council meetings from Mondays to Tuesdays and establishing an effective date.
- (c) Resolution No. 10367 authorizing the execution of an amendment to the ProjectCorps Professional Services Agreement to increase spending authority from a not-to-exceed amount of \$1,000,000, plus all applicable taxes, to a not-to-exceed amount of \$2,000,000, plus all applicable taxes.
- (d) Resolution No. 10368 authorizing execution of a labor agreement between the City of Bellevue and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union No. 77 (IBEW), representing Traffic Signals and Electronic Communications employees for a four-year contract period starting January 1, 2023, and expiring December 31, 2026. The executed agreement shall be substantially in the form of the agreement in the Council Library.
- (e) Resolution No. 10369 authorizing an amendment to the City Council rules of procedure regarding the Council meeting day.
- (f) Resolution No. 10370 authorizing the execution of a five-year Software as a Service agreement with e-Builder, Inc., a Trimble Company, for an enterprise capital infrastructure project and portfolio management software solution, in an amount not to exceed \$1,521,089, plus all applicable taxes.
- (g) Resolution No. 10371 authorizing execution of a Design-Build Coordination and Review Agreement (GCB 3852) with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the City of Bellevue (City) for acceptance of design and construction roles and responsibilities and payment of City staff time associated with the I-90 Fish Passage Project at Lewis Creek.
- (h) Resolution No. 10372 authorizing execution of all documents necessary to implement settlement of the lawsuit brought by David Irwin in Irwin v. City of Bellevue et al. (King County Superior Court Case No. 22-2-17838-8 SEA).

9. Public Hearing: None.

10. Study Session

(a) Cascade Water Alliance Water Supply Contract Negotiations Update

City Manager Carlson introduced an update by the Cascade Water Alliance regarding the status of water supply contract negotiations.

Lucy Liu, Director, Utilities Department, said the City buys all of its water supply from Cascade and is the alliance's largest member. Payments to Cascade represent approximately one-third of the operating budget for the water utility. Ms. Liu said Cascade has been renegotiating its water supply contracts with Seattle Public Utilities and with Tacoma Public Utilities and both agencies have presented final proposals. Cascade anticipates that its Board of Directors will provide direction regarding which agency to contract with at its next meeting in April.

Chuck Clarke, Cascade Water Supply Negotiations Lead, recalled that the alliance was created in 1999 and includes seven member agencies serving 380,000 people and 20,000 businesses. The alliance is governed by the Board of Directors comprised of elected officials from member jurisdictions. Mr. Clarke recalled that Cascade acquired the Lake Tapps Reservoir in 2009 for its potential use as a future supply source.

Mr. Clarke noted that he previously served as the Deputy Mayor for the City of Seattle and as the Director of Seattle Public Utilities. He said the cities of Covington and Mercer Island were previously Cascade members. He said Councilmember Hamilton currently serves on the Cascade Board and Councilmember Stokes served as a Board Member for a number of years.

Mr. Clarke said the current contract with Seattle Public Utilities is a "take or pay" contract with payments based on purchasing blocks of water rather than being charged for actual water usage. He said Cascade contracts to purchase 33.3 million gallons of water per day and uses approximately 28 million gallons on average. He said Cascade receives discounted rates compared to other wholesale customers. He said the amount of water available to Cascade begins to decline in 2039 and the contract ends in 2063. Beginning in 2064, Cascade may continue to purchase 5.3 million gallons per day.

Cascade is renegotiating a contract now because the Lake Tapps Reservoir would need to be in service by 2042 when demand is expected to exceed the water supply. The cost of implementing the use of Lake Tapps Reservoir is estimated at approximately \$2 billion for transmission pipes, a treatment plant and other assets. Mr. Clarke said it would take 15-20 years to plan, secure permits and property rights, design and construct the facilities. Extending the contract with Seattle Public Utilities or entering into a new contract with Tacoma Public Utilities will allow the deferment of building out the Lake Tapps water supply. Mr. Clarke said the region has a significant water supply through 2060, even when considering the impacts of climate change.

Ed Cebron, Cascade Chief Economist, described the proposed terms of the Seattle and Tacoma contracts. Seattle Public Utilities' s proposal provides a 10-year guaranteed extension from 2040 to 2049 with rates increasing beginning this year plus a required \$14 million additional payment. There is the potential for two five-year conditional extensions from 2050 to 2054 and from 2055 to 2059. If the first extension conditions are not met, Cascade could extend the contract by paying \$20 million to offset related supply costs. Seattle Public Utilities is willing to offer a 40-year conditional contract for individual Cascade members from 2060 to 2099, which requires an intertie agreement with another utility by 2044 for the additional supply and a 25-percent rate premium to offset the new supply.

Tacoma Public Utilities' s proposal offers a 25-year guaranteed contract from 2040 to 2064 with rates that are 20 percent below the cost of Seattle water and payments based largely on water used versus the current block contract approach.

Mr. Cebron said Cascade's members are not currently connected to Tacoma's system. Two pipe segments would be needed: 1) Phase 1 provides central and north transmission pipes to accept Tacoma water, to be used later for Lake Tapps, and 2) Phase 2 is a south transmission pipe to connect to Lake Tapps and the treatment plant. Construction would occur in the 2030s. No new infrastructure is needed for the Seattle option. However, by the end of the current contract, Cascade would be faced with building out the Lake Tapps facilities. The 40-year option with Seattle potentially avoids building out Lake Tapps.

Mr. Cebron said one advantage of the Tacoma option is that construction could be phased through the 2030s. Then when Lake Tapps is needed, the south transmission pipe and treatment plant could be completed.

Mr. Cebron said Cascade is beginning to consider pursuing options that could further reduce the initial capital needs, and perhaps long-term needs, with the Tacoma option. That would involve negotiating terms with Seattle for them to wheel water to Cascade members as opposed to Cascade building the north transmission pipe reflected in the Tacoma option.

The Seattle 10-year guaranteed contract extension saves Cascade \$53 million when compared to building out Lake Tapps by 2042. With two five-year extensions, the savings increases to \$132 million. The 40-year option for conditional contracts assumes Lake Tapps is not developed and reflects a savings of \$907 million. The Tacoma proposal for a 25-year contract reflects a savings of \$299 million when compared to building out Lake Tapps by 2042. Mr. Cebron presented a graph comparing rates under the different options. However, he said rates will be smoothed out to the extent possible for all of the options.

Mr. Cebron said Seattle's 40-year option is the lowest cost option but has the lowest probability of occurring due to the required intertie agreement. It would be offered to individual members only and not to Cascade. If members decide to opt out of Cascade's alliance, the remaining members will still be legally responsible for maintaining the Lake Tapps Reservoir unless it is sold or transferred. Members who leave would be required to provide Cascade with their allocable share of costs (e.g., bond and contract obligations, fixed operating costs). Bellevue's

current estimated buyout cost is \$350 million and buyout amounts are expected to decline over time. The actual buyout amounts will be set by the Cascade Board.

Mr. Cebon said Cascade staff's preliminary recommendation is to contract with Tacoma Public Utilities for a number of benefits: 1) longer supply certainty and flexibility to adapt to changes in supply and demand, 2) more cost-effective than 10-year extension and conditional five-year extensions with Seattle Public Utilities, 3) lower construction risk and more time to adapt to changing circumstances, and 4) opportunity for regionalism and improved resiliency. He said the Tacoma option includes the possibility for limiting construction to the central pipeline. He noted that Lake Tapps would become an important part of the regional system.

Mr. Clarke said all of the other member cities have received this briefing. The Cascade Board plans to make a decision in April regarding whether to continue to negotiate with Seattle or Tacoma, which would extend possibly through September. The Board anticipates authorizing the final contract in October or November 2024.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Mr. Clarke said Cascade was seeking input regarding the options. Councilmember Hamilton will ultimately vote on the options as a Cascade Board Member.

Councilmember Hamilton said he and Councilmember Stokes have been working with staff to study the impacts of the options. Mr. Hamilton recommended continuing negotiations with Tacoma unless Seattle comes back with a revised offer. Mr. Clarke noted that Seattle invited Cascade to offer another counter-proposal, which they did. However, he has not heard back from Seattle since that time.

Responding to Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Cebon said that in the near term with the current contract, Cascade would need to finance Lake Tapps during the 2030s. He expressed concern about Cascade's ability to secure financing for a \$2 billion project. The Seattle scenarios have cost profiles consistent with inflation over the next 10 years. However, there is a tripling in water rates. The Tacoma proposal reflects the lowest cost profile in the near term, primarily because Cascade receives the cost advantage of the existing Seattle contract and has lower costs to connect to Tacoma. The Tacoma option provides moderate rates in the near term and a rate increase during the 2030s.

Councilmember Hamilton asked about the savings reflected in the 40-year option for individual cities contracting with Seattle. Mr. Cebon said the two largest costs are the cost of wholesale water and infrastructure and operations costs. Most of the scenarios involve building the \$2 billion Lake Tapps project. In the meantime, Cascade is paying wholesale rates to allow the deferment of that project. Under Seattle's 40-year option, the Lake Tapps project is avoided. Mr. Cebon said the question of whether there is a permanent supply relationship is critical to the decision.

In further response to Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Cebon said that for the remainder of the 2020s, Cascade's rates will likely increase above Cascade's inflation assumption of three percent. Inflation is likely to range from three percent to four percent. Mr. Cebon noted there is greater

rate pressure in the near term for the Seattle contract. Councilmember Hamilton expressed an interest in seeing the expected rate impacts over time for the options.

Councilmember Stokes said he served on the Cascade Board for more than 10 years and a number of options have been identified and discussed. He noted that Tacoma Public Utilities's system is located closer to Lake Tapps. He said Tacoma has a good system and good water. He suggested that working with Tacoma will benefit all parties. He thanked Cascade staff and the members cities for their work.

Councilmember Lee recalled the formation of Cascade based on the recognition of the need for Bellevue and other cities to have their own water supply. He said water conservation has increased significantly and the water supply is expected to be sufficient for several decades. He said that while we do not need Lake Tapps yet, it has been a good insurance policy for Cascade's members.

Responding to Mr. Lee, Ms. Liu said Bellevue staff concurs with Cascade's preliminary recommendation to continue to negotiate with Tacoma Public Utilities because it better aligns with City policies stating that the drinking water supply should be reliable, cost effective, secure, high quality and environmentally responsible.

Mr. Cebron said Cascade's purchase of Lake Tapps provided leverage at the bargaining table. If Cascade connects to Tacoma's system, Cascade will ultimately have multiple water supplies, including at Lake Tapps.

Councilmember Lee thanked staff and expressed support for pursuing continued negotiations with Tacoma.

Councilmember Zahn said the City always wants to center the best interests of ratepayers. She concurred with the recommendation to continue negotiations with Tacoma and highlighted the estimated savings of \$299 million. She said she likes that the proposal is based on actual water usage instead of purchasing blocks of water. She agrees with keeping Lake Tapps as an insurance policy. However, avoiding that project's cost is an important goal as well. Mr. Cebron noted that contracting with Tacoma Public Utilities provides the benefit of that agency potentially sharing in the costs of developing the Lake Tapps water supply in the future.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Mr. Cebron said Cascade is currently updating its water supply and demand forecast.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian asked whether there has been an analysis of the environmental impacts related to the construction of the transmission lines needed for the Tacoma option.

Mr. Cebron said there was a limited analysis when the pipelines were integrated into Cascade's transmission and system plans. After the Board provides guidance, additional environmental review will occur.

Mr. Clarke said Cascade already owns approximately 90 percent of the easements and rights-of-way along the central transmission line route. Other parcels are owned by the City of Seattle and King County. Mr. Clarke said the best solution for the region in the long run is to need only the central pipeline and to connect to Seattle's supply line to use existing infrastructure.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the briefing and noted that he also served on the Cascade Board. He said he is generally favorable toward the Tacoma option. He wondered about Seattle's hesitancy to reach a regional solution, especially given that Seattle has indicated it might be willing to help Cascade with the north transmission line for the Tacoma option.

Mr. Cebron said Cascade currently pays Seattle approximately \$25 million annually for water. By 2040 the amount will be closer to \$40 million per year and then it will go away. Any supply capacity for Seattle at that time will represent lost revenue that Seattle and its wholesale customers will need to bear. Mr. Cebron said that if an attractive wheeling arrangement could be established, it would offset some of that revenue loss and provide the potential for regionalization. He agreed with Councilmember Nieuwenhuis that Seattle's resistance to interties to other systems is somewhat perplexing. Mr. Clarke noted that Seattle is more willing to engage with individual cities and water districts in that regard than with Cascade.

In further response to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Cebron said a primary unknown factor is climate change and future impacts on the water supply. Mr. Cebron said both of Seattle's watersheds rely heavily on snowpack for storage and the reservoirs are relatively small. Tacoma's system is more reliant on rainfall and they have more active storage relative to their demand. However, storage is still a constraint. Mr. Cebron said Lake Tapps is an insurance policy for a while. However, it could become a tool for mitigating the impacts of climate change. Mr. Clarke said water is currently a buyer's market with Tacoma, which has plentiful water it is willing to sell at a reasonable price.

Mayor Robinson said it is interesting that in 20 years Bellevue's population grew while the region's water consumption has decreased during that time. She encouraged continued conservation and suggested a new billing system that reflects how users can affect their own water rates.

Mr. Clarke said that population growth in the Seattle service area has been 35-40 percent since 1990, and their water usage has dropped 35 percent. He noted that agencies plan for peak water usage and if a system can reduce that peak, it delays the need for more infrastructure investments.

Mayor Robinson observed that the benefits of the Tacoma option are the cost savings and paying for actual water usage. She said it seems like Bellevue will have better bargaining power under that option and that there will be better seismic resiliency. Mr. Clarke said a regionalized system with interties provides the best resiliency in natural disasters. He said if there is a big enough earthquake, some residents could be without water for up to six weeks. Mr. Cebron noted that new transmission lines would be built to more robust seismic standards.

At 8:02 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:12 p.m.

(b) Bike Bellevue Program Update

City Manager Carlson said the Bike Bellevue plan envisions the implementation of low-cost, rapid-build bicycle facilities on existing streets in the Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed areas. In March 2023, the Council directed staff to work with the Transportation Commission to prepare and submit implementation recommendations for the Bike Bellevue Program. Staff has provided technical analysis for the commission and conducted community outreach over the past year. The purpose of tonight's agenda discussion is to update the Council and community about the public input and to seek Council consideration to provide further direction and guidance to the Transportation Commission and staff.

Andrew Singelakis, Director, Transportation Department, recalled that when the draft concept guide for the Bike Bellevue program was released, it was apparent that many of the 11 corridors involved the removal of vehicle travel lanes for bike lanes. He said this generated significant public interest with people communicating both support for and opposition to that impact. Given the feedback, staff felt it was appropriate to bring the plan back to the Council for an update and further direction. Mr. Singelakis said the Transportation Commission has not yet prioritized the projects.

Paula Stevens, Assistant Director, Transportation Department, said pedestrian and bicycle transportation plans were adopted in 1993, 1999 and 2009. The 2009 plan consolidated disparate plans, policies and studies into a single document that identified and ranked (e.g., high, medium and low priority) more than 400 potential projects throughout Bellevue. In 2015, the Council directed staff to begin implementing projects. In 2016, the Transportation Commission developed the Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program, which was a framework for finding ways to creatively implement bike infrastructure more rapidly instead of relying only on capital projects and programming. The neighborhood safety, connectivity and congestion levy approved by voters in 2016 provided a portion of funding for bike infrastructure, which implemented approximately 59 miles of infrastructure throughout the community.

From 2017 to 2019, the Transportation Commission, with the Council's direction, implemented two projects that used existing infrastructure to provide rapid implementation facilities (108th Avenue NE and Main Street). In 2022, the Council increased funding for bike infrastructure to \$4.5 million. The Council initiated the Bike Bellevue program in March 2023.

Ms. Stevens said the Mobility Implementation Plan was adopted on April 18, 2022. That plan addresses the concept of the level of traffic stress, which is intended to better ensure that the bicycle facilities to be implemented are safer, more connected and more likely to be used by people of all ages and abilities. The development of the 2023 Vision Zero Action Plan also informs the City's approach to bike infrastructure.

Ms. Stevens said there is \$4.5 million in the 2023-2029 Capital Investment Program (CIP) for the Bike Bellevue plan (CIP Project PW-W/B-85, Growth Corridor High Comfort Bicycle Network Implementation). The CIP project description reflects the goal of implementing three priority projects by 2024.

On March 27, 2023, the Council approved the Bike Bellevue principles, affirmed the project area and corridors, and directed the Transportation Commission to prepare and provide a recommendation to the Transportation Director for implementation. Ms. Stevens presented a map of the Bike Bellevue project areas and corridors.

Ms. Stevens highlighted the preamble to the program principles: The City Council envisions a well-connected bicycle network for Bellevue that is safe, enhances livability, supports economic vitality, and equitably serves the mobility needs of people of all ages and abilities. The eight principles address safety, connectivity, comfort, data-informed evaluation of impacts on modes of travel, coordination with land use planning, partnerships, community engagement and equity.

The Transportation Commission has held seven meetings to discuss the Bike Bellevue program since May 2023. Areas of focus included listening to community input, reviewing and refining the Draft Design Concepts Guide, and staff's ongoing refinement of the draft public engagement plan with the Transportation Commission. A special meeting was held on December 14 to focus on technical questions and issues and a public hearing was held later that night during the commission's regular meeting, with 59 people commenting on the Bike Bellevue initiative.

Ms. Stevens said staff received 1,023 emails from 856 contacts through February 2024. Of those, 515 expressed support for the plan and 608 did not support the plan. There were 32 requests for additional information. In addition, 737 form letters were received with 231 letters of support, 375 letters that do not support the plan and 131 letters expressing both support and concerns. Themes identified through the public feedback include access and mobility, City priorities and investments, community health, data analysis, economy, safety and vehicle capacity/efficiency.

Ms. Stevens said staff used the Konveio online comment tool for the first time, which was open for public comment for two months. Through that tool, 214 people contributed 1,719 unique comments focusing on access and mobility, vehicle/bike conflict points, protections and buffer treatments, roadway design and alignment, and general comments in support or opposition to the Bike Bellevue program.

Ms. Stevens said staff is seeking Council direction to the Transportation Commission to develop a recommendation for each proposed corridor consistent with one of the following categories for each corridor: a) corridors that would not require vehicle travel lane repurposing that could be implemented as soon as possible, b) corridors that would repurpose a travel lane and would first be evaluated as a trial or pilot project, using criteria to be developed by the Transportation Commission, c) corridors that would be implemented as permanent bicycle infrastructure rather than with a rapid implementation design, d) corridors to be deferred and incorporated into the next update of the Transportation Facilities Plan, and e) corridors that would no longer be considered.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the presentation.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis, liaison to the Transportation Commission, thanked commissioners for all of the time they have spent discussing the Bike Bellevue plan and listening to the

community. He thanked the public for their involvement and interest in the plan. He noted that he, Councilmember Zahn and others on the Council have participated in bike rides with community members to help understand their priorities and concerns. He believes that despite differences of opinion on a number of issues, there is general support for bike facilities in Bellevue.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said the Bike Bellevue funding currently available covers approximately one-quarter of the overall plan. He noted Spring Boulevard as a priority corridor for him. He said the primary cause of opposition to the plan is the repurposing of six miles of arterial road lanes for bike lanes. He said that is a legitimate concern, especially when considering that one of the Comprehensive Plan policies is to “aggressively plan, manage and expand transportation investments to reduce congestion.”

Mr. Nieuwenhuis said that, as a lifelong cyclist, he wants to see more bike facilities in the community. However, he expressed concern about whether repurposing vehicle lanes meets the City’s goal of providing a safe and comfortable experience for bike riders. He expressed concern about traffic speeds on certain arterials, especially on BelRed Road. He said paint and posts are not enough to protect cyclists.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis said first responders and representatives of Overlake Hospital have opined that bike lanes should not reduce travel lanes affecting ambulance, police and fire department responses. While aspects of the Bike Bellevue program might meet short-term goals, Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he did not believe it meets the City’s long-term goal of providing safe and comfortable bike lanes for all ages and abilities.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he appreciated the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce’s survey which indicated that 70 percent of respondents oppose reducing six miles of arterial road lanes in the Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed areas and 72 percent of respondents oppose replacing road lanes with bike lanes.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis suggested moving forward immediately with one or more of the four corridors that do not require any removal of vehicle/arterial lanes. He suggested expanding the Bike Bellevue network, focusing on completing and making connections to the regional bike corridors, and directing the Transportation Commission and staff to develop a recommendation for each Bike Bellevue corridor. He suggested eliminating the consideration of corridors that would repurpose a vehicle travel lane [category (b) from presentation]. Mr. Nieuwenhuis said he would like to see the completion of the regional bike network established in the 2009 pedestrian and bike plan.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian said he appreciated all of the community and stakeholder engagement in this planning effort. He said he strongly supports the Bike Bellevue program to enhance safety and connectivity. He recommended that the Council not send category (a) corridors that would not require travel lane repurposing back to the Transportation Commission for further consideration. He suggested moving forward now to implement those corridor improvements.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Malakoutian, Mr. Singelakis said those corridors could be completed with approximately \$3.6 million. Mr. Malakoutian suggested moving those projects forward and sending the remaining corridors back to the Transportation Commission for consideration. He expressed support for finding a creative design solution that provides safe, protected bike lanes without the need to repurpose travel lanes, which he sees as a last resort. Mr. Malakoutian expressed a sense of urgency for moving forward with bike projects.

Mayor Robinson said she appreciated the Transportation Commission for their time and thoughtful review. She said she was in a neighboring community that morning that does not prioritize bike routes, including no bike lanes on a very busy main road. And she observed children walking to school along the shoulder of a road in relatively dangerous conditions. She said she is proud that Bellevue is choosing to make investments to enhance pedestrian and bike safety.

Ms. Robinson said Bellevue needs complete bike routes and her priority is connecting the gaps in the existing network. She would like to ask the Transportation Commission to analyze how to make those final connections for multiple safe north-south and east-west routes. She listed her priorities: 1) 100th Avenue, 2) 12th Street to 100th Avenue, 3) NE Spring Boulevard, 4) 136th Avenue to the SR 520 trail, 5) SE 8th Street, 6) NE 2nd Street heading west, 7) Lost Meadow Trail near the botanical garden, and 8) a safe, direct route between the Downtown and Crossroads areas.

Ms. Robinson praised the bike corridor along Main Street and where Amazon just constructed a building. She said the developer completed that project without removing a car lane. She wondered if that would be a possible solution on Bel-Red Road.

Mr. Singelakis said there would need to be a mapping for development review to occur. He said it would take a long time to do that but it could be done. Ms. Stevens said the first thing to do would be to ensure that there is an approved route on a map to provide direction and certainty to enable the City to pursue infrastructure support, funding and back-of-curb implementation from developers. That does not currently exist along Bel-Red Road.

Mayor Robinson noted four nods from Councilmembers indicating an interest in that scenario. Ms. Robinson requested guidance from staff about how to proceed with that project. In the meantime, she would like to focus on a good route. She noted, however, there is still the need for a route to the Crossroads area.

Mr. Singelakis said the City received a number of comments and proposals. He said the project suggested by Mayor Robinson could fall under category (d), corridors to be incorporated into the next Transportation Facilities Plan update.

Councilmember Hamilton thanked staff for all of the briefings and communications regarding the Bike Bellevue program. He thanked Mr. Singelakis and Ms. Stevens for their leadership and for keeping the initiative on track, and he thanked the community for their input and proposals. He said he appreciated the guiding principles for the Transportation Commission.

Councilmember Hamilton suggested sending the topic back to the commission for more in-depth analysis and community engagement, as well as an update to the implementation plan.

Mr. Hamilton said that as the matter goes back to the commission, he would like to see a focus on the evaluation principle. He would like to look at other transportation uses and support for all travel modes. As a part of the evaluation process, he wants to be sure the City is careful with the data. He said there has been an effort in the past to reframe the data, which he thinks was a mistake. He said asking the Transportation Commission to do more work to ensure the City has reliable data is important. He encouraged expanding the community engagement approach. He said there has been a wide range of stakeholders. However, he said there has been preferential treatment for a subset of stakeholders. He suggested that sending the matter back to the commission will correct that lapse.

Mr. Hamilton said he would like to see a plan that does not involve removing any travel lanes. He suggested moving forward with current funding while continuing to seek additional funding for project implementation. He would like to prioritize funding for the completion of Spring Boulevard by 2030. He said there is no harm in trying pilot projects to collect data and analyze the effectiveness and impacts. He suggested continuing to look at the Eastrail and the Grand Connection crossing as well.

Councilmember Hamilton asked about the next steps in the process after the Transportation Commission completes additional review. Mr. Singelakis said the results of the commission's work would go back to him, the transportation director. He would always discuss the next steps with the Council, however.

Councilmember Lee said there is universal support for enhanced bike infrastructure and the Council supported the rapid implementation initiative. He said safety is an important consideration. He concurred with Mayor Robinson about the need for providing missing connections in the bike network. However, Mr. Lee said there are problems to address with roadways as well. He expressed support for requesting additional review by the Transportation Commission. He expressed concern about any projects that could threaten the safety of cyclists or drivers.

Mr. Lee suggested using data to identify appropriate solutions. He is reluctant to support removing vehicle lanes for the benefit of cyclists. He would like to direct the Transportation Commission to ensure that enhancing travel for cars and bikes does not take anything away from either mode. He said he is not in favor of pilot projects because they could be creating dangerous conditions, even if temporary. He said safety is a key criteria for projects.

Mayor Robinson concurred with Mr. Lee that any consideration of removing vehicle lanes should be based on accurate and relevant data.

Councilmember Stokes said the community engagement around the Bike Bellevue plan has been productive and helpful. He suggested looking for successful projects and approaches in other jurisdictions. He said he appreciated the work to date and spoke in favor of sending the matter back to the Transportation Commission for further review. Councilmember Stokes

acknowledged that more funding will be necessary. However, there are projects that can be accomplished with the current \$4.5 million available. Mr. Stokes said he believes that everyone has the same general goals and will be able to work together. He said he is excited to move forward and concurs with Councilmember Lee about the importance of safety.

Councilmember Zahn thanked everyone for their comments. She recalled that the Council committed to the Vision Zero program eight years ago and staff developed the high-injury network map to identify vulnerable locations. In 2020, the City committed to a safe system approach, which has involved pursuing U.S. Department of Transportation grants for road safety projects. She said the recent \$2.7 million grant references the high-injury network map and the bike network. She asked how the acceptance of that grant impacts the selection and implementation of projects. She said there have been bike projects on three roads where a vehicle lane was repurposed in certain segments. She asked whether there have been impacts on travel times for cars. She asked about the acceptable delay for enhancing safety.

Ms. Zahn said she liked the Deputy Mayor's comment about moving forward as quickly as possible for corridors that do not require the repurposing of lanes. Ms. Zahn said that if the City is collecting data but the corridor is not actually connected and safe, the data is meaningless. She encouraged an emphasis on safe, comfortable and connected routes to increase the likelihood that people will use the bike lanes. She said that adding improvements through the Spring District and in adjacent areas is a long-term solution.

Ms. Zahn stated her understanding that bike projects should focus on rapid implementation for the high-injury network. She suggested that the City should be willing to try pilot projects to determine their effectiveness and safety. She expressed concern about removing any corridors in the high-injury network from the Bike Bellevue program. Ms. Zahn expressed an interest in feedback from the police and fire departments about potential route and impacts.

Mr. Singelakis said it is important to consider the more costly permanent infrastructure needed for the long term, such as Spring Boulevard.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Malakoutian, Mr. Singelakis confirmed that the City has received suggestions from the community for alternative routes. Mr. Singelakis said the Transportation Commission is a good venue for evaluating some of those alternatives. Mr. Malakoutian said the Council received an email from Mariya Frost that shows a nice map connecting everything that staff has talked about.

Ms. Stevens said staff is aware of the map and has met with Ms. Frost and Kevin Wallace to discuss their ideas. She said staff has not had the opportunity for in-depth analysis, however. Ms. Stevens confirmed that this is information staff would like the Transportation Commission to review. She said some of the projects on the map were already under review by staff. They represent permanent infrastructure, do not remove travel lanes and are not candidates for rapid implementation. Ms. Stevens said their plan focuses on preserving travel lanes through long-term projects over low-cost rapid implementation.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian thanked Ms. Frost, Mr. Wallace and other stakeholders for taking the time to develop alternative proposals.

Mayor Robinson recapped what she is hearing from the discussion: 1) prioritization of corridors that do not repurpose car lanes [category (a)], 2) collecting and analyzing data before considering corridors that would repurpose a travel lane [category (b)], and 3) not removing any corridors [category (e)] but consider moving them to different plans or programs. Ms. Stevens said it would be important to provide the rationale for why a corridor should be removed from consideration.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis said he appreciated the repeated requests for good data. He suggested that the analysis of capacity throughput data should be based on peak travel hours. Mr. Singelakis and Ms. Stevens agreed.

→ Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to amend principle 4 to read: Use a data-informed approach to evaluate impacts to all modes of travel and to design the program to maximize the mobility of all modes through improvements to the bike network that do not remove general purpose vehicular lanes. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

Mayor Robinson said she was not in favor of prohibiting the removal of any car lanes in all corridors. Councilmember Zahn concurred.

Councilmember Lee encouraged having the Transportation Commission review the stakeholders' map that does not remove any travel lanes. Mr. Singelakis confirmed that staff and the Transportation Commission will conduct further analysis of their proposal.

Deputy Mayor Malakoutian emphasized that removing car lanes should absolutely be a last resort. If the stakeholders' plan is feasible, he would support moving forward with it. However, he concurred with Mayor Robinson and Councilmember Zahn that he does not want to prohibit, at this point, the consideration of routes that remove car lanes.

Councilmember Hamilton suggested discontinuing discussion about removing travel lanes as it is an impediment to moving forward. He suggested asking the Transportation Commission to conduct further review and to determine the best projects for using the first \$4.5 million currently available. He would prefer to not revise the principles at this time.

Councilmember Stokes said bike infrastructure has been provided in a number of communities nationwide in a very successful way.

→ The motion failed by a vote of 2-5, with Councilmember Lee and Councilmember Nieuwenhuis in favor.

Mayor Robinson suggested adding category (f) to reflect an emphasis on creating connected routes. Councilmember Zahn suggested adding that to category (a).

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to add language emphasizing the goal of creating connected routes through the Bike Bellevue program. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

Councilmember Lee questioned the meaning of “connects.” Mayor Robinson suggested that the experts would determine which projects contribute to a fully connected network.

- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Mayor Robinson suggested adding language regarding the use of data to inform decisions to category (b), corridors that would repurpose a travel lane.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis suggested adding to (b) that travel lanes would be repurposed only as a last resort. Deputy Mayor Malakoutian concurred, noting that would provide important direction for the Transportation Commission.

- Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to add language to category (b) indicating that if a project will repurpose a travel lane, it will first be evaluated as a trial or demonstration project using available, accurate data and criteria to be developed by the Transportation Commission. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

- Councilmember Nieuwenhuis moved to add language to category (b) indicating that travel lanes will be repurposed only as a last resort. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Mayor Robinson suggested revising category (e), corridors that would no longer be considered, to include the requirement for providing the rationale for removing a corridor from consideration.

- Councilmember Stokes moved to revise category (e), corridors that would no longer be considered, to include the requirement for providing the rationale for removing a corridor from consideration. Deputy Mayor Malakoutian seconded the motion.

Councilmember Zahn said she wants to be sure that corridors identified in the high-injury network are not removed from consideration. Mayor Robinson suggested offering that as a separate motion.

- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

- Councilmember Zahn moved to add category (g), prioritizing high-injury network corridors consistent with the goals of the Vision Zero program. Deputy Mayor Malakoutian seconded the motion.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. Singelakis said the Bike Bellevue plan is essentially based on improving the high-injury network. Ms. Stevens confirmed that most of the corridors in the plan are the high-injury network corridors, with some isolated exceptions.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Referring to category (a), Deputy Mayor Malakoutian asked whether recommendations for corridor projects that would not require travel lane repurposing would be forwarded to the Transportation Director for implementation or to the Council for additional consideration. Mr. Singelakis said the current language implies the direction would go directly to staff.

Responding to Mayor Robinson, Ms. Stevens suggested the Council could direct the Transportation Commission to work with staff to determine the projects, keeping in mind that the Council would like to move those projects forward as quickly as possible.

Councilmember Hamilton expressed concern about reducing the \$4.5 million available by allowing certain projects to go directly to staff for implementation. He said that could effectively eliminate certain corridors for consideration.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Malakoutian, Mr. Singelakis said two corridors that could be implemented without removing travel lanes are Lake Washington Boulevard and 100th Avenue.

Mayor Robinson suggested that the Council's direction to create connected routes covers those issues and Councilmembers concurred.

Councilmember Zahn encouraged the Council to consider more funding for the Bike Bellevue plan during this year's budget process.

Councilmember Hamilton said he would like to see a recommendation from the Transportation Commission for a connected network that does not remove travel lanes.

Mayor Robinson said the Council has already agreed to prioritize projects that do not repurpose travel lanes.

→ Deputy Mayor Malakoutian moved to direct the Transportation Commission to develop a recommendation for each Bike Bellevue corridor consistent with the categories described during the staff presentation and through votes on the floor tonight. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

11. Land Use Reports: None.

12. Other Ordinances, Resolution and Motions: None.

13. Written Reports: None.
14. Unfinished Business: None.
15. New Business: None.
16. Executive Session: None.
17. Adjournment

Mayor Robinson announced that the April 1 regular meeting is cancelled and a special meeting for a budget workshop will be held on April 8. Beginning on April 16, the Council will hold its regular meetings on the first four Tuesday nights of each month.

At 9:46 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

/kaw