

## CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

### Bike Bellevue Project Principles

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## DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

### DIRECTION

This evening staff will seek Council approval on the Bike Bellevue project principles and direction to work with the Transportation Commission to prepare a recommendation for implementation.

## RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Bike Bellevue project principles and direct staff to work with the Transportation Commission to prepare a recommendation for implementation.

## BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

### Background

Bellevue's 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan commits to implementing complete continuous, cross-city, bicycle priority corridors. The following timeline reflects actions on bikeway projects after adoption of the 2009 Plan:

- February 9, 2015 – Council approved [Implementation Principles](#) that direct the Transportation Commission and staff to work with community stakeholders to meet or exceed the City's 2019 project completion targets identified in the 2009 Plan.
- April 28, 2016 – The Transportation Commission endorsed the [Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program](#) (BRIP) which includes proposed citywide investments that are: (i) *Connected*, prioritizing a network that 'fills the gaps' in lieu of piece-meal implementation; (ii) *Protected*, promoting physically separated facilities to minimize conflicts between roadway users where possible; (iii) *Rapid*, leveraging early-win opportunities that can quickly advance project delivery.
- November 8, 2016 – Bellevue voters approved the 20-year Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion Levy. Bicycle network improvements are one of the six programs funded by the levy.
- During 2017 and 2019 – Staff worked with the Transportation Commission and community in a discussion about how to make downtown a safe, comfortable, and attractive place for people to bike. Both the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast Bikeway and the Main Street Bikeway were implemented through the BRIP program.

- December 14, 2020 –Council adopted a [2021-2027 Capital Investment Program](#) (CIP) plan that included \$1.5 million for Growth Corridor High Comfort Bicycle Network Implementation (CIP #PW-W/B-85) in the Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed neighborhoods.
- April 18, 2022 –Council adopted the [Mobility Implementation Plan](#), which established performance targets for the bicycle network measured using a concept known as level of traffic stress (LTS). The Bike Bellevue project area includes multiple arterials where the current LTS deters people from bicycling due to concerns over safety.
- November 21, 2022 –Council adopted a [2023-2029 Capital Investment Program](#) (CIP) plan that increased to \$4.5 million funding for Growth Corridor High Comfort Bicycle Network Implementation (CIP #PW-W/B-85) in the Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed neighborhoods.

### **Project Need**

Bike Bellevue aligns with Council’s commitment to a Safe System approach to Vision Zero and eliminating traffic deaths and serious injury collisions by 2030. Safe mobility for people walking, rolling, and bicycling is the City’s highest priority road safety challenge. Even though these road users represent just 5% of all crashes on City streets, they represent 55% of all fatal and serious injury crashes in Bellevue.

In a 2017 online questionnaire involving more than 1,200 people, 57% of respondents reported feeling unsafe riding a bicycle in Downtown, and 62% indicated they would ride a bike in Downtown more often if streets had safe and comfortable bike lanes. People bicycling and driving alike reported feeling most comfortable traveling along bike lanes that are physically protected.

Past efforts to advance bicycle facility improvements along individual corridors have proved to be challenging, involving time-consuming and costly consultative processes that ultimately delivered only incremental segments of the broader vision for a safe and connected network. A coordinated approach to implementing network improvements — with a single engagement process through which stakeholders arrive at a clearly articulated strategy for investments over multiple years — will help the City achieve its goals more efficiently and effectively.

### **Project Area Map**

Major capital projects and levy-supported projects are implementing bikeways in Bellevue’s Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed neighborhoods (see Attachment A – Project Area Map); however, significant gaps in the network remain that limit access to and the utility of these investments. In 2022, Council approved \$4.5 million for CIP PW-W/B-85 in the 2023-2029 Capital Investment Program to plan and implement rapid-build bicycle infrastructure in the Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed neighborhoods.

The neighborhoods in this project area collectively represent just 8.5% of the City geography but account for: 65% of citywide jobs, 52% of citywide transit usage, 36% of citywide High Injury Network, and 34% of the City’s pedestrian and bicyclists involved in fatal and serious injury crashes. In 2025, East Link Light Rail will serve five stations in the project area, and Eastrail will open new segments along the old rail corridor. Ensuring safe access for all travelers is critical as this geography prepares for 30,000 new jobs and 27,000 new residents by 2025.

## **Project Scope**

Bike Bellevue incorporates oversight by the Transportation Commission with community engagement to identify investment priorities for rapid build bicycle improvements that will fill network gaps in the project area. Rapid build projects use low-cost materials to quickly install projects on existing streets with no or minimal impact to existing curbs and drainage.

The network design process will consider the 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan, 2016 Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program, 2022 Mobility Implementation Plan, East Link Connections, Eastrail Implementation, and evolving best practices for how to establish a grid of safe and comfortable bikeways for people of all ages and abilities. The projects identified in Bike Bellevue will support:

- the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan objective to “provide transportation choices for those who can or wish to travel by foot or bicycle to destinations within their neighborhood, city and the greater Eastside and region”.
- Comprehensive Plan direction to “increase system connectivity for all modes by providing for vehicular, transit, pedestrian and bicycling facilities to create a Complete Streets network throughout the city” (Policy TR-25), which “enables equitable access for all people and all travel modes” (p. 168) and helps “ensure getting around Bellevue on foot is easy and safe, and bicycling facilities accommodate riders of all ages and abilities” (p. 161).
- mode share targets aiming to reduce drive-alone trips (Policies TR-8).
- Environmental Stewardship Initiative targets to reduce per capita vehicle miles travelled by 50% by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050.
- an Economic Development Plan foundational strategy to “cultivate a multi-modal transportation system that will ease congestion by increasing capacity and enhancing connectivity (roads, transit, rail, biking and pedestrian corridors)”.
- Mobility Implementation Plan bicycle network performance targets.

Following Transportation Director approval of Bike Bellevue, staff will implement identified projects using local (CIP) and other funding sources.

## **Project Timeline**

The project timeline is proposed to sequence as follows:

- March 2023: Council directs staff to engage with the Transportation Commission to prepare Bike Bellevue consistent with the project principles (Attachment B) outlined below.
- Q2-Q4 2023: Staff supports the Transportation Commission in meetings and at workshops in considering technical details including environmental review, project sequencing priorities, and public input informing the development of Bike Bellevue.
- Q4 2023-Q1 2024: Transportation Commission Bike Bellevue recommendation.
- Q4 2023-Q1 2024: Transportation Director consideration of Transportation Commission’s Bike Bellevue recommendation. Project implementation including opportunities for additional funding.

## **Project Principles**

Council approval of project principles (Attachment B) will guide the Transportation Commission's development of Bike Bellevue. These principles establish continuity with and build upon Council approved principles for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Initiative (PBII) to further account for guidance in the Mobility Implementation Plan, Safe System approach to Vision Zero, Complete Streets, and other policy developments since 2015:

1. **Safety:** Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes and minimize conflicts between roadway users through bikeway design.
2. **Connectivity:** Implement a connected network of bicycle lanes that facilitate access to major destinations.
3. **Comfort:** Design bicycle lanes that maximize separation between motor vehicles and people bicycling on streets with higher speed limits and more vehicle traffic.
4. **Evaluation:** Use a data informed approach to evaluate impacts to all modes of travel and design the program to maximize the mobility of all modes.
5. **Coordination:** Coordinate transportation and land use efforts underway in Bellevue to ensure equity and sustainability outcomes are aligned.
6. **Partnerships:** Identify partnership opportunities to advance the implementation of bicycle projects.
7. **Engagement:** Engage community stakeholders in setting the priorities for Bike Bellevue investments.

Once Council initiates Bike Bellevue, the Transportation Commission will work with staff consistent with the Council approved principles.

## **Public Engagement**

Bike Bellevue includes public engagement consisting of the following components:

- **Transportation Commission.** The Transportation Commission – with support from City staff – will meet throughout 2023 to develop Bike Bellevue. The Transportation Commission will transmit Bike Bellevue to the Transportation Director for approval.
- **Focus Groups.** Staff will conduct up to five focus groups, facilitated by a consultant, to document community input and priorities for Bike Bellevue investments.
- **Online Presence.** Staff will develop a City webpage to provide information about the project. An *Engaging Bellevue* webpage, including a questionnaire, will invite community suggested design refinements on the bicycle facility corridor concepts.
- **Public Open House.** City staff will host one public open house at Bellevue City Hall to provide information and solicit design refinement and prioritization feedback on the bicycle facility corridor concepts.
- **Direct Engagement and Feedback.** City staff will conduct a minimum of five direct engagement briefings to invite input from diverse community members on Bike Bellevue. These opportunities will be made available to neighborhood associations as well as business and community-based organizations.

- **Mailer/Media.** A postcard mailer will be sent to every address in the project area referencing the online questionnaire and open house. Announcements regarding the questionnaire and open house will be made on the city’s social media outlets and online forums.

Input gathered through these engagement strategies will be reported in briefings to the Transportation Commission.

## **POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS**

### **Comprehensive Plan**

Bellevue’s Comprehensive Plan directs the city to: “Implement the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan and prioritize projects that address safety issues, provide access to activity centers, provide access to the transit and school bus systems, [and] complete and connect planned pedestrian or bicycle facilities” among other considerations (TR-103).

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan**

On February 17, 2009, Council adopted the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan (Ordinance No. 5861). The 2009 Plan set project completion targets for 2019 relating to the implementation of priority bicycle corridors. Pursuant to the Plan, the City is not implementing improvements at a rate consistent with established targets.

### **Implementation Principles**

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

### **Fiscal Impact**

Funded through the City of Bellevue’s 2023-2029 General Capital Investment Program (CIP), PW-W/B-85 allocates \$4.5 million to construct projects through 2029. PW-W/B-85 identifies a total budget of \$4.5 million for this purpose.

## **OPTIONS**

1. Approve the Bike Bellevue project principles and direct staff to work with the Transportation Commission to prepare a recommendation for implementation.
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Project Area Map
- B. Project Principles
- C. CIP Project Description (PW-W/B-85)

## **AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY**

N/A