

City of
Bellevue



Transportation Commission

DATE: July 2, 2026
TO: Chair Magill and Members of the Transportation Commission
FROM: Kevin McDonald, AICP, Principal Planner
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SUBJECT: 2026 Mobility Implementation Plan Update

DIRECTION REQUESTED

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion/Direction
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information

INTRODUCTION

At the June 11, 2026 Transportation Commission study session, staff reviewed a preliminary scope of work for the 2026 update of the Mobility Implementation Plan that responds to changing circumstances and to recent experience working with the adopted Performance Metrics and Performance Targets.

Staff reviewed four topics as candidates for an update to the MIP:

1. Speed Limit Change: Transportation Commission concurred with staff to update the MIP tables and figures per City Council Ordinance 6928 that reduced the adopted speed limit. Staff will review changes with the Commission on July 9. Commission action is not needed
2. Speed Limit Factor as a primary metric: Transportation Commission requested that staff return with analysis that would use adopted speed limit rather than the speed limit factor as a performance metric in the MIP. This is a discussion topic for July 9. Commission action is not requested at this time.
3. "Regional" arterial intersections performance targets: Transportation Commission request staff to return with analysis and options (September/October)
4. Freeway access intersections performance targets: Transportation Commission request staff to return with analysis and options (September/October)

BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

Speed Limit Change

On June 2, 2026, the City Council received a staff recommendation to reduce the speed limit on several arterials that were set by Bellevue City Code at 30 mph or greater. On June 23, the City Council adopted Ordinance 6928 that changed (reduced) the speed limit on several arterials. This action supports Vision Zero and it amends Bellevue City Code Chapter 11.32 (Speed Limits). Attachment A is a map that shows the new adopted speed limits, and Attachment B is Ordinance 6928.

Speed limit (with the speed limit factor) is a primary performance metric used in the Mobility Implementation Plan to determine the level of traffic stress. This change in the adopted speed limit requires that the Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress (PLTS) and Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (BLTS) maps and tables be reconciled with the new speed limits.

The Transportation Commission concurred with staff to refresh PLTS and BLTS maps of existing conditions and to update the network completeness tables to reflect the changes in the arterial speed limit as adopted by the City Council.

Results

Using the new adopted speed limits (retaining the speed limit factor of 1.2 x speed limit) to determine the existing PLTS and BLTS reveals the importance of vehicle speed as a primary performance metric. The new adopted speed limits improve both PLTS and BLTS performance in locations where a facility is present but did not meet the performance target under the previous speed limits. Network gaps are the same, regardless of the adopted speed limit. Since the MIP suggests “where to look” not “what to do”, a focus on network gaps will help to prioritize project concepts that can improve network completeness.

Please see Attachment C for the results of the speed limit changes to the MIP maps and tables, retaining the speed limit factor as a primary performance metric.

Transportation Commission Action: No action is requested on this administrative amendment to the MIP.

Follow-Up

An unanticipated consequence of the reduced adopted speed limit, which is especially apparent on multi-lane arterials, is the calculated Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress and Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress that may not reflect the actual environment for these vulnerable users.

An example highlights this point:

- Bel-Red Road between 124th Ave NE to 148th Ave NE:
 - Speed limit was reduced to 25mph from 35mph (the corresponding speed limit factor changed to 30mph from 42mph)

- Traffic volume is 23k
- Performance target is BLTS 3
- Figure 1 (Table 4 from the MIP) below shows that BLTS 3 can be achieved only with a vertical buffered bike lane using the **old speed limit** plus the speed limit factor (42mph). **Red circle**.
- To achieve BLTS 3 with the **new speed limit** and the speed limit factor (30mph) can be achieved with a striped bike lane or a bike lane with horizontal buffer. **Blue circle**.
- IF performance metric is changed to the **adopted speed limit**, BLTS 3 could be achieved on Bel-Red Road with no markings or sharrow lane markings. **Green circle**. Sharrows would not likely be comfortable to the bicycle riders who are “Enthusied and Confident” and who “can tolerate some stress”. Best practice guidance from the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) identifies sharrows as appropriate for roads </- 25 mph with less than 3,000 vehicles per day.

Staff will review Table 1 (Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress) and Table 4 (Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress) and provide options for the Transportation Commission to consider that would amend the tables to better reflect the intended level of traffic stress performance outcomes of the new adopted speed limits (with and without the speed limit factor).

Table 4: Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress		BLTS 1	BLTS 2	BLTS 3	BLTS 4		
Arterial Characteristics		Bicycle Facility Components: Guideline to Achieve Intended Level of Traffic Stress					
Speed Limit Factor ¹	Traffic Volume	No Marking	Sharrow Lane Marking	Striped Bike Lane	Buffered Bike Lane (Horizontal)	Buffered Bike Lane (Vertical)	Shared Use Path or Physically Separated Bikeway
≤25	≤3k	1	1	1	1	1	1
	>3k-7k	3	3	2	1	1	1
	>7k	3	3	2	2	1	1
>25-30 mph	≤10k	3	3	2	2	1	1
	>10 -25k	4	4	3	3	2	1
	>25k	4	4	3	3	3	1
>30-35 mph	≤25k	4	4	3	3	3	1
	>25k	4	4	4	3	3	1
>35	Any	4	4	4	4	3	1

Figure 1. Table 4 Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

Speed Limit Factor

The adopted MIP performance metric of “Speed Limit Factor” (1.2 x adopted speed limit) was intended to approximate higher-end traffic speed (e.g., 85th percentile speed) that can affect a person’s perception of the level of traffic stress. Recent data reveals that the speed limit factor does not consistently reflect the actual higher-end traffic speed. Speed limit factor may exaggerate the performance target gaps on some arterials. Recognizing that the MIP performance target gaps indicate “where to look”, the speed limit factor may divert focus from the locations that need attention to improve network completeness.

As part of Safe Speeds Bellevue, the city recently collected actual speed data at dozens of locations across the city. While actual high-end speed can be higher than the adopted speed limit, it is not universally higher by 20 percent (speed limit factor). In particular, observed speed in Downtown and other parts of PMA 1 are typically less than the adopted speed limit.

The Transportation Commission requested staff to analyze the results of using the adopted speed limit instead of the speed limit factor as a primary performance metric in the MIP tables and figures. Staff will review the PLTS and BLTS tables and provide options to recalibrate the performance outcomes with the new adopted speed limits.

One other consideration; rather than embedding the calculated speed limit factor as a performance metric, the adopted speed limit may be used for planning purposes in the MIP, combined with measures to address speeding. Where a performance target gap is identified, staff can then acquire the actual speed along a corridor and address high-end vehicle speeding with measures other than expanded facilities for pedestrians and bicycles. The following passage is an excerpt from the Council agenda memo that describes the approach:

Setting safer speed limits that reflect the current land use and mobility options in Bellevue is only the first step in managing Safe Speeds on city streets. Although speed limit changes alone can reduce high-end speeding, additional tools and street design changes may be needed to further encourage people to slow down. Staff are already identifying projects and grant opportunities for the next phase of Safe Speeds Bellevue. These projects include technology such as radar feedback signs and speed safety cameras along with physical changes to the street design such as speed cushions, raised crosswalks, lane width adjustments and other features.

If these measures are not feasible or effective, then staff can consider the higher documented vehicle speed to design more robust facilities for pedestrians and bicycles to achieve the intended level of traffic stress.

Results

Staff has conducted an analysis of actual measured speeds relative to speed limits and prepared an option to consider changing the primary metric for PLTS and BLTS from “speed limit factor”

to “speed limit”, and has documented the outcomes for PLTS and BLTS in the related tables and figures. Attachment C shows maps and tables that demonstrate the results of using the adopted speed limit (with the speed limit factor) as a primary metric. Attachment D shows the maps and tables with the new speed limits and without the speed limit factor.

Summary speed analysis indicates that actual “speed limit factors” are as follows:

Roadway	Bellevue Way	1.18
	Coal Creek Pkwy	1.23
	Bellevue-Redmond Rd	1.16
	148th Ave (520 to I-90)	1.03
	West Lake Sammamish Pkwy	1.22
	NE 8th St	1.19
	Northup Way	1.15
	Total	1.18

If the speed limit factor were to be removed as a primary performance metric and changed to adopted speed limit, there would be locations where PLTS or BLTS would shift from “Exists but does not meet target” to “Meets target”. Where a location is identified as “Meets target”, additional analysis is not prioritized. Specific examples include:

Figure 2: A segment of Spring Boulevard east of 124th Avenue NE in BelRed for PLTS. The sidewalk is separated from one lane of 25 mph traffic in each direction by buffered bike lane and landscape strip. This achieves the intended PLTS 1

Figure 3: 140th Avenue between NE 8th Street and Lake Hills Boulevard/SE 8th Street for BLTS. Striped bike lanes. Recent overlay north of SE 8th Street has incomplete bike lane striping in the photo. This achieves the intended BLTS 2.

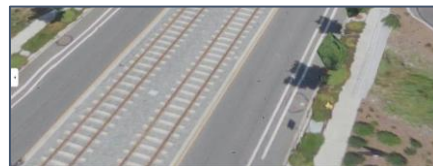
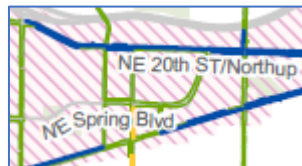
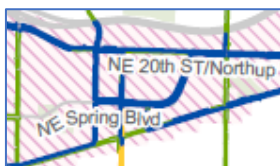


Figure 2. Spring Boulevard PLTS



Figure 3. 140th Avenue BLTS

Aggregated citywide, the performance of the pedestrian network would improve from 43% of the network that meets the PLTS target to 65% of the network that meets the target. The percent of the network that is a pedestrian facility gap remains at 22% because the speed limit factor does not affect the level of traffic stress of a facility that is not present. This fact supports the Transportation Commission recommendation and the MIP prioritization to focus implementation to address network gaps as a priority over enhancing an existing facility.

Transportation Commission Action: No action is requested regarding the speed limit factor at this time. In the fall staff will return with analysis and options to amend the PLTS and BLTS tables. Staff will then seek a recommendation on whether to amend the MIP to use adopted speed limit as a primary metric for PLTS and BLTS, or to retain the speed limit factor. A change to the primary performance metric and the associated tables and figures would require final Council approval.

NEXT STEPS

In September and October, staff will return with an analysis and options for the speed limit factor performance metric and changes to the PLTS and BLTS tables and maps.

Staff will also provide an analysis of intersection (V/C) performance targets along segments of regional arterial corridors and at freeway access locations, and will discuss options with the Commission to address V/C performance target gaps.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Map of new speed limits
- B. Ordinance 6928
- C. Maps and Tables: New speed limits with speed limit factor
- D. Maps and Tables: New speed limits without speed limit factor

