

## Transportation Commission Input and Responses Environmental Stewardship Plan Update

### Overview

On January 23, 2020 staff presented on the update of the Environmental Stewardship Plan, and provided an overview of the intent, draft environmental goals and targets, and results for the first phase of public outreach and engagement. This document summarizes the input provided from the Transportation Commission members at the January 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, and subsequent written input received from individual Commissioners.

Staff responses are in blue.

### Questions from the Transportation Commission meeting on January 23, 2020

- Chair Wu asked staff to bring to the next discussion examples of how a 50 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled might play out.
- Chair Wu agreed that the status quo will not achieve the goals. She urged staff to bring to the next meeting concrete steps for getting to the desired end results along with the costs.
- Chair Wu asked the Commissioners to jot down their thoughts relative to two questions and come ready to discuss them the next time the topic is on the agenda: 1) Are there any strategies or actions that the Transportation Commission would like to suggest for consideration in the benefit cost analysis and public outreach? 2) What does the Transportation Commission consider to be the greatest areas of opportunity for supporting mobility options to help reduce per capita vehicle miles travelled?

Attachment 1 provides an overview of the proposed actions for the plan, and the types of strategies needed to achieve the 50% per capita vehicle miles traveled reduction. These actions build on existing transportation and land use efforts and aim to support continued improvements in expanding mobility alternatives in Bellevue.

- Commissioner Teh said he was somewhat disappointed with the goal and objective for electric vehicles. He said he would like to see something more tangible and enforceable and not just outreach and education. He said he wanted the end result to be tangible actions, not just unenforceable policies.

The electric vehicle goal is a more aspirational goal compared to some of the other goals which could result in new policy development or capital improvement programs. However, this goal will help to develop policies, requirements, and programs related to electric vehicle charging infrastructure, support for state-level electric vehicle incentives and programs, and serve to help increase awareness around the benefits of electric vehicles.

**From Commissioner Loreana Marciante, email dated 1/23/2020:**

I believe we need to get origin and destination trip data in order to effectively develop strategies to transition people out of single occupancy vehicles into shared modes (and reduce VMT). I'm working with Sandag (the San Diego Association of Governments) precisely on this effort for their 2050 Regional Plan.

The Bellevue/Kirkland/Redmond travel demand model that the city uses (BKRCast is the acronym) does have the capacity to document and forecast person trips by mode and by origin and destination, using a Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) as the geographic unit. Dense urban areas such as Downtown Bellevue have smaller TAZs compared to lower density suburban locations. The BKRCast model can therefore yield more precise travel demand forecasts to inform multimodal urban mobility strategies.

**From Commissioner Lei Wu, email dated 1/29/2020:**

My major issues plus one clarification on this topic are:

1. Council expressed support for goals in the category of bold. Once established, while those goals and targets are aspirational, I believe that the City of Bellevue should put out the best earnest effort in striving toward those goals and targets. While we may not hit the absolute targets, bold and clear transportation strategies need to be implemented to achieve the intention of those mobility goals in support of environmental sustainability. Regardless of how goals and targets may stay as proposed or get adjusted in some way, they will heavily shift the focus of how Bellevue's transportation system needs to be improved. Between the Vision Zero framework and Environmental Sustainability Plan, we recommend or support ambitious safety and environmental sustainability goals and targets. In order to walk the talk or implement the plans, we have to treat those two goals as the top priorities for the transportation system. I would like to bring issue this to the attention to my fellow commissioners and potentially back to Council if it resonates among the Commission.

Should the Commission agree with this statement, these priorities could be reiterated in the notes and transmittal letter to Council.

2. Technology shows up as an important strategy for multiple transportation planning efforts for the City of Bellevue. Examples include the Transportation Facilities Plan that the Commission concluded in May, Vision Zero, and the Environment Sustainability Initiative current in the works. The gist of related strategies is that Bellevue will take advantage of advanced transportation technologies to improve multimodal transportation. Such technologies, while not a silver bullet to instantly transform Bellevue's transportation system, are expected to bridge some gaps for modal integration. The Smart Mobility Plan has a list of recommendations for the City of Bellevue, meant to achieve such intent in various ways. My question for staff is that what kind of transportation technology applications or even pilot testing we can point to as a promising tool for Bellevue to achieve goals related with Environmental sustainability, vision zero, and so much more.

In terms of achieving our Environmental Stewardship Plan goals, the main priority advancement area is around electrifying vehicles in Bellevue – both the City's fleet and private vehicles. Another promising pilot project is an air quality monitoring project, to gain higher quality air quality data in particular near freeways and areas poised for significant redevelopment. This pilot project will help staff to understand the gaps in data and needs for a more scalable air quality monitoring program, to help drive policy and planning for growth center areas such as BelRed, Wilburton, and East Main. Additional pilot projects led by partners, such as for autonomous, connected, and electric vehicles all support the transition to electric vehicles and will help to accelerate adoption of EVs.

3. Regarding transportation strategies to help achieve goals for environmental sustainability, I would like to see ideas that focus on address trips between specific areas or destinations. For one example, what tools or strategies we can use to chip away at the SOV rate between single family house neighborhood areas and major employment centers (Overlake, Downtown Bellevue and Downtown Seattle)? Another major pair of destinations is schools and homes.

The Environmental Stewardship Plan will not provide specific recommendations for these types of trips, however the larger programs and strategies outlined in the plan, such as the Mobility Implementation Plan, could support targeted strategies between nodes.

4. Another approach is to look at strategies that serve specific population groups. For example, a subgroup of Bellevue residents is students. One strategy is to build a bicycle network so that all responsible middle and high school students can safely ride their bikes between school and home. We can start from a pilot school.

The City's Transportation Demand Management program has run a pilot SchoolPool program with 15 schools, to help facilitate walking, biking, and carpooling amongst students and families. During bike to work month, the City also promotes biking to school. The City's capital program funded through the 2016 Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion Levy has

also invested in several right-of-way enhancement projects to support safer routes to school.

One clarification is that I would like to get the meeting minutes and date of the Council meeting/study session to understand Council's direction first hand on this topic. Can you provide a date or dates for relevant Council meetings/study sessions?

Provided in a previous email and can be found here:

<https://bellevue.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=714420&GUID=8D929FAD-984D-499B-A83B-9A029BD15632&Options=info|&Search=>

**From Commissioner Vic Bishop, emailed dated 3/3/2020:**

The Environmental Stewardship Plan update was presented the Transportation Commission on Jan. 23, 2020. Commissioners were invited to comment on the plan.

One of the targets in the Mobility and Land Use Goals section is the following:

- *Per capita VMT: Through the Washington State Green Transportation legislation, RCW 47.01.44, the State established transportation demand management goals to reduce per capita VMT by 18% by 2020, 30% by 2035, and 50% by 2050. Using this as a precedent, along with the updated K4C Joint Commitment goals, the Environmental Stewardship Plan recommends that Bellevue reduce per capita VMT by 50% by 2050. Between 2011 and 2018, per capita VMT decreased by 3%.*

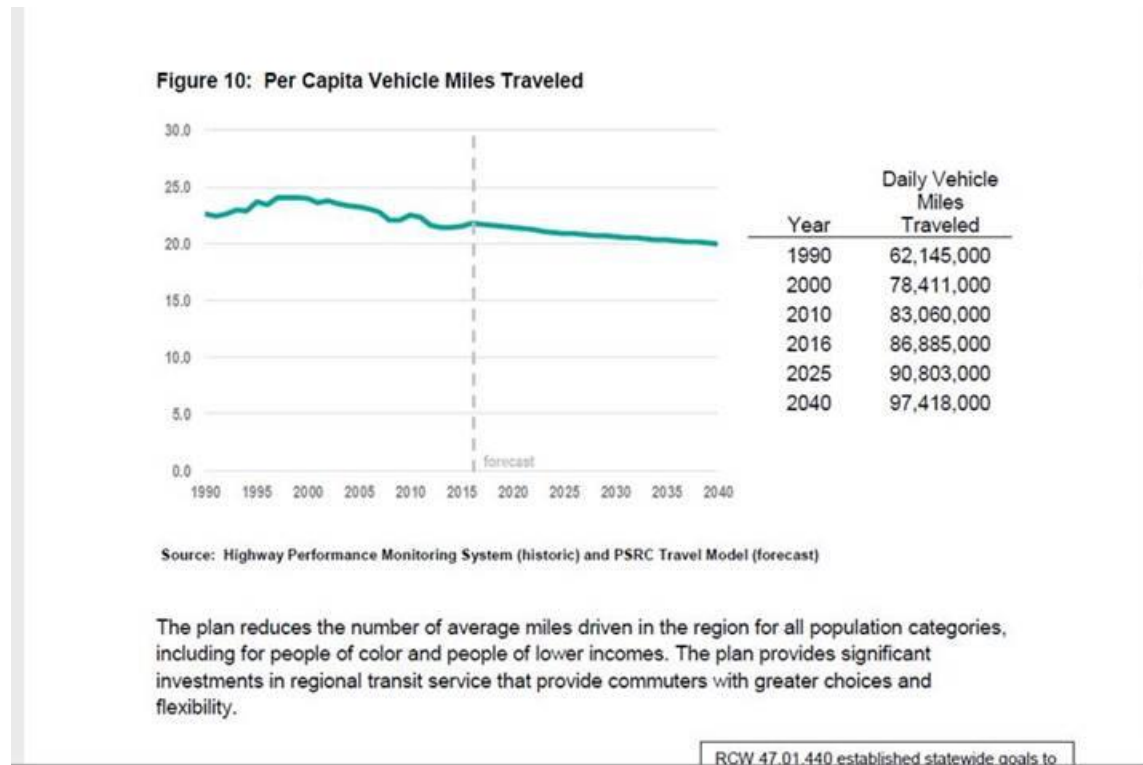
Figure 10 (below) of the attached PSRC 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, 2018 Update, shows that our best regional planners expect that the Per Capita Vehicle Miles Traveled are projected to be reduced by approximately 10 % (from 22 to 20 miles per capita) between 2015 and 2040. This chart is on page 14 of the attached Appendix K.

If we want the Environmental Stewardship Plan to be rationally acceptable to our residents, it seems to me that the above target should be drastically revised to reflect real projections of changes in behavior rather than the aspirational goals of RCW 47.01.44. We have managed to reduce VMT by 3% in seven years. We have no serious funding sources to accomplish a 50% reduction by 2050.

I suggest a rational aspirational goal of a 15% reduction in per capita VMT by 2050. With the growth daily regional vehicle miles traveled we are projecting, that would be a very strong achievement and worthy of some solid thinking on how to achieve it.

Victor H. Bishop, P.E.

Transportation Commission Member



Thank you for providing the additional context and research from the PSRC. While the 50% per capita VMT reduction goal will be challenging to attain, it is necessary to reduce overall and per capita VMT to achieve the recommended greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal. In addition, in light of COVID-19, which has seen a significant drop in overall VMT, transportation patterns are expected to evolve over the next several years. Additional analysis of strategies to achieve this goal is included in Attachment 2.

**From Commissioner Albert Ting, email dated 4/5/2020:**

- **Reduction of vehicle miles driven.** With the COVID-19 situation, many people are working from home. The methodology and technology are far from perfect: currently, there are bandwidth, latency, tools, and cost issues. Can the CoB partner with tech companies to create a hardware/software pilot programs that approach on-site experiences? Can the CoB then incentivize businesses to have a percentage of their employees work at home? This could significantly decrease (or moderate the increase) of miles driven.

As the economy recovers, we anticipate more of a trend toward people working from home more regularly and have an interest in encouraging working from home from a traffic and transportation standpoint. However, from an economic development standpoint, the city and major employers have an interest in maintaining the viability of retail establishments in the employment centers. As the Transportation Demand Management program assesses changing in trends in commuting and working over the coming years, there will likely need to be further review around transportation incentives to meet evolving needs.

- **Growth in growth centers.** My understanding is that all of Bellevue is an Urban Growth Area. Focusing growth in areas that reduce transportation needs (specifically SOV), sounds like a good idea (11/12/19 extended study session [video](#) at 28:37). If Council agrees, this should drive their land use plans in practice and reduces miles driven.

Yes, for growth management purposes, Bellevue is within King County's Urban Growth Area, as are all cities within the county. Downtown Bellevue is also designated as a Regional Growth Center in the region's Vision 2040 plan, and within the city, Bellevue has designated mixed use centers including Downtown, BelRed, Wilburton, Eastgate, and Factoria (see page 50 of [the Land Use](#) element in the city's Comprehensive Plan) to further focus projected growth enabling targeted investments in enhanced multi-modal services namely, light rail, bus and bicycle infrastructure along with walkable neighborhoods to encourage reductions in SOV use.

- **EV strategy.** The cost of EVs is still high for many people. How can the city indirectly help people buy EVs? Can the city incentivize businesses to provide EV incentives to their employees? It is probably impractical for the city to fund this directly, but businesses may see this as a great benefit they can provide their employees (especially if given bonuses during the permit process -- something the planning commission could investigate).

One approach for the City to support the adoption of electric vehicles is through education and outreach around the total cost of ownership cost savings of driving an electric vehicle. Other cities seek to incentivize EV purchases through provision of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure, or incentives for home and office EV charging infrastructure. City staff are also working with Puget Sound Energy and Electrify America to seek to channel private sector electric vehicle charging infrastructure development in Bellevue.

- **TMCs** like Uber may have a negative impact on overall GHG (in addition to congestion, although this is a complex topic). Can the city set targets on EVs for TMCs?

Staff are recommending a goal for 100% electric vehicles in Bellevue by 2050, which would include light-duty TMCs.

- **Renewable electricity sources.** Much of the electricity consumed by Bellevue and eastside neighborhoods is not renewable. How can we fix that?

Finally what is the aspirational policy initiative that would decrease GHG? I believe we should have stretch but realistic goals. However, if we think this is a critical issue, then we should also look at an big aspirational goal too.

Side note: one thought on surveys that I wanted to pass along. Questions should detail the costs and tradeoffs -- this will help prioritize competing goals. Council (and others) can then understand how to plan better. In the presentation, it was not clear whether the questions were framed this way.

In 2019, Washington passed the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA), which will require utilities to provide 100% clean energy by 2045, which will include a mix of hydro, wind, solar, and other renewable sources. Staff are recommending the following energy and climate change goals as part of the Environmental Stewardship Plan: 100% renewable energy by 2045 (to support the implementation of CETA) and reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050.