

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

January 13, 2022
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Marciante, Vice Chair Stash, Commissioners
Beason, Kurz, Ting

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Helland, Rebhuhn

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Paula Stevens, Andrew Singelakis,
Chris Long, Chris Iverson, Shuming Yan, Department of
Transportation; Emil King, Department of Community
Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Lauren Mattern, Evan Costagliola, Nelson/Nygaard

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Marciante who presided.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Helland and Rebhuhn.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

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

Chair Marciante shared that on January 3, along with Senior Planner Mike Ingram, she briefed the City Council on the Commission's recommended 2022-2033 Transportation Facilities Plan project list. A brief summary of the Commission's evaluation of the TFP using the Mobility Implementation Plan Performance Targets was included in the presentation. The Councilmembers expressed a particular interest in understanding where there are gaps in the bike network and the level of investment needed to advance Vision Zero. The Council voted to endorse the Commission's recommended project list to the environmental process. That analysis should be ready for review by May or June.

5. STAFF REPORTS – None

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald noted that the Council was very appreciative of the Commission's work on the TFP. The Council was also expressed appreciation for the work of

the Commission on the multimodal concurrency policies that were approved on December 13 and have already been incorporated into the Transportation Element. The Commission will see a draft of the Mobility Implementation Plan on February 10 and the expectation is that the document will be transmitted to the Council for approval in April or May.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Curb Management Plan

Senior Engineer Chris Iverson said the Curb Management Plan is a new long-range planning effort the city has embarked on. He introduced consultants Lauren Mattern and Evan Costagliola with Nelson/Nygaard.

Mr. Iverson explained that curb management is a unique and nuanced topic. It is one of the most important mobility aspects that most people have never heard of. Curb management seeks to inventory, optimize, allocate and manage the curb space to maximize mobility, safety and access for the wide variety of curb demands. Traditionally, the curb has delineated the vehicle travel space adjacent to the sidewalk/pedestrian space and serves as an intermediary between those two zones. As the city grows, it will be increasingly important to have a more comprehensive framework and understanding of how the curbs are managed. Going forward, the work will establish new policies and guidance for how curb areas should be designed, maintained and operated over time. Within the scope of work, a variety of issues will be addressed, including establishing a vision and values framework; establishing a contextualized prioritization framework for curb use; analyzing options to establish a pricing-based curb program; developing a curbside playbook of tools; and building an organizational and staffing framework to implement the Curb Management Plan (CMP).

As the city has grown over time, there have been a growing number of curbside sticking points that affect safety, mobility, and the efficiency of the transportation system. The increase in the number of new mobility services such as e-commerce, Uber and Lyft are placing burdens on the curbside. Responses to Covid-19 have inspired innovative strategies in curbside areas.

Mr. Iverson suggested the curb should be thought of as the shoreline of the street. The curb accommodates parking, like marinas do; they accommodate commercial freight activity, like docks do; they accommodate passenger loading and unloading; they accommodate seating and dining; they delineate placemaking and activation; and they house greenery. If all of the uses had to jockey for space, none of them would be very effective.

In 1996 the city formalized its on-street parking program for the Downtown. All on-street parking areas are time-limited and enforced via a contractor. Over the last decade there has been effort put into looking at curb management, of which the Downtown Transportation Plan was one component. The Commission worked on a recommendation for on-street parking about eight years ago. In 2015 King County began regulating transportation network companies (TNCs) and that triggered the need to think regionally about a regulatory framework. Within the last two years the city has been active in launching pilot projects specific to the curbside, including the al Fresco Dining Program, the 3-Minute Food Priority Pick-up Zone, and the Transportation for America Smart Cities Collaborative and the 106th Avenue curbside pilot project. Additionally, the Environmental Stewardship Plan included a strategy focused on curb management. Curb management has generally been identified in a

handful of city documents, beginning with the Downtown Transportation Plan and more recently with the Smart Mobility Plan and the Environmental Stewardship Plan.

The reality of how the city addresses curb management is a little behind the times given the changing landscape of the street grid. Currently, any time an action needs to happen at the curb, management occurs on a piecemeal or ad-hoc basis. There is no guiding framework to make curb-based decisions. Parking enforcement exists but it is very light, resulting in people violating time limits and parking in incorrect locations. The coming of East Link light rail will add burdens in specific locations, particularly in the Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed. The result will be more demand for curbsides, particularly in areas that do not currently have a robust street grid. The city has long-range plans to build an extensive street grid as development occurs, but currently there is no framework around which to make educated decisions about operating and designing those spaces.

Mr. Iverson said the CMP will establish recommendations that will be focused in the growth corridor of Downtown, BelRed, East Main and Wilburton. Curb policies will be discussed at future meetings, and they will technically be applicable citywide, but the actual recommendations for curb management will be focused on the growth corridor.

Mr. Costagliola said he would be serving as the project director for the Curb Management Plan. He said curb users, including people who need access to the curb, operators, and businesses, tend to experience some obvious functional breakdowns. The challenges that were highlighted during the CMPs directional workshop included communicating to the public about the curb use decision process; setting a coherent curb use priority structure that recognizes trade-offs, competing uses and emerging new uses; potential constraints from the Land Use Code and curb design standards; the need for durability and flexibility in policies and priorities to future proof against changes to the curb in terms of demand and technology; capacity limitations in terms of enforcement, organizational roles and data collection; and addressing accessibility challenges, especially in new uses such as outdoor dining areas.

Curb users in Bellevue currently are experiencing the same challenges other cities are seeing. The list of challenges includes high demand curbs that are often full while other curbs are underutilized. Curb users often find it difficult to understand the curb regulations on any given block, which is exacerbated by the fact that not all curb uses are enforced. As growth continues in the growth corridor, curb demands will continue to increase and some curbs are going to continue to be uncomfortable for people who are walking and biking, and there will continue to be unresolved conflicts by the various curb users.

Mr. Costagliola said absent a comprehensive curb management strategy there will continue to be negative outcomes in terms of access, safety and right-of-way organization. Uber and Lyft will continue to congest the public right-of-way by double parking; Metro and Sound Transit buses will continue to experience delays; delivery vehicles will be unable to find safe and efficient loading opportunities; and most curbs will continue to be dedicated to moving cars and other uses. With a comprehensive curb management strategy, even as growth continues curb users will find the open spaces they need and the curbs will be well utilized. The regulations will be easily understood and enforced. New development will support curb access and loading features. People walking and biking will have comfortable facilities and loading conflicts will be resolved. The strategy will ensure more space for al-fresco curbside dining; space dedicated to transit and bicycles; space allocated to facilitate deliveries, shuttles, and light rail demand; and space for alternative mobility services.

Ms. Mattern, project manager, allowed that curb management is complicated because of the many things to be accomplished. The topic includes but certainly is not limited to parking management. Curb management should not be considered block-by-block, rather it should consider all surroundings and context. Curb space is a large public resource that serves as a gateway between the building frontages and the transportation rights-of-way. The growing number of demands on the curb space represents an exciting change of events but it can be expected that things will only get more complicated going forward. Critically, the Curb Management Plan will be a tool to help the city achieve its various goals.

Ms. Mattern said shoring up the vision and values is going to be one of the most important first steps. The principles that will be kept in mind throughout the process include curb equity, which will need to be defined; efficiency and effectiveness, which will go beyond just pricing conversations; user friendliness; decision-making clarity; and adaptability and resilience. Given the increasing number of curb users, operators, and interests, making sure the roles and responsibilities of all parties will be an important aspect.

The work of investigating existing conditions will include asking some interesting questions around how curb space is currently allocated and if the approach matches the stated goals. That first point of analysis will dovetail directly to the curb equity conversations. Having a clear understanding of how curb space is allocated and how it is performing will feed into the core work product around establishing a prioritization framework.

Ms. Mattern shared an example from some work done for Atlanta to develop a curbside management plan. She noted that that work included the development of a prioritization framework founded on an analytical base of context and the transportation system. The work involved the development of a curb typology map, a curb type guide, and a curb design menu. Curb management options are detailed in the plan, but things are also bucketed so that if a few years out there are new and better ways to think about the curb, adjustments can be made. The Atlanta plan also has a key element curb program and management options for the full array of curbside uses that includes pricing. She explained that Atlanta elected to make the move to adopt performance-based pricing standards across all modes, including demand space pricing for on-street parking, on-street commercial loading, and other curb uses.

Mr. Costagliola allowed that there is much work to be done in the next eleven months. The process began in December 2021 and is currently focused on collecting data and beginning the work of developing an existing conditions document. That work will take two or three months. A stakeholder and public engagement process will continue throughout the project. The meat of the Curb Management Plan will be the development of the curb policy and pricing concepts, and that work will run from February through July. Development of the curb prioritization framework will be done between March and August. All of that work will culminate in nesting curb priorities and policies into a curb typology. Taken together, the work will yield a curbside playbook, a Curb Management Plan and a roadmap for testing and piloting new ideas and solutions. The plan will ultimately be adopted by the Council and integrated into the Comprehensive Plan. The engagement process will involve informing the public, consulting with stakeholders, and engaging in robust collaboration. A website will be created and be opened to the public. There will be a curb survey as part of the public involvement process. Local and regional stakeholders will be convened in a curb summit, and some national experts will be brought in to discuss the challenges and opportunities and to outline what has worked well in comparable cities. The Commission will be involved in the development of policies and the curb typologies, and the work will ultimately be adopted by the Council.

Mr. Iverson said the Council will on February 14 be asked to initiate a Comprehensive Plan amendment work plan for 2022. The work plan will include having the Transportation Commission collaborate with staff on creating updated policy language before transmitting a recommendation to the Planning Commission. The Transportation Commission will also be tasked with guiding the development of the Curb Management Plan itself.

Commissioner Ting asked how the bike lanes and bike routes interplay with curb management. Mr. Iverson suggested that bike lanes that are up against a curb could be considered to be a curb use. There can be overlapping curb uses in some instances, such as bike lanes next to on-street parking. In general, whether or not a bike lane falls within or outside the Curb Management Plan will depend on the type of bike facility. He said there is a use case for bike lanes against the curb for which one would want to see more protections, and that would result in a very specific type of curb use. The important thing is to think about curb use from more of a dynamic perspective. Ideally there would be a 24/7 facility for bike movement, a facility that is unimpeded by any other use. The strategies that will be considered will include granting some areas to facilitate certain types of dynamic uses, such as load/unload, parking and bus stops in ways that will ensure bike lanes will remain open.

Vice Chair Stash asked if there are any industry-recommended coverage percentages for specific uses, like bikes and load/unload. Mr. Iverson said he was not aware of any industry standards. He said Bellevue has a very interesting street environment, with a 600-foot superblock grid in the Downtown. That limits the ability of the city to do a lot more with the curb. In getting into evaluating existing data and assessing existing conditions, consideration will be given to the high-demand locations. The data and public feedback will hopefully inform recommendations for how to split the uses.

Ms. Mattern said there are a few industry standards that address specific relationships, such as for accessible parking. Within the broader spectrum of curb management, however, there are no industry standards.

Commissioner Ting asked how environmental and safety concerns show up in the priorities. Mr. Iverson said those concerns will play out when the focus turns to policy. Data such as crash history will be analyzed as part of the process. Ms. Mattern added that the issues could be called part of curb equity in a broader sense.

Commissioner Beason referred to the comment made about the focusing the principles on the study area yet applying them citywide and asked if there is a general matrix that will be used that can transition from area to area. Mr. Iverson explained that in making policy amendments through the Comprehensive Plan amendment process, the work can be done either in the specific elements of the Comprehensive Plan or in the subarea plans. The policies will use specific language referencing the study area, but they will ultimately rest in the elements rather than in the subarea plans. That effectively will allow for making amendments to policy without having to make amendments to several different subareas.

Vice Chair Stash commented that in general the approach outlined focuses on the most important issues. She allowed that as the city grows uses such as delivery vans will expand. She said the use of the curb areas for dining purposes, especially during the summer months, is a good thing and is something that should be built into the plan.

Commissioner Ting suggested seeking clear prioritization direction from the Council on the different customers and uses to help narrow the focus. The likelihood of increased density due

to external pressures will potentially trigger the need for more on-street parking and that could impact plans for other curb uses. If there is anything in the Curb Management Plan relating to smart mobility, it should be showcased to residents, workers and visitors as a way of improving the user experience. Every effort should be put into encouraging robust community engagement as the process moves forward.

Commissioner Beason said as someone who lives and works in the Downtown, she is able to relate to the issue of delivery trucks and the Uber and Lyft traffic increasing over the last two years. She said she would like to see some support for the business community included in the plan. She also said she wanted to see more detail about how the data will be gathered and used to prioritize projects.

Commissioner Kurz said he also was anxious to see the data collected to help quantify what the biggest problems are. As people return to work in the Downtown buildings, things may change. He said he is aware that there are companies that help cities monetize their curb areas by charging for things like scheduled windows for delivery companies and he said he was curious to know if the same could be applied to rideshare companies.

Chair Marciante agreed that a Curb Management Plan will be most needed in the identified study area. She noted, however, that the curb environment is changing in residential areas as well given an increase in the number of home deliveries, the addition of bike lanes, and increased traffic generally. Those simpler elements associated with residential areas are not typically thought of in association with a curb management plan, but the team should be prepared to engage in a broader conversation about curbs in all areas of the city.

B. I-405 South Downtown Access

Transportation Engineering Manager Shuming Yan informed the Commission that the Council had already taken action on the I-405 South Downtown Access project. As such, he noted that no action was needed on the part of the Commission.

Mr. Yan said the I-405 Master Plan includes a new half interchange in the Downtown area to improve access to and from I-405 south. He said about a dozen scenarios were looked at as part of the study, seven of which did not pass the initial screening. The remaining five alternatives were evaluated in the second tier of the study. The Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp was identified by the Council as the best option for meeting the needs of the city.

Mr. Yan briefly reviewed with the Commissioners the five alternatives studied in the second tier of the study. The Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp alternative involved building a southbound flyover ramp connecting to I-405. The SE 6th Street extension and southbound on-ramp option included an uphill connection to the Lake Hills Connector on the east side of the freeway, and a southbound on-ramp only from the west side of the freeway. The SE 6th Street extension with inside access also had the connection to Lake Hills Connector via the inside connection from the express toll lane that is currently under construction. The NE 2nd Street extension alternative connected to 116th Avenue NE via a ramp over I-405 and included no ramps connecting with the freeway. The no build option served as a baseline for comparing the options.

The Tier 2 analysis a mix of quantitative and qualitative measurements were applied. On the qualitative side was alignment with the city's adopted plans and policies, while on the quantitative side were travel time savings, the impacts on property development, cost, and

access and safety issues. A fairly robust engagement with stakeholders was involved that included two open house events.

The SE 6th Street extension ramp alternatives were shown to have significant issues. No such connection is envisioned in any of the city's current plans. Significant time would be needed to revise existing policies and that could negatively impact the East Main TOD work. The city's modeling tools were used to analyze access capacity from I-405. The NE 2nd Street alternative added no capacity. Of the remaining three alternatives, the SE 6th Street inside access alternative provided the most capacity. The analysis in terms of citywide travel times showed that the SE 6th Street inside access alternative proved to be the most beneficial, while the NE 2nd Street extension option provided the least. The analysis also looked at the degree to which the alternatives might impact local intersections. It was found that the SE 6th Street southbound on-ramp option yielded the highest reduction in peak hour delay. The NE 2nd Street alternative added to intersection delay in that it would prevent traveling from NE 2nd Street to 114th Avenue NE given the need to elevate the extension.

The analysis sought to determine which alternative provided the most in terms of vehicular and non-motorized access. It was found that neither the Lake Hills Connector or no build options would add facilities for people walking or biking. The Lake Hills Connector option would use only existing right-of-way and thus would have the least impact in terms of property development. The SE 6th Street extension, which must be elevated in order to cross over I-405, would hinder the current access from adjacent properties to the current SE 6th Street, thus some mitigation in terms of additional access would be needed. The NE 2nd Street extension alternative involves navigating a very tight space between existing and planned developments. The wetland on the east side of the freeway would need to be crossed and mitigated for, while on the west side of the freeway the extension would cut through some existing buildings, thus the option would have significant property impacts.

With regard to cost, Mr. Yan noted that the SE 6th Street southbound on-ramp option would cost about \$25 million more than the Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp alternative given current right-of-way costs but given that additional development along the route is planned, as time goes by the cost of right-of-way will increase dramatically. The most expensive option was shown by the analysis to be the SE 6th Street inside access, more than twice the cost of the Lake Hills Connector option because of the cost of a flyover and because of the need to push I-405 northward in order to make room for the inside ramp connection.

The results of the analysis were shared with the property owners within the study area as well as representatives from neighborhood associations in or adjacent to the study area. There was broad support voiced for all three alternatives adding access, and concerns were voiced in regard to the NE 2nd Street extension option. The no build option was held up as not being an acceptable option. The alternatives that received the highest level of support were the two SE 6th Street options, but the adjacent property owners voiced the strongest opposition to those alternatives.

The information was also shared with key interest groups, including the Bellevue Downtown Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Eastside Transportation Association. Each of those organizations voiced support for building something. The groups collectively identified the Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp option as having the most benefit with the least impacts. The Eastside Transportation Association went so far as to recommend the implementation of the southbound auxiliary lane immediately and keeping the NE 2nd Street extension option open for future consideration.

The Council concluded that the Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp alternative should be recommended to the Washington State Department of Transportation for consideration. The Council emphasized the need to expedite the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian connections along SE 8th Street between 112th Avenue SE and Lake Hills Connector to ensure multimodal access.

The next step will be to reflect the Council's direction in the Transportation Improvement Program. That will be done in the first or second quarters of 2022. WSDOT will ultimately be responsible for securing approval from the United States Department of Transportation through final design, and for doing all environmental work before construction.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 9, 2021

The minutes as submitted were approved by consensus.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

Mr. McDonald briefly reviewed the Commission's calendar of upcoming meeting dates and agenda items.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Marciante adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date