

City of  
Bellevue



# Transportation Commission Study Session

**DATE:** March 10, 2022

**TO:** Chair Marciante and Members of the Transportation Commission

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**SUBJECT:** Curb Management Plan: State of the Curb, Typologies, and Policy Concepts

## DIRECTION REQUESTED

*No action on Curb Management is requested on March 10, 2022.*

*Staff will present a status report for the ongoing Curb Management Plan, which will include an update on engagement efforts, a review of existing conditions, and introductions to curb typologies and curb-related policy concepts.*

Action

**Discussion/Direction**

**Information**

On February 14<sup>th</sup>, City Council provided direction to initiate a 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) workplan to prepare policy recommendations in support of curb management and to develop content for the Curb Management Plan, both through the Transportation Commission. As discussed on January 13<sup>th</sup>, Transportation Commission will work to develop and eventually transmit policy recommendations to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Later in 2022, Transportation Commission will help develop recommendations and content for the Curb Management Plan itself, including recommendations related to curb typologies, curb use prioritization, and curb management program development.

## BACKGROUND

### Existing Conditions & State of the Curb

Part of the Curb Management Plan scope includes the creation and development of an existing conditions report. This “State of the Curb” report is currently in an initial review stage and highlights the various programs and conditions surrounding curb management in Bellevue.

Some highlights within the State of the Curb document include:

- **Curb Management Staffing:** Multiple groups and departments within the city handle curb challenges, sometimes independently from one another. Work groups within Transportation – such as Right-of-Way, Traffic Engineering and Development Review – collect requests and coordinate ad-hoc. Other departments – like Community Development, Parks & Community Services, and Development Services – interface with curb management through resource guides, land use codes, and operational procedures. Departments collaborate routinely on curb-related matters. For example, during review of development proposals in downtown, the Land Use Code dictates planter and sidewalk width requirements, while other Transportation manuals, plans and guidelines provide direction on the ultimate placement of the curb line for said development.
- **Curb (Mis)Use Enforcement:** The city’s enforcement capabilities are limited. Enforcement responsibilities are currently split between downtown and non-downtown areas:
  - o In downtown, the city hires a contracted parking enforcement service to monitor and deliver citations for curb activities. In 2020, this contract service resulted in approximately 215 warnings per month, 105 monthly overtime infractions per month, and 125 safety infractions per month.
  - o Bellevue does not currently have a municipal court system; therefore, all parking and curb-related citations are sent to King County District Court for review. The revenue collected mostly covers King County court fees; therefore, the full cost of enforcement must be covered from the city's general fund.
  - o Outside of downtown, Bellevue Police Department utilizes support officers to enforce parking and make citations. However, due to staffing limitations and priorities to support public safety, resources from Bellevue PD are often limited to handle parking and curb enforcement demands.
- **Curb Operation Today:** Most non-movement use of curb space today is in the form of on-street parking. In the Urban Core neighborhoods, most of this curb space is time-limited and enforced accordingly. Some high-level curb operation takeaways are below:

- All on-street parking in Bellevue is currently free of charge for private vehicles. Although existing policy is in place to support exploring the creation of a paid parking system, Bellevue has not yet created this program. Previous efforts to create a paid parking program have been unsuccessful. The most recent effort occurred in 2014, where a paid on-street parking program was proposed for the 2015-2016 budget cycle but did not advance.
- At the same time, other non-parking uses of the curb feature a charging mechanism. For example, private employer shuttles, sidewalk cafes, construction leases and other temporary curb uses are required to apply and pay for a permit for curb use.
- City plans and policies call for more flexible curb management approaches. For example, the Downtown Subarea Plan includes a policy to explore creating off-peak parking in curbside travel lanes. Additionally, the recent curbside dining program and Healthy Streets program allowed on-street spaces to be converted for other types of uses.
- Internally, Bellevue approaches curb operation changes in an ad-hoc manner. No formal mechanisms exist to convert one curb use to another (i.e. changing a 2-hour parking spot into a 15-minute load zone or dining area).

One major recurring theme in the curb management field is the balance between access and movement within curb spaces. In many cases within Bellevue, curb areas are reserved as travel lanes for motor vehicles, bicycles, and transit. These movement uses are generally “free of charge” for travelers. Meanwhile, other curb areas are utilized for access, which facilitate on-street parking and the other numerous use cases previously described. As stated above, on-street parking is currently free in Bellevue, while other access-based curb uses have a fee mechanism.

National best practices often recommend charging for curb access – these pricing mechanisms allow agencies to encourage dynamic turnover at the curb and avoid “tragedy of the commons” impacts from private overconsumption of inherently valuable public curbside and right-of-way areas. As the Transportation Commission begins considering the creation of a comprehensive curb management program, these curb access pricing mechanisms could be a direct means to generate revenue that could support the program.

As of February 2022, numerous gaps in existing data are still being collected, including expanded curb space inventory, macro-level curb utilization data, and other metrics. A final State of the Curb document is expected to be complete in Q2 2022.

### **Ongoing Public and Stakeholder Engagement**

The project team has continued to develop outreach materials in effort to gain feedback to inform the CMP and initial curb-related policy concepts.

- **Curb Management Plan Feedback Questionnaire:** This [online questionnaire](#), hosted on the EngagingBellevue.com platform, allows members of the public to provide general input about their experiences and vision for the curb in Bellevue. This questionnaire also features an interactive map that allows users to pinpoint specific locations where they have a curb-related idea or challenge. This questionnaire launched on February 16<sup>th</sup>. As of March 2<sup>nd</sup>, a total of 143 responses have been submitted for the questionnaire, and 4 responses have been placed on the interactive map.
- **CMP Focus Groups:** the project team is facilitating targeted focus groups to gain curb user feedback from key stakeholders. A total of seven focus groups are anticipated to occur throughout March. Each focus group includes specific intended audiences to gain broad perspectives. These groups include residents, local businesses, regional employers, mobility providers, transport advocates, developers, and freight providers. Feedback from these focus groups will help build awareness of competing curbside needs and help inform recommendations.
- **Curb Summit:** This virtual event is scheduled for Tuesday, March 29. The Curb Summit will convene mobility providers, regional and national experts, and local representatives to help shape Bellevue’s future curbside strategies. The public event will take place from 9am – noon. Members of the public, including members of the Transportation Commission, will have the ability to register, join, listen, and provide questions for panelists. More information will be posted soon to the [CMP webpage](#).

### **Introduction to Curb Typologies**

Later in 2022, the Transportation Commission will be tasked with recommending an approach to curb use prioritization. One major building block for this endeavor is the development of curb typologies, which will provide a high-level framework for that discussion. Curb typologies can be considered a type of “zoning” for curb areas. Typologies will be developed from and will reflect numerous existing city plans, policies, and land use contexts.

The curb typology framework will do four key things: indicate curb use permissibility, identify applicable city policies at given sections of curb spaces, reflect previously defined modal priorities, and address how the use of the curb may change into the future. This layered framework will allow the project team to begin crafting a technical foundation that will help inform the ultimate long-range curb use prioritization recommendations.

### **Curb Policy Concepts**

As part of the city-initiated CPA workplan, the Transportation Commission will help develop and eventually transmit recommended curb-related policies to the Planning Commission for

consideration. Staff-recommended policies are anticipated to be finalized in April 2022 after the initial round of public engagement is complete.

The CMP project team is considering various curb-related policy concepts that will address current gaps in the Comprehensive Plan. Policy concepts may include:

- Added support for curb placemaking and activation functions, like curbside dining and parklets
- Added support for developing curbside mobility hubs
- Added support for curb management technologies and innovations
- Amended language that addresses new mobility functions, such as providing deliberate accommodation for rideshare services, freight providers, and micromobility services
- Added support for the creation of a dedicated curb management program

### **NEXT STEPS**

The CMP project team will continue refining the State of the Curb document, engaging with stakeholders and the public, and begin developing the curb typology framework throughout March and April 2022. Initial staff policy recommendations are expected to be transmitted as a Staff Report to the Transportation Commission at the April 14, 2022 meeting; however, the Commission will not discuss the CMP at that meeting. Instead, it is anticipated that the Transportation Commission will review and discuss curb-related policies at the April 28, 2022 meeting in a focused workshop format. This approach will allow Commission members more time to review staff-recommended policies.