

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 12, 2022
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Vice Chair Stash, Commissioners Helland, Rebhuhn

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Paula Stevens, Andrew Singelakis,
Eric Miller, Michael Ingram, Kristi Oosterveen, Chris
Iverson, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: Evan Costagliola, Lauren Mattern, Nelson Nygaard

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at x p.m. by x who presided.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present

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 – None

5. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. McDonald reported having received notice from the City Clerk's Office that beginning in June board and commission meetings will once again be held in person as well as remotely. The details for the hybrid format are not yet fully worked out.

Mr. McDonald asked the Commissioners to send him their nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair ahead of the next meeting.

Mr. McDonald shared that he attended a session of the recent National American Planning Association conference in San Diego. Chair Marciante also attended and served as host for a session on data-driven technology for multimodal transportation planning, which was well-attended.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Transportation Improvement Program

Without objection, Chair Marciante opened the public hearing.

Program Manager Kristi Oosterveen explained that a public hearing is mandated by state law to be held annually for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The list of projects included in the proposed TIP was included in the Commission packet and was available online to the public.

Justin Jones with JMJ Team, representing the Spring District development of Wright Runstad, noted that a letter of support had been previously submitted. Appreciation and support for the work of the Commission was voiced.

Absent additional persons wishing to address the Commission, Chair Marciante closed the public hearing.

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Transportation Improvement Program

Kristi Oosterveen noted that staff was seeking action from the Commission to forward the TIP to the City Council for approval. The annually updated plan is not revenue constrained and contains all projects the city might want to do within a six-year time period if resources were available. The Commissioners were reminded that the former Comprehensive Transportation Project List is now embedded in the TIP. As such the TIP now houses all long-range planning projects. Projects in the TIP can become candidates for the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP), and projects in the TFP become candidates for the Capital Investment Program (CIP).

Section I of the TIP contains projects that are in the adopted CIP. Section II has unfunded projects from the preliminary TFP. Other unfunded local projects identified in the Comprehensive Transportation Project List or scoped out by completed alternative analyses and planning or pre-design studies are housed in Section III. Section IV has regional or outside agency-led projects in which the city may choose to participate.

Projects in the TIP feed into the Regional Transportation Program managed by the PSRC, and the state's Transportation Improvement Program, which is managed by the Washington State Department of Transportation. That is what makes the TIP projects eligible for grants.

In the proposed TIP, Section I contains 32 projects. There are 46 projects in Section II. Section III has 23 other unfunded projects; and Section IV has five projects that deal mostly with highway and freeway corridors or the bus system.

The recommended changes from the current TIP were reviewed by the Commission in March. They include adding nine new projects to, and removing six projects from, Section I. Thirteen new projects are recommended to be included in Section II, and six projects are recommended to be removed. One new project is proposed to be added to Section III, and ten projects are proposed to be removed. The proposal for Section IV is to add one project and to remove one project.

Kristi Oosterveen said notice regarding the proposed TIP had gone out on all the city's social networks to generate some public comment. The feedback received favored the proposal. Once

the Commission finalizes a recommendation, the TIP will be forwarded to the City Council on its June 6 consent calendar. The TIP must be submitted to the state and the Puget Sound Regional Council by June 30.

Commissioner Ting noted that some projects slated to be removed from the TIP because they will be evaluated by the Mobility Implementation Plan (MIP) project. Staff was asked if there is a separate master list of projects that should be evaluated by the MIP process. Kristi Oosterveen said the projects earmarked for removal are those that have either been superseded by something else, or are to be looked at through a different lens by virtue of not actually being in any of the city's long-range or planning documents. Some are projects that were suggested during a process that never actually ended up an end document. The projects in the end documents have been brought forward, the rest of them need to be vetted through a process using the tenets of the MIP.

Commissioner Ting stressed the need for projects not to get lost as the transfer is made and asked if there is a list projects to be evaluated will be housed. Another option would be to simply keep everything on the TIP given that it is not a financially constrained list. Kristi Oosterveen explained that projects removed from the list can be reevaluated and brought back into the TIP as part of the next planning process for the area in which the projects are located. All of the projects in the TIP to begin with were pulled from the 2022-2027 list. Staff went through each project looking to determine if there is a viable project and a viable cost associated with it. The projects that were removed will simply go away, though they may come back in the future as areas are studied again.

Mr. McDonald added that Volume II of the MIP contains the entire list of performance target gaps for vehicle, pedestrian, bike and transit. Those gaps represent a much larger list than the TIP project list. There is a four-step process for vetting the performance target gaps towards informing future project lists and ultimately a screened list of projects will move forward toward further analysis.

Commissioner Ting commented that at some point someone thought each project in the TIP should be there. The projects that are proposed to be removed should not be forgotten. Kristi Oosterveen said the projects earmarked for MIP evaluation will be put through the MIP process as part of the program the projects are in.

Chair Marciante suggested it might be helpful to simply change the project not to indicate something like the project has insufficient information.

Commissioner Ting commented that so long as it is clear that the MIP process will work its way through a long list of projects, including those being deleted from the TIP, all will be well.

Mr. McDonald clarified that the MIP has a map and the list. Some of the intersections associated with the projects being eliminated show up on both the map and the list as not meeting the performance targets. That will make those locations candidates for evaluation in a future planning process.

Turning to the transmittal memo, no modifications were proposed to be made.

A motion to recommend to the City Council the adoption of the staff-recommended 2023-2028 Transportation Improvement Program was made by Commissioner Beason. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kurz and the motion carried unanimously.

B. 2022-2033 Transportation Facilities Plan

Senior Planner Mike Ingram noted that the 12-year Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) is updated every two or three years. City code designates the Transportation Commission for overseeing the periodic update of the TFP and making a recommendation to the Council. One key characteristic of the TFP is that it is financially constrained and as such can only include those projects the city can reasonably expect to afford within the 12-year time horizon.

The current update work began in September 2020 with a process to identify candidate projects, establish criteria for evaluation, conduct an analysis, and rank and prioritize projects. The process was put on hold to allow for finishing up the MIP metrics. In the fall of 2021 the MIP metrics were applied to the proposed TFP project list and the results were shared with the Commission in October for all four travel modes. The Commission endorsed the project list and then in January Chair Marciante along with staff briefed the Council on the TFP update process and the project list. The Council endorsed the list as the basis for moving forward with the TFP update process. In February a SEPA checklist was submitted to the Department of Development Services and a notice of SEPA application was published in March, which was followed on April 28 by the issuance of a Determination of Non-Significance.

Mr. Ingram sought from the Commission a recommendation to move the TFP update forward to the Council for adoption.

There are 71 projects in the proposed TFP to which the MIP metrics, but not the full MIP process, has been applied. With regard to the pedestrian system status, Mr. Ingram shared with the Commissioners a map of current conditions showing in green where there are complete systems; in blue where there are incomplete facilities; and in orange the location of system gaps. Looking ahead to 2033, some of the gaps will be filled, specifically in the BelRed area; on 112th Avenue NE north of the Downtown; along West Lake Sammamish Parkway; and on SE 34th Street. Numerically, the projection shows the addition of five miles of arterial roadway with sidewalks on both sides and a reduction in the gaps from 17 miles to 12 miles, and going from 12 percent of the system having no sidewalks to only eight percent, arguably a meaningful improvement.

With regard to the bicycle system, the existing conditions map shared with the Commissioners showed in green where the targets are met; in blue where there are facilities in place that do not meet the targets; and in yellow where there are gaps in the system. The 2033 conditions fill a number of the gaps, particularly in the BelRed area; along the Eastrail; and along West Lake Sammamish Parkway.

Commissioner Ting noted on the map in the area of project TFP-278 all the blue lines without any connecting green lines north and south. The question was asked if there could be something on the east side of the city a bicycle facility that meets the LTS target. Mr. Ingram said that is where project TFP-301, Bicycle Network Project Area, comes into play. There are bike lanes along the blue segment of 140th Avenue NE between NE 8th Street and SE 8th Street, but according to the new MIP metric, they do not quite meet the standard; as such they would need to be updated.

Chair Marciante asked how trails can be shown on a future map. Mr. Ingram said some trails are identified, including the SR-520 trail, Eastrail and the Mountains To Sound trail. Parts of the Kelsey Creek trail are gravel, and there certainly are other trails here and there. Chair

Marciante suggested it would be helpful to show trails with dotted lines on future maps. Mr. Ingram said all trails are mapped in the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan and they are captured in the completion status update done every year, which is published as a web map on the city's website. For MIP purposes, the non-major, secondary trails with gravel surfaces and the like were not considered.

Mr. Ingram commented that the 2033 conditions indicate significant progress to the bicycle system. An additional 15 miles of corridors meet the targets, and the percentage of system gaps is reduced from 24 percent to 18 percent.

Commissioner Ting asked how it can be known that the right priorities are put on specific bicycle paths versus others, and if there is any analysis to show that a particular intersection or roadway segment is more important for improving bicycle facilities. Mr. Ingram said those determinations are made as part of implementing the Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program. Commissioner Ting voiced his desire to know there is enough of a backbone to the system to maximize usage.

Mr. Ingram shared with the Commissioners a map of existing conditions relative to transit performance. It was noted that the metric is that transit should not take more than twice as long as driving. Under current conditions, travel speeds along a number of corridors fall below that target. Looking ahead to 2033, however, performance is improved along several corridors, especially between Downtown and Overlake owing to East Link light rail. Improvements are also evident westbound from Crossroads into Downtown, and from Overlake and Crossroads into Eastgate. The improvements are tied to capital improvements identified in the TFP, including the NE 6th Street extension which provides a direct line from the transit center across I-405 to 116th Avenue NE or 120th Avenue NE, and the Bellevue College connector.

Mr. Ingram commented that vehicular performance looks at intersection volume to capacity and corridor speed. Under existing conditions there are 11 intersections that fall below the target, many of them along the 148th Avenue corridor and SE 8th Street. Looking ahead to 2023, with the level of anticipated demand, the number of intersections projected to fall below the target increases to 24. However, under a no action alternative where none of the TFP improvements are made, the number increases to 29, and a number of those locations were see much worse conditions. The intersections that get worse include some in the Downtown along include 112th Avenue NE, some along SE 8th Street where there are projects without which conditions would be far worse.

Commissioner Ting referred to project TFP-278 and asked if the main benefit of the project is for the intersection of 148th Avenue NE and Main Street itself or for the entrance into the business. Mr. Ingram said at first glance the thought was that work was needed to improve the intersection, but after getting deeper into the review the alternative of focusing on the access into the shopping center would make more sense.

Moving on to vehicular performance along corridors, Mr. Ingram stressed that the conditions measured are for the PM peak where traffic is primarily moving southbound. The areas most stressed under existing conditions are along 148th Avenue, Bellevue Way, Richards Road and Factoria Boulevard. Those same corridors continue to be stressed under 2033 conditions, and indeed more corridors do not meet the performance target. However, the TFP improvements do make a difference, including southbound Bellevue Way because of the HOV lane; and on 156th Avenue SE south of NE 8th Street.

Commissioner Ting asked how the city coordinates with Redmond given that much of the southbound traffic is coming from that jurisdiction. Mr. Ingram said Bellevue has a long history of coordination with Redmond. While the relationship was more formal in the past, it is still very strong and deliberate.

Mr. Ingram reiterated that the MIP prioritization process was not used in analyzing the TFP projects because it did not exist. As the metrics were developed, staff elected to test them by applying them to the projects, and they proved to be very useful.

A motion to recommend to the City Council the staff-recommended 2022-2033 Transportation Facilities Plan was made by Commissioner Beason. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kurz and the motion carried unanimously.

There was consensus to approve the transmittal memo as drafted.

C. Curb Management Plan Policy Recommendation

Senior Transportation Engineer Chris Iverson briefly reviewed the schedule to date and going forward on development of the curb management plan.

Consultant Evan Costagliola with Nelson/Nygaard reported working with staff on the framework for curb typology, with a specific focus on how it will be used after the plan is adopted. Curb typology is the future work horse of the curb management plan and will serve as a vehicle for conveying a lot of different information. It will also be used as a decision-making framework when prioritizing different types of curb uses ranging from movements to access, place-based uses and even storage. Curb typology is necessary to make informed decisions about the highest and best use of the curb, and it will display the information spatially. Curb typology will describe existing curb uses and conditions; will indicate desired future curb uses and conditions based on other city plans and policies; and will indicate modal priorities at the curb as established in other city plans and policies. It will not, however, establish new modal priorities for the curb; include any new policies or services; or set curb priorities beyond the curb management plan study area. Curb typology will take the curb recommended policies and apply them spatially, indicating when certain curb uses should be prioritized and when they should be deprioritized.

Commissioner Kurz asked if the curb management plan will apply only in the four neighborhoods in the study area or to all curbs in the city. Chris Iverson said the proposed policies will technically apply citywide in that they will be housed in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. However, the curb typology and approaches in the curb programs, as well as the potential pricing framework, will be applied in the urban core Performance Management Area 1 neighborhoods established in the Mobility Implementation Plan.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Ting, Chris Iverson said once adopted the policy language will be applied citywide. However, many of the policies will be targeted toward actions within the curb management plan. When someone references the curb management plan, it will outline the typology in specific locations, all of which will be within the urban core neighborhoods.

Commissioner Ting asked how the priorities will get implemented, what things will get deprioritized, and what the tradeoffs will be. Evan Costagliola explained that it is very context

sensitive street-by-street and neighborhood-by-neighborhood.

Chris Iverson said the intent of the curb typology is not to say definitively what the curb use will be. Rather, it is intended to identify the highest priority uses. The decision-making process will happen at the curb level to determine the priority uses for a particular curb space.

Chair Marciante pointed out that currently there are actual uses for the curbs that have been determined, such as where people can park or where buses can stop. Those uses are the result of decisions made about what to do with a particular curb space. What the city has not had is any actual transparency in the decision-making process. The intent is to get to a place of better understanding conditions so that transparent decisions can be made. The discussion related to exactly how decisions are to be made will occur down the line. Commissioner Ting suggested that absent the data the implications of the priorities being created cannot be known. While the MIP sets modal priorities, the curb typology and policies will end up acting on those policies. The outcomes versus what is in place currently is unknown. Chair Marciante said at the policy level it is clear that all the various uses are wanted. The policies will not outline how to make tradeoff decisions, but they will outline the value of the various uses and help to guide the decision-making process.

Chris Iverson noted that one of the policies speaks directly to the concept of typology. The Commissioners were asked to take a leap of faith in recommending the policies, with the understanding that the Commission will be in charge of the typology approach. The policies are lined up to be implementable, and the implementation framework and process will be established in the coming months.

Chair Marciante reminded the group how specific the Commission had been in including language about the MIP in the policies. The Commission also specifically referred to tying decisions to existing processes. Chris Iverson agreed references are made to other plans and said there is a case to be made that a recommended project in the TFP could also align with a recommended curbside strategy.

Chris Iverson reminded the Commissioners that feedback from them was incorporated into the proposed draft policies. There are 16 policies in all and comments were received on half of them. Four of the policies were initially recommended by staff to be repealed because they are either redundant compared to existing policies or Land Use Code language, or are lumped in with the proposed new or modified policies. Two policies were suggested to be modified related to creating curbside zones for on-street parking and on-street parking spaces and travel lanes for use during off-peak hours. Two new policies were proposed related to regulated passenger load zones and the creation of activated curbside zones in suitable locations.

Turning to the eight policies earmarked for revisions, Chris Iverson said the issue with Policy TR-128 was primarily in regard to confusion about the word “dynamic.” In layman’s terms, the word is supposed to mean curbside zones can accommodate various uses at different times of the day and different days of the week. The recommendation was to replace the word with “flexible.”

Commissioner Kurz what development review means and was told by Chris Iverson that it refers to the process of staff reviewing a proposal from a developer. As used in the policy, there would be a staff recommendation in regard to the curbside space as part of a development project. Typically any curbside revisions needed would be a condition of the development and paid for by the development.

Chair Marciante asked for clarification with regard to the term “curb operations.” Chris Iverson said the concept involves a staff-led initiative from a traffic operations perspective. There is no current policy on the books that provides for staff making recommended changes. The policy wording is intended to provide support for staff to consider flexible curb uses. Chair Marciante proposed adding “within the purview of the transportation director” following the term “curb operation changes.”

Chris Iverson reminded the Commissioners that one of the tasks within the curb management plan is the development of a curbside playbook to serve as an operational guide that staff or stakeholders can reference when making a change to the curbside. The proposal was made to refer to the guide by having the policy revised to read “...to accommodate parcel delivery and passenger loading through development review and curb operation changes as designated in the curbside playbook or in the curb management plan.”

Chris Iverson noted that Policy TR-143 pertains to vehicle charging stations and said questions were raised about how it would work through development review and if a developer could be required to add stations. The policy language is intended to give some guidance to have developers potentially construct electric vehicle charging stations at the curb in appropriate locations. As revised, the policy wording is changed from “consider adding electric vehicle charging stations” to “add electric vehicle charging stations” to clarify the intent.

Commissioner Ting asked if changing the policy as proposed would imply there are cases a developer would be required to add an electric vehicle charging station, or if it would still just be a recommendation. Chris Iverson said there is a difference between policy and the Land Use Code. Ultimately the authority to require a developer to do something lands in the Land Use Code rather than in policy language. Realistically the sequence would likely be a recommendation within the curb management plan of locations for where electric vehicle charging stations could go. There likely will be a recommendation for future workflow to change the Land Use Code to incent or require developers to add electric vehicle charging infrastructure in specific locations.

Commissioner Ting said it is one thing to encourage or provide incentives for electric vehicle charging stations and another to recommend changing the Land Use Code to require developers to put in the infrastructure as a condition of development.

Chair Marciante suggested using either “allow” or “encourage.” As revised the language is much stronger and explicit.

Commissioner Kurz said it is not clear that the curb needed to be used for electric vehicle charging, especially when a developer could locate the infrastructure inside a garage. The policy language should not be too prescriptive.

Mr. McDonald noted that the recommendation to repeal Policy S-DT-157.7 came from the Commission in 2011 and 2012 in the context of the Downtown Transportation Plan. There were no electric vehicle charging stations on the street at that time and the policy was intended to allow for the use to occur. In the interim years the technology has evolved along with the demand, which leads to the more directive policy language proposed.

Chair Marciante commented that from the perspective of the city’s overall desire to see electric vehicle charging stations, the proposed policy language is aligned. It would be good to include

in the policy a reference to the curb management plan where the designated on-street parking areas will be located.

Commissioner Ting stressed the need to clarify what exactly the policy is intended to do. If the intent is just to incentivize, the policy makes sense. Chair Marciante said policy language justifies staff actions and through the development review process someone could interpret the policy as being a requirement.

Commissioner Beason said clarification could be gained by having the policy read “Add electric vehicle charging stations in designated on-street parking areas as required through development review.”

Chris Iverson allowed that in lieu of Land Use Code language dictating a specific outcome, policy can be referenced as indicating an outcome. Should the city decide that an electric vehicle charging station should be sited in a specific zone, the policy could be cited as a reference point for decision making through the development review process. The modification proposed by Commissioner Beason is reasonable except that currently there is nothing in development review that would incite staff to have a developer put in an electric vehicle charging station at the curb side, thus the “as required” element could be confusing.

Mr. McDonald suggested that rather than “required through development review” the policy should read “determined through development review.” Commissioner Beason said that would be perfect.

Chris Iverson referred to Policy S-DT-157.6 and noted that it addresses the concept of queue areas. There is a difference between an active load/unload zone and a queue area. Queue areas are for services such as Uber and Lyft to wait in lieu of circling. The concept is particularly applicable in the Downtown.

Chair Marciante suggested the phrase “strategic locations” is not overly clear. It would be better to use “as designated in the curb management plan.”

Chris Iverson noted that Policy New-1 references the concept of curb typologies and curb use prioritization. Ultimately the specifics will be outlined in the curb management plan. Policy New-2 talks about the concept of a pricing-based curbside management program in line with the cost-benefit analysis aimed at implementing a more dedicated curb management program that has a cost component to it.

Chair Marciante suggested the word “holistic” does not really add anything.

Commissioner Ting referred to the same word and pointed out that just what a pricing-based curbside management program will look like until the curb management plan is in hand. The issue may just be one of sequencing, but the difficulty lies in recommending to move ahead with a policy that will result in an as-yet unknown pay-for curb use program. It would be better to include language in the policy calling for implementation of a pay-for curb use program based on specific and included principles or guidelines. As proposed, it is too much like a blank check.

Chair Marciante said the policy should simply offer a guiding framework for how and where a pay-for curb use program will be implemented. The curb management plan is the place where that will occur. The policy does not codify the program. Chris Iverson agreed to take those

comments into consideration.

Chris Iverson noted that Policy New-4 addresses curb technology solutions. The language seeks to avoid including reference to specific technologies to keep the policy open ended. The recommendation of staff was to retain the original draft of the policy.

Policy New-5 addresses mobility hubs. Chris Iverson said the policy is in direct relation to an existing King County policy that speaks to mobility hubs. It was noted that “active travel modes” refers to human powered.

Chair Marciante commented that to date the only human powered modes have been pedestrian and bicycle. Those are the modes referenced in the MIP and to include “active travel modes” might be confusing. Chris Iverson allowed the policy could be reworded to read “...easy transfer between all modes.”

Chair Marciante also suggested that if “mobility hubs” is to be used in policy, it should be defined in the context of curb management overall.

Chris Iverson said Policy New-6 relates to creating curbside zones to facilitate curbside use for vendors such as food trucks in areas with high pedestrian activity. The Commission previously expressed some confusion about the concept of “temporary.” The recommended new language removes the reference to temporary and simply allows for vendors being allowed to function in those zones.

Chair Marciante commented that nothing is said about who would make the decision and when the uses would be allowed.

Commissioner Kurz referred to Policy New-7 and the phrase “vibrated activated curbside zones.” The suggestion was made that “activated” is jargony and “vibrant” could refer to having a lot of people. It would be better to reference being people centered or people friendly. Chris Iverson agreed to make the change.

Commissioner Ting voiced support for the policies overall but stressed the need to think about the tradeoffs and the principles behind the tradeoffs, in addition to who makes the decisions.

Commissioner Beason agreed with the need to make sure the policies are clear as to their intent. Commissioner Kurz concurred.

Chris Iverson said staff would return to the Commission with a final set of policies in June and seek direction to forward them to the Planning Commission. A tentative date in September has been set for a public hearing ahead of submitting the package to the Council for adoption.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None
9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None
10. NEW BUSINESS – None
11. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None
12. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

A. Upcoming Agenda Items

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

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Marciante adjourned the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date