

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

October 13, 2022
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Hybrid Meeting

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Rebhuhn

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Paula Stevens, Chris Long, Chris Iverson, Department of Transportation; Councilmember Zahn

OTHERS PRESENT: Alex Mercuri, Lauren Mattern, 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 Stash who presided.

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Helland. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Beason and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Matt Jack with the Bellevue Downtown Association congratulated the Commission and the city for arriving at an important milestone with the curb management plan curb prioritization and typology. The work will help to organize all of the efforts to date. The BDA transportation committee has been following the city's work very closely and has been developing position statements for milestones along the way and will be submitting a report in the near future. Data and information has been an important topic in informing the methodology of developing the curb management plan, which will be the foundation for future curb management programs. While it is important to have data to inform the development of the plan, there are some things that will not be trackable. Accordingly, establishing the curb management plan on schedule will be very important. The importance of developing a component that gathers information and builds a repository of information to inform adjustments to the curb management plan was stressed.

Mariya Frost, director of transportation for Kemper Development Company, voiced appreciation for the efforts the Commission and the city have put into the development of curb management policies, and for engaging with and listening to those who want to ensure the policies consider the traveling public, residents, property owners and the city as a whole. As

city staff lay out their approach to curb typology, the public will gain a better sense of how curb uses will be understood and prioritized. The city has indicated that curb typology will reflect both the existing usage and the future intention of each block. A curb that currently is used for parking may in the future be earmarked for access for deliveries or drop-offs. A curb currently used for mobility for vehicles may in the future be needed for mobility for transit or some other non-travel placemaking function like a parklet or on-street dining. It is understood that the city has a myriad of modal plans and policy goals that will be used to justify changes to how curbs are used. However, it is not yet clear what the public process will be for changing a curb type based on future intent. It should be indicated who would determine the future intent or use of curbs, and what data would be required to support the change. It should also be clarified what criteria would be used for that evaluation, and how the public and adjacent property owners will be engaged in the process. It should further be noted what notice property owners would receive and what opportunities they would have to inform the future intent, and how a change in typology would account for the potential impacts to traffic congestion which the city has made a commitment to reduce. Under Washington law, the primary purpose of the right-of-way is for public travel, though uses that benefit the public may be allowed provided that they do not interfere with public travel. Accordingly, there need to be guardrails to protect the public from the city taking a curb intended for public travel and changing it to a non-transportation use. Some of the city's curb policies, which will be considered by the Council next month, encourage the use of right-of-way for non-travel purposes, and that may exceed the bounds of Washington law.

Alex Zimmerman with Stand Up America began with sieg heil and noted having talked with the City Council many years ago when Microsoft came to Bellevue about the fact that the influx of people would destroy the city. Nothing changed. Now Amazon is set to come to town with an estimated 30,000 employees. Transportation is currently a nightmare and the city has done nothing about it for many years. The Commission is only a small rabbit when it comes to wielding power, but it can do something about the issue. The city should not give the corporation what it wants without caring about the citizens of Bellevue. The Commission should work to stop Amazon totally. Alex Zimmerman also noted having spoken to the Council many times some years ago about red light cameras. The city is facing a crisis that has no analogy in American history. The Council has done nothing about red light cameras, it is only interested in the money. And the money goes to Amazon, a private corporation. The issue will continually be brought up until something is done about it. There are currently 150,000 living in Bellevue. Adding another 30,000 will only make it a nightmare.

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

Councilmember Zahn reported that toward the end of September the Council published its draft biennial budget. It included \$80 million of project program transportation funds, \$22 million for transportation maintenance, and five additional FTEs. Also in September the Council had an ADA self-evaluation and transition plan report from which it was learned that the city has installed many linear feet of accessible sidewalks, curb ramps and accessible pedestrian signals. The city has also signed an agreement with the Washington State Department of Transportation on the I-405 widening project to add a sidewalk widening under the Main Street bridge on 114th Avenue SE. Earlier in the week the Council proclaimed October 12 as Bellevue School Pool Walk and Roll to School Day which in part was aimed at creating a sense of safe routes to schools. The city has submitted a Safe Access for Everyone grant as part of the Safe Roads and Streets as part of the bipartisan infrastructure law. If received, the funds will be used

to address safety improvements. The I-405/SR-167 executive advisory group met recently and heard that the bus rapid transit south is looking at a 2026-2027 completion date. Work is progressing on the preliminary design for completing the interchange of SR-520 at 124th Avenue NE. The I-405 widening Contract 3, which includes improvements along Coal Creek Parkway is still slated to begin design work in 2025.

Commissioner Helland asked about the timeline for the grant application approval. Assistant Transportation Department Director Chris Long said the city expects to hear something about the grant by January. Councilmember Zahn said the city intends to continue applying for grants as they are offered.

Commissioner Marciante reported on having joined with Principal Planner Kevin McDonald in presenting the Mobility Implementation Plan at the American Planning Association Washington Chapter conference on October 12 in Vancouver. The room was packed and there was a lot of interest expressed in the approach.

Chair Stash reported that recently the Governor's 2022 Smart Communities Award was given to the Bellevue City Council for the Mobility Implementation Plan. The Puget Sound Regional Council recently handed out a similar award. It is a good time to emphasize and acknowledge that a lot of good work has been done.

5. STAFF REPORTS

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald noted that the Commission would be working on the major Comprehensive Plan update in the coming months and informed the Commissioners about a scoping meeting for the Environmental Impact Statement on October 18 at City Hall. The purpose is to hear from the community what issues the EIS should address. The information gathered will feed into the environmental analysis to be done by staff and the consultant team.

On October 27 there will be a virtual training session on parliamentary procedure. Commissioners planning to attend should let staff know.

On November 14 the curb management plan policies will be received by the Council from the Planning Commission. Adoption is anticipated in early December.

While the work to develop the Mobility Implementation Plan has generated awards, the work of implementing the program lies ahead. One of the primary purposes of the MIP is to provide a prioritized project list to inform the Transportation Facilities Plan. The TFP will be updated in 2023 and 2024, so a prioritized project list will be needed in either the third or fourth quarters of 2023. The Commission will be involved in the process.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Curb Management Plan

Senior Transportation Engineer Chris Iverson noted that over the course of three meetings the Commission reviewed and considered draft policy language changes for the Comprehensive Plan. A final recommendation from the Commission was transmitted to the Planning Commission on September 14. The public hearing held by the Planning Commission garnered

about a dozen comments, with three generally in favor and nine opposed. Some of the questions around the Comprehensive Plan language revolved around policies that referred to the Curb Management Plan, which has not yet been finalized. Based on that feedback, policy language was amended. An additional policy was added that specifically recommended creating a Curb Management Plan. Those are among the policies that will be transmitted to and considered by the Council on November 14 and acted on in December.

Chris Iverson reminded the Commissioners that in July there was feedback from the Commission related to the curb pricing principles. The leading principle is now the notion of curb pricing achieving city goals and policies, followed by the idea that curb pricing should be established to achieve target parking occupancy goals. The other principles were unchanged.

The project team conducted a preliminary financial analysis of what would be involved in creating a dedicated curb pricing program. Staff estimated one-time start-up costs would be about \$1.7 million. The estimated annual ongoing costs would be about \$1.1 million, while the annual revenues were projected to be a little over \$1.5 million. The calculations, which are based on existing parking supply and permit issuances, indicate a revenue-positive scenario after year three or four. As the city grows there might be more opportunities for increasing the quantity of on-street parking.

Chris Iverson said there have been comments from the public relative to the curb management plan immediately becoming a pricing program. The fact is there will be additional rounds of engagement before a pricing program is implemented. Pricing program recommendations will be included within the curb management plan and likely will include details on performance metrics, strategies for pricing, data collection, permit system updates, and general outlines for public outreach.

In terms of curb pricing, Chris Iverson stated that there will be recommendations for a pricing program within the draft Curb Management Plan. The recommendations will be reviewed and discussed at future Commission meetings.

With regard to pricing, Commissioner Kurz asked if enforcement would be part of the ongoing costs, and asked who would conduct the enforcement. Chris Iverson said the assumption made in the estimates was that enforcement would be via contract for the Downtown and BelRed neighborhoods. Currently the Downtown area is enforced by a contractor and the available budget accommodates only a single enforcement vehicle. The Spring District and BelRed are not included in that contract; enforcement in those areas is conducted ad hoc by the Bellevue police department.

Commissioner Ting asked what level of confidence staff and the consultants have in the cost and revenue estimates, and asked what data is to be collected. Chris Iverson said the estimates reflect an average between what is considered to be low and high scenarios. The detailed work will be part of future initiatives. The data collection would likely be focused on parking occupancy and utilization of the curb space, as well as enforcement and general operations of the street grid.

Commissioner Helland suggested that a curb management plan is necessary where there are occupancy issues, but until there is a data that shows that, the creation of a beautiful plan will not be supported. The question is what kind of data is needed to feed the plan and make it useful. Chris Iverson said there is some data in hand from studies over the last year relative to parking occupancy and utilization on the street. Data from public outreach and feedback from

surveys and focus groups has also been considered, and there is data relative to enforcement violations. The idea is to continue developing a more stringent regiment of collection as the program evolves. The data in hand is sufficient to suggest that a curb management plan is needed.

Chair Stash asked about the percentages for the sources of revenues. Chris Iverson said the estimation was that the majority of revenues would come from paid parking and the balance from permits. Estimates for permit uses were shown conservatively for this exercise due to unknowns about what uses would be included within the program. Depending on what is included in the program, revenues could range from the tens of thousands to millions annually.

Commissioner Helland asked if pricing might include the leasing of space by either a property owner or tenant. Chris Iverson said that was included in the possible permit revenues. Chris Iverson said generally any leasing of the right-of-way is required by city code to be issued via permit. A restaurant or retail business wanting to use the curbside or sidewalk space would need to seek and obtain a permit.

Turning to the issue of curb typology, Chris Iverson recalled the previous discussions about the concept of curb supply and demand, where the demand side is accommodated by concepts like pricing, time limits and permit issuances. The supply side tracks how much curb space is available for any given use. Demand for the curb is growing, and the curb cannot be everything to everyone. Curbs on some streets are needed to perform one type of function, and something else on other streets. To date there is no guiding tool to inform decisions relative to curb design and functionality. The intent is to create the necessary tool to maximize the curb benefit across the myriad of uses. The curb typology concept is a good way to achieve that.

A curb typology is a framework for guiding decisions about how to prioritize the use of the space along the curb. It helps define where existing curb uses are happening. Layering the plans and policies will eventually get to a recommendation for a future typology. For the immediate short term, however, the focus is on the existing conditions of curb space. It is hoped that existing city plans and policies will inform the function of the curb environment. There are also modal-based network plans that will help to inform the typology. What is being heard from the community and what is being observed in terms of land use growth and the associated demand will help to dictate the outcome.

Chris Iverson said there is a clear distinction between looking at specific elements and thinking what is best for people. It is people who use spaces in a real way and it will be important to match the intent of any given curb space to how people actually use it. Challenges along the curb space such as double parking, lane blocking and other unsafe behaviors are viewed both as human error and as a design discrepancy. There can be a dissonance between the built environment and how people use it. The curb is a valuable public space and it is important to emphasize that. The right-of-way from a transportation perspective serves mostly mobility uses, but it can also serve other uses. Curb typology will be a language that can describe the priorities and help guide decision making. Existing plans and policies indirectly describe curb-related needs and priorities. While they may not be explicit relative to what should happen at the curb, they will facilitate discussion about how curb spaces should perform.

Curb typology should be thought about in two different ways; the first is existing curb conditions and the second is future conditions. As the city grows, as capital projects are built in the transportation realm, and as traffic operations change, the typology can be used as a reference in making decisions, all with an eye on articulating the future vision of the curb and

identifying priorities. The typology will illustrate both existing and future curb use priorities. It will look at performance metrics, and it will indicate specific uses within each curb type, but it will not set new modal priorities or overrule prescriptive codes.

Lauren Mattern, consultant with Nelson/Nygaard, said curb typology is a nascent but growing practice nationally and internationally due to increasing pressures on the curb uses. The practice has been most useful in places where there are all kinds of requests coming in ranging from changing parking lanes to accommodating busways and a desire for more parking availability. Some cities have lacked a policy framework and thus have been forced to design their approach to be more flexible. In all cases, the cities have sought to find the balance between responding to immediate context and reinforcing modal network priorities. Bellevue is ahead of the game in that it has established policies and priorities to respond to, as well as focused planning areas. As city blocks evolve, there will be a need to verify that the policies are still useful and responsive to the demand for different curb uses.

Alex Mercuri, consultant with Nelson/Nygaard, said curb typology is aimed at advancing the city's goals as established in policies and plans. It will reference those policies and plans, particularly in the future typology; include key performance indicators to track curb changes over time; and will remain flexible to allow for responding to land use and transportation changes.

There are four primary functions of the curb: the curb supports movement along the length of the block; the curb supports access to adjacent uses; the curbside area itself is a public place for activities and gathering; and the curb provides space for storage for various types of mobility. Those four functions form the basis for the curb typology framework. The acronym MAPS stands for movement, access, place and storage.

Alex Mercuri said the movement and storage typology both have modal subtypes in recognition of the wide range of granularity in how people move. For movement, the subtypes are vehicles, bicycles and transit movements, while for storage the subtypes are vehicle storage and transit storage. Relative to auto movement, the curbside travel lane is the hallmark feature and entails movements along the length of the curb without any other uses in between. In Bellevue it is often accompanied by a continuous landscape buffer that separates the roadway from the sidewalk. The typology contains only limited active adjacent uses. With regard to transit movement, there are typically bus lanes that sometimes are painted red. With transit comes transit stops, which are access elements that can vary from block to block depending on the transit service and the design of the street. Landscaping is often included along with other curbside elements. The bicycle movement involves dedicated bicycle facilities such as bike lanes and paths, cycle tracks and shared use paths. The curbside lane may or may not include bicycle parking.

The access typology involves a lot of activities at the curb, ranging from freight loading/unloading to passenger pick-up/drop-off zones, bicycle parking, and store fronts and entrances to key destinations. Landscaping typically includes breaks that allow access to and from the curb. The place curb typology involves activities that happen within the curbside space. In Bellevue that is primarily curbside dining and parklets. Other cities allow for other programmed spaces within the curbside area.

The auto storage curb typology revolves around vehicle parking, either unrestricted, time-limited or priced. The landscaping element includes breaks that allow for access to and from the curbside parking. Storage for transit typically involves dedicated curb space for transit

layovers, though it may include transit operator facilities such as seating, access to restrooms or break areas.

Some curbs fulfill many different functions and have multiple existing curb types. Some are more common and compatible with other uses, though some are mutually exclusive. The future typology will allow for multiple types but will also include a priority curb type.

Commissioner Helland noted that bicycle parking is listed under access rather than storage. Alex Mercuri allowed that bicycle parking is an interesting component in that it pairs with bicycle movement, access to place, and is a type of storage. In Bellevue, however, bicycle parking does not primarily happen in curbside lanes.

Commissioner Ting asked what for a crisp definition of what the curb is and where it ends starting from buildings outward. Chris Iverson explained that Bellevue has an interesting environment in the sense and in the urban core areas the sidewalk is included within the private space. As such, sidewalk and planter strip requirements are dictated within the Land Use Code and conditioned with private development. Accordingly, the curb as defined in the Bellevue context is the space within the public right-of-way adjacent to the sidewalk, planter space and the curb and gutter. The curb technically includes the roadway space, but the focus is not primarily on the full width of the roadway. In the case of two-lane roadways, the curb area would include only the travel lane adjacent to the curb.

Commissioner Ting suggested the issues surrounding bicycle storage could also apply to vehicular storage. Alex Mercuri agreed and noted that the function of storage is not exactly binary. The existing typology seeks to describe the current functions of parking and access, both of which are tracked.

Referring to the comment made about the typology approach being based on priorities, plans and policies from the city, Commissioner Ting suggested it would be helpful to have an appendix listing out the relative plans and policies. Chris Iverson agreed and said the issue will be addressed when focused on the future typology.

Chris Iverson clarified for Commissioner Marciante that except for rare examples, Bellevue does not currently have bicycle parking in the street rights-of-way; most bicycles park on the sidewalks, which is technically not considered part of the curb in the Bellevue context. Commissioner Marciante said that would mean in the context of the current typology, bicycles are a function of access rather than storage, though in the future the storage of bicycles may be considered in the curb area.

Chair Stash referred to the comment made about the KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR being used to track changes over time and suggested the KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR should also serve to confirm that the system is performing as desired. Chris Iverson said it is accurate to say the KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR tracks how curb performance is behaving and meeting the intent of the future typology.

Alex Mercuri shared with the Commission draft maps of the existing conditions for the four curb typologies. A draft map that combined all four curb typologies was also shared with the Commission. It was stated that the combined map was a reflection of how the curb is currently used. The future curb typology will streamline the overlapping types and indicate a priority used for each curb. It was noted that there are gaps and breaks in some curb types in key networks given current conditions. The future type will reflect the city's full buildout vision of

the networks. Some types and subtypes only appear in a few locations, but the future typology will indicate additional location opportunities for prioritizing some of those types.

Commissioner Ting allowed that the curb management plan applies citywide but noted it is primarily focused on Performance Management Area 1. Chris Iverson confirmed that. Commissioner Ting suggested that should be made very clear to avoid the notion that the work seeks to create citywide policy. Chris Iverson said that can be done.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Helland, Chris Iverson said the streamlining of overlapping types is tied to the decision-making process of determining the performance of any given curb space, something that currently is done on a case-by-case basis and often in isolation. The future typology will help to inform what the city wants to see in terms of primary and secondary curb types for given blocks. The future illustration will show the primary curb type, but that will not preclude other uses of the curb.

Commissioner Marciante stressed the importance of recognizing conflicts between priority uses. It will not over the long term be a simple thing to change the existing uses and there should be a recognition of the things that will need to be done to manage the conflicts.

Commissioner Kurz asked if the typology survey is built on an underlying dataset that informs all the possible uses for each street. Chris Iverson said for the existing conditions, the exercise was predicated on going out into the field and reflecting the existing conditions. Part of the curb management plan project will be the development of a digital inventory that accurately reflects things like the linear feet of parking space or where specific load zones are. The typology is more high level and shows things on a block-by-block basis.

Commissioner Marciante asked the team has thought about using the typology to document prohibited uses as well as allowed uses on specific blocks. Chris Iverson mentioned that prohibited uses have not been discussed. Lauren Mattern noted being unaware of cities that have established prohibited uses but agreed it bears looking into. In most cases the approach taken has been on prioritizing uses.

Commissioner Helland asked if the city is receiving requests from businesses to have their sidewalk tables or retail spaces deemed a place. Chris Iverson said there have been quite a few such requests fielded over the last couple of years.

Vice Chair Beason agreed that certain activities should be prohibited from a safety standpoint. Cars just stopping where they want to load and unload is one.

Commissioner Marciante said the typology exercise is a very useful framework for making policy decisions, but at the end of the day cities have been deciding on a parking spot-by-parking spot basis uses like loading zones and their time limits. That should be specifically called out for the public. The intent of the curb typology is not to set specific parking or permitting, rather it is to inform those processes.

Commissioner Ting asked if it is within the scope of the curb management plan to define where parking zones should and should not exist. Chris Iverson said that is generally not within the scope of the curb management plan. The intent of the curb management plan is to establish a long-range planning framework rather than an implementation strategy. Commissioner Ting stressed the need to be transparent in regard to the outcomes that will come from the curb management plan.

Commissioner Marciante commented that when the bike plan went out, it was specific to the need to have a certain number of bicycle corridors, and it highlighted the likely best places for them. The bike plan did not, however, include any feasibility analysis for designing the specific routes. With the bike plan in hand, the city is working to implement it project by project. The modal plan is the vision that sets the stage, and there is a process for implementing it.

Chris Iverson said the ways in which changes on the curb will be brought to light will be the focus on the next study session. The curb management plan certainly will be used as a reference to help inform the actual design of projects such as those listed in the Transportation Facilities Plan. Additionally, the curb typology will inform the conditions for curb space during the development review process.

Commissioner Helland suggested it would be helpful to know how decisions are made currently versus how they will be made going forward in light of curb typology.

Answering a question asked by Vice Chair Beason, Chris Iverson said the primary resource currently used to make decisions about the curb is the city development code. The code dictates sidewalk and planter strip widths, for instance by street. The curb line is often set based on things like the TFP and the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan, which generally is addressed through a case-by-case process. Decisions about on-street parking versus a load zone, and how many cuts should be allowed in the landscaping strip to facility movements from the curb, are made individually through the development review process. Ultimately the typology will help to inform that process. Vice Chair Beason suggested the rub lies with the fact that development is already occurring. Going back will be difficult at best if possible at all. Chris Iverson said the best opportunities to have development change the curb will be found in neighborhoods outside of the Downtown within PMA 1. BelRed is a great example. There is a street grid that has been codified and development is starting to happen. The future curb typology will be able to inform what those streets that have not been built yet will look like. The same will be true for Wilburton and East Main. There are several parcels in the Downtown that are not at their maximum potential and the curb typology will assist in that arena. Changes in the Downtown will also happen through other initiatives, like operations changes or capital improvement projects.

Alex Mercuri took a moment to briefly outline the next steps.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 8, 2022

Commissioner Ting called attention to a small change outlined in an email sent to staff.

A motion to approve the minutes as amended by Commissioner Ting was made by Commissioner Marciante. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Beason and the motion carried unanimously.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Commissioner Remote Participation for the November 10 Meeting

A motion to approve remote participation for Commissioner Ting on November 10 was made by Vice Chair Beason. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helland and the motion carried unanimously.

11. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

A. Upcoming Agenda Items

Mr. McDonald took a moment to review the schedule of upcoming meeting dates and agenda items.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Stash adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date