

City of
Bellevue



Transportation Commission Study Session

DATE: November 3, 2022

TO: Chair Stash and Members of the Transportation Commission

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SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Transportation Element Policy Amendments

Staff request that the Transportation Commission review the proposed policy amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element, discuss and provide comments.

Action

☒ Discussion/Direction

☐ Information

PROJECT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council initiated the periodic update to the Comprehensive Plan on February 28, 2022, and must adopt the changes by the end of 2024. Bellevue City Code defines the Transportation Commission's role to provide policy recommendations in the update of the Transportation Element.

3.63.070 Power and duties.

1. Long-range transportation planning, including participation with the planning commission in preparing, reviewing and recommending comprehensive plan updates and subarea transportation plans; provided, that the planning commission shall review and make final recommendations to the city council on all matters which will be adopted by the city council as part of the comprehensive plan.

Community Development Department staff provided briefings to the Commission about the overall scope of the update (March 10, 2022) and the scope of the update to the Transportation element (September 8, 2022). Staff now requests the Commission to provide comments on the proposed policy amendments to the Transportation Element. The Commission's feedback at this time will ensure that the policy amendments reflect direction provided and address any concerns. Some Transportation element policies are interdisciplinary (ie, related to land use or environmental topics) therefore they may incorporate feedback from other commissions, the public, and subject matter experts. The Commission will review the draft Transportation

element policies again in 2023 after feedback from all commissions, the public and staff has been integrated.

The Transportation element has been amended several times since the last Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update in 2015. Therefore, no policy amendments for new transportation planning initiatives are needed for this update (Curb Management Plan policies are being incorporated in the 2022 amendments).

Planning initiatives that have resulted in policy amendments to the Transportation element since the 2015 update include:

- Transportation Demand Management
- Vision Zero
- Complete Streets
- Multimodal Level-of-Service
- Mobility Implementation Plan (includes Multimodal Concurrency policy Q3 2022)
- Curb Management Plan (currently in process, policy amendments Q4 2022).

These prior policy amendments have addressed the substantive changes that have been initiated by the City Council since 2015. However, this periodic update is an opportunity to consider the element holistically, to re-establish a consistent approach to policies across all elements, to update language and to ensure consistency with updated regional plans.

The proposed policy amendments are consistent with the direction from the state Growth Management Act (GMA), Puget Sound Regional Council's Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs) and King County's Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), these are the guiding documents for the Comprehensive Plan.

PRELIMINARY STAFF PROPOSAL FOR TRANSPORTATION POLICY AMENDMENTS

Across the entire Comprehensive Plan, staff have been asked to explore opportunities to reduce the "volume" of the Plan. Over time, the Plan has accumulated policies that address topics that have since been resolved or that are overly prescriptive. Transportation Department staff have reviewed every policy in the Transportation element and have made an initial determination to "repeal", "modify", or "retain" each policy. Attachment A is a list of all proposed policy amendments in strike-draft form. Policies to be retained are not listed. Attachment B is a comprehensive spreadsheet that documents the proposed disposition of each policy.

Minor Policy Amendments. Staff proposes minor policy amendments to achieve clarity and consistency across the Transportation element and the Comprehensive Plan as a whole. These proposed policy amendments help to streamline the Plan and are non-substantive.

Policies Overly Prescriptive. Policies are intended to provide overall direction rather than a prescriptive recipe for implementation. Yet, several existing policies include lists of specific implementation direction. Implementing plans contain detail to implement the policies. Examples of implementing plans include the Mobility Implementation Plan, Transit Master Plan, Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan, and the Vision Zero Strategy Plan. While it is appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan to provide general direction for these plans, the

specifics related to implementation are appropriately located in the implementation plans. The proposed policy amendments eliminate most lists of implementation details.

Policies Related to Completed Projects. As an example, East Link light rail construction and station area planning required policies in the Comprehensive Plan in 2015. These policies reflected recommendations from the Light Rail Best Practices Report. Staff recommends repealing these dated policies and amending other policies to ensure they apply to future planning for light rail/high-capacity transit specifically and to transit generally.

Consistency with Regional Plans. In 2020 The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) adopted the [Vision 2050](#) plan for Central Puget Sound. In 2022 the Puget Sound Regional Council updated and extended the [Regional Transportation Plan](#) from 2040 to 2050. The [King County Countywide Planning Policies](#) were adopted in late 2021. The Transportation element and other elements acknowledge and incorporate regional planning, include policy amendments that:

- Refer to Countywide Centers as focus areas of growth and transportation investment. Countywide Centers in Bellevue are roughly equivalent to the Type 1 Performance Management Areas in the Mobility Implementation Plan (Wilburton/East Main, BelRed) and the Type 2 Performance Management Areas (Crossroads, Eastgate, Factoria)
- Identify and prioritize multimodal transportation investments to support growth (The Transportation Element policies do this by referring to the Mobility Implementation Plan and the Transportation Facilities Plan)
- Ensure transportation investments address racial and social equity issues (policy references to the Mobility Implementation Plan)
- Respond to the causes and effect of climate change (policy references to the Mobility Implementation Plan which includes per capita vehicle miles traveled and mode share. The Environmental Element and the Environmental Sustainability Plan include other climate policies and actions.)

NEXT STEPS

A draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is being prepared for the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, and additional public comments will be received and documented in the final EIS. In The DEIS will study a range of growth alternatives, and a preferred alternative will be selected. Transportation system impacts and mitigation strategies (using the Mobility Implementation Plan as guidance) will be identified. Additional policy amendments may result.

The state requires the updated Comprehensive Plan to be adopted no later than December 2024. Bellevue staff recommend a timeline that will lead to Council action on the Plan as early as May 2024. This timeline provides the opportunity to address any unforeseen circumstances prior to the deadline.

The planned policy study sessions for Transportation Commission are as follows:

March 9, 2023: (Direction) Discuss the implications of growth alternatives on the Transportation network and prepare a preliminary Transportation Commission recommendation for Transportation Element policies

July 13, 2023: (Action) Review the full draft of the Comprehensive Plan Update and approve Transportation Commission policy recommendations for transmittal to the Planning Commission.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Preliminary Staff Proposal for Transportation Element Policy Amendments
- B. Comprehensive Transportation Element Policy Spreadsheet