

City of
Bellevue



Transportation Commission Study Session

DATE: May 11, 2023

TO: Chair Stash, Vice Chair Helland, and Members of the Transportation Commission

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SUBJECT: Bike Bellevue – Overview, Project Principles, and Engagement Plan

DIRECTION REQUESTED

Action

Discussion/Direction

Information

At the Study Session on May 11, staff will introduce the Bike Bellevue project, which will begin a series of engagements with the Transportation Commission. No action is requested on May 11. Staff will seek Commission concurrence on a community engagement plan at the May 25 Study Session. Council requests the Transportation Commission provide a Bike Bellevue recommendation to the Transportation Director, with a target deliverable of Q1 2024.

SUMMARY

The city has started work on [Bike Bellevue](#), a project aimed at implementing bicycle network improvements in the city's urban core — including Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed. The goal of Bike Bellevue is to enhance the city's multimodal transportation system and help make getting around the city safer, more equitable, sustainable, and accessible for everyone. On March 27, 2023, the City Council approved eight Bike Bellevue project principles (summarized below and included as Attachment 1) and directed staff to work with the

Transportation Commission to prepare and submit a recommendation for implementation to the Transportation Director.

1. **Safety:** Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes and minimize conflicts between roadway users through bikeway design.
2. **Connectivity:** Implement a connected network of bicycle lanes that facilitate access to major destinations.
3. **Comfort:** Design bicycle lanes that maximize separation between motor vehicles and people bicycling on streets with higher speed limits and more vehicle traffic.
4. **Evaluation:** Use a data informed approach to evaluate impacts to all modes of travel and design the program to maximize the mobility of all modes.
5. **Coordination:** Coordinate transportation and land use efforts underway in Bellevue to ensure equity and sustainability outcomes are aligned.
6. **Partnerships:** Identify partnership opportunities to advance the implementation of bicycle projects.
7. **Engagement:** Engage community stakeholders in setting the priorities for Bike Bellevue investments.
8. **Equity:** Promote equity and inclusion in the development and delivery of bicycle projects. Consistent with the city's Diversity Advantage Plan, Bike Bellevue will center equity, access, inclusion, and opportunity in project delivery.

Major capital projects and levy-supported projects are implementing bikeways in Bellevue's Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed neighborhoods (Attachment 2); however, significant gaps in the network remain, limiting access to and the utility of these investments. In 2022, Council approved \$4.5 million for CIP PW-W/B-85 (Attachment 3) in the 2023-2029 Capital Investment Program to plan and implement rapid-build bicycle infrastructure in the Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed neighborhoods as to be defined by this Bike Bellevue project.

The neighborhoods in the project area represent just 8.5% of the city geography but account for 65% of citywide jobs, 52% of citywide transit usage, 36% of citywide High Injury Network, and 34% of the city's pedestrian and bicyclists involved in fatal and serious injury crashes. In 2025, East Link Light Rail will serve five stations in the project area, and Eastrail will open new segments along the old rail corridor. Ensuring safe multimodal access for all travelers is critical as this geography prepares for 30,000 new jobs and 27,000 new residents by 2035.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Bike Bellevue aligns with Council's commitment to a Safe System approach to Vision Zero and eliminating traffic deaths and serious injury collisions by 2030. Safe mobility for people walking, rolling, and bicycling is the city's highest priority road safety challenge. Even though these road users represent just 5% of all crashes on city streets, they represent 55% of all fatal and serious injury crashes in Bellevue.

In a 2017 online questionnaire involving more than 1,200 people, 57% of respondents reported feeling unsafe riding a bicycle in Downtown, and 62% indicated they would ride a bike in

Downtown more often if streets had safe and comfortable bike lanes. People bicycling and driving reported feeling most comfortable traveling along physically separated bike lanes.

Past efforts to advance individual bicycle facility improvements along specific corridors have proved to be challenging, involving time-consuming and costly consultative processes that ultimately delivered only incremental segments of the safe and connected bicycle network (Attachment 4). A coordinated approach to implementing bicycle network improvements — with a single engagement process through which stakeholders arrive at a clearly articulated strategy for investments over multiple years — will help the city achieve its goals for network completeness more efficiently and effectively.

NEXT STEPS

Bike Bellevue incorporates oversight by the Transportation Commission with community engagement to identify investment concepts and priorities for rapid build bicycle improvements that will fill network gaps in the project area. Rapid build projects use low-cost materials (such as paint and posts) to quickly install projects on existing streets with no or minimal impact to existing curbs and drainage.

The network design process will consider the 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan, 2016 Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program, 2022 Mobility Implementation Plan, East Link Connections, Eastrail Implementation, and evolving best practices for how to establish a network of safe and comfortable bikeways for people of all ages and abilities. The project timeline will sequence as follows:

- May 25, 2023: Staff seeks Transportation Commission approval of the Bike Bellevue community engagement plan (Attachment 5) that will include focus groups, an online presence, a public open house, direct engagement and feedback from diverse stakeholder organizations, and a postcard mailer sent to every address in the project area. Input gathered through these engagement strategies will be reported in briefings to the Transportation Commission.
- Q2-Q4 2023: Transportation Commission considers technical details including a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Checklist that will be made available for public review, project sequencing priorities, and public input informing the development of Bike Bellevue.
- Q4 2023-Q1 2024: Transportation Commission prepares a Bike Bellevue recommendation for the Transportation Director.
- Q4 2023-Q1 2024: Transportation Director considers Transportation Commission's Bike Bellevue recommendation. Project implementation, including seeking opportunities for additional funding, is initiated.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Project Principles
2. Project Area Map
3. CIP Project Description (PW-W/B-85)
4. Background on Bicycle Planning and Implementation in Bellevue

5. Draft Community Engagement Plan