

City of  
Bellevue



# Transportation Commission Study Session

**DATE:** December 14, 2023

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

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**SUBJECT:** Bike Bellevue Update

## DIRECTION REQUESTED

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Action  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Discussion/Direction <i>(No action; recommendation at a future meeting)</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Information   |

At the Study Session on December 14, 2023, staff will provide the Transportation Commission the following [Bike Bellevue](#) project updates:

- Konveio online engagement platform summary.
- Email and letter communications from the public on Bike Bellevue.
- Update on upcoming focus groups and stakeholder interviews.
- DRAFT Community Engagement Plan.
- 2044 travel demand model results.

While no action is requested of the Transportation Commission at this meeting, your recommendation to the Transportation Director is anticipated in Q2 of 2024.

## BACKGROUND

Bellevue's 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan commits to implementing complete continuous, cross-city, bicycle priority corridors. The following timeline reflects actions on bikeway projects after adoption of the 2009 Plan:

- February 9, 2015 – Council approved Implementation Principles that direct the Transportation Commission and staff to work with community stakeholders to meet or exceed the City's 2019 project completion targets identified in the 2009 Plan.

- April 28, 2016 – The Transportation Commission endorsed the Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program (BRIP) which includes proposed citywide investments that are: (i) Connected, prioritizing a network that ‘fills the gaps’ in lieu of piece-meal implementation; (ii) Protected, promoting physically separated facilities to minimize conflicts between roadway users where possible; (iii) Rapid, leveraging early-win opportunities that can quickly advance project delivery.
- November 8, 2016 – Bellevue voters approved the 20-year Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion Levy. Bicycle network improvements are one of the six programs funded by the levy.
- During 2017 and 2019 – Staff worked with the Transportation Commission and community in a discussion about how to make downtown a safe, comfortable, and attractive place for people to bike. Both the 108th Avenue Northeast Bikeway and the Main Street Bikeway were implemented through the BRIP program.
- December 14, 2020 – Council adopted a 2021-2027 Capital Investment Program (CIP) plan that included \$1.5 million for Growth Corridor High Comfort Bicycle Network Implementation (CIP #PW-W/B-85) in the Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed neighborhoods.
- April 18, 2022 – Council adopted the Mobility Implementation Plan, which established performance targets for the bicycle network measured using a concept known as level of traffic stress (LTS). The Bike Bellevue project area includes multiple arterials where the current LTS deters people from bicycling due to concerns over safety.
- November 21, 2022 – Council adopted a 2023-2029 Capital Investment Program (CIP) plan that increased to \$4.5 million funding for Growth Corridor High Comfort Bicycle Network Implementation (CIP #PW-W/B-85) in the Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed neighborhoods.

CIP #PW-W/B-85 funds Bike Bellevue work and includes the following direction: “This program funds the design and implementation of bicycle projects in the Growth Corridor to coincide with the opening of light rail stations and Eastrail. The design process will consider the 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan, 2016 Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program, and evolving best practices for how to establish a grid of safe and comfortable bikeways, including connections to key destinations along routes that are suitable for people of all ages and abilities. This proposal will fund a consultant contract to complete design and implementation of three priority projects by 2024.”

### **DRAFT DESIGN CONCEPTS GUIDE**

On March 27, 2023, the City Council approved Bike Bellevue project principles (Attachment A). Pursuant to these principles, “The City Council envisions a well-connected bicycle network for Bellevue that is safe, enhances livability, supports economic vitality, and equitably serves the mobility needs of people of all ages and abilities.” Responsive to Council direction, staff produced a DRAFT Design Concepts Guide, September 2023 to support the Transportation Commission’s evaluation of the corridor designs. Further, the DRAFT Guide serves as the project reference document as staff coordinates with the Bellevue residents, community groups, businesses and employees, major institutions, and outside agencies.

On September 14, 2023, staff presented the Transportation Commission with the DRAFT Design Concepts Guide, September 2023 (available on the project webpage) and conveyed that the document will evolve over the course of the project to account for project refinements informed by technical analysis and public input. Staff reviewed edits to the DRAFT Guide, now identified as the DRAFT Design Concepts Guide, November 2023 (available on the project webpage) with the Transportation Commission at its November 9, 2023, meeting.

Following the release of the DRAFT Guide, staff commenced community engagement which included an online project design feedback tool. Through this Konveio tool, the public was able to submit comments and offer their perspective on feedback from others on the proposed designs for each Bike Bellevue corridor. Between September 15 and November 17, 2023, staff received 1,719 comments. The following is a summary of the sentiments expressed on each of the eleven candidate corridors (see Attachment B).

#### Corridor 1: Northup Way / Northeast 20th

- There is interest in vertically protected lanes with stronger protection than flexible posts, such as planters, curb, or bollards. Routine maintenance of these protected lanes is needed to ensure that debris does not pile up.
- There is concern about removing a vehicle travel lane, due to future growth and potential impacts on traffic, local access, residents, and businesses/local economy. Some cited the existing 520 trail as an existing alternative.
- Intersection and driveway improvements are desired including no right-turn-on-red, bike boxes, bike detection, signals, and green skipped markings; as well as reducing the number of driveways where multiple access points are present.
- There were various alternate routes proposed, including a link along Spring Boulevard, an off-street path and the existing 520 trail.

#### Corridor 2: Northeast 12th Street

- There is interest in extending the bike facility to close the gap between the proposed corridor and 100th Avenue northeast (to Northeast 8th or Northeast 10th Street).
- Advanced bicycle detection is desired along Northeast 12th Street to give pedestrians/cyclists the priority and enable safer, less interrupted mobility.
- There is interest in vertically protected lanes with stronger protection than flexible posts, such as planters, curb, or bollards.

#### Corridor 3: Northeast 12th Street/Bel-Red Road

- There is interest in vertically protected lanes with stronger protection than flexible posts, such as planters, curb, or bollards.
- There is concern about removing a vehicle travel lane, due to future growth and potential impacts on traffic, local access, residents and businesses/local economy. Some cited alternative routes such as a bike lane along the new light rail line and Spring Boulevard.
- Intersection and driveway improvements are desired including no right-turn-on-red, bike boxes, and bike detection; as well as improving visibility and reducing the number of driveways where multiple access points are present.

#### Corridor 4: Bel-Red Road, 132nd Avenue Northeast to 148th Avenue Northeast

- There is interest in vertically protected lanes with stronger protection than flexible posts, such as planters, curb, or bollards.
- There is concern about removing a vehicle travel lane due to current traffic concerns as well as future growth and potential impacts on traffic, local access, residents and businesses/local economy.
- Intersection and driveway improvements are desired including bike boxes, reducing turning radii with curb bulb outs and green skipped markings; as well as improving visibility and reducing the number of driveways where multiple access points are present.

#### Corridor 5: Bel-Red Road, 148th Avenue Northeast to 156th Avenue Northeast

- There is interest in vertically protected lanes and corners with stronger protection than flexible posts, such as planters, curb, or bollards.
- There is concern about removing a vehicle travel lane due to current traffic concerns as well as future growth and potential impacts on traffic, local access, residents, and businesses/local economy.
- Extending the proposed bike facility to connect to areas such as Crossroads, Overlake Village, and Marymoor Park/Redmond is desired; as well as to fill in bike facility gaps to the future 156th Avenue lanes in Redmond and to Highland Middle School.

#### Corridor 6: Northeast First Street / Northeast Second Street

- There is interest in vertically protected lanes, with many commenters asking for stronger protection than flexible posts, such as planters, curb, or bollards.
- There is concern about removing a vehicle travel lane due to current traffic concerns as well as future growth and potential impacts on traffic, local access, residents, and businesses/local economy.
- As Northeast 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street cross multiple arterials, there is interest in bike detection and signals that increase safety/connectivity for cyclists and reduce conflicts with vehicles.

#### Corridor 7: Lake Washington Boulevard Northeast

- There is concern with removing on-street parking. Commenters expressed interest in either maintaining or providing alternative parking if the bike lane will remove parking spots.
- Intersection improvements are desired including bike boxes, controlled intersections, and green skipped markings; as well as improving visibility of driveways.
- There is interest in vertically protected lanes with stronger protection than flexible posts, such as planters, curb, or bollards.

#### Corridor 8: 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast

- Intersection and driveway improvements are desired including no right-turn-on-red, bike boxes, bike detection, signals, and green skipped markings; as well as improving visibility and controlled stops for driveways.
- There is interest in vertically protected lanes with stronger protection than flexible posts, such as planters, curb, or bollards.

- There is concern about removing a vehicle travel lane due to current traffic concerns as well as future growth and potential impacts on traffic, local access, residents and businesses/local economy.

#### Corridor 9: Wilburton Route

- There is interest in extending this corridor to connect to locations such as the Spring District, upcoming light rail stations and the Botanical Garden; as well as to bike facilities including Eastrail and Lake Hills Connector, among others.
- There is interest in vertically protected lanes with stronger protection than flexible posts, such as planters, curb, or bollards.
- Intersection and driveway improvements are desired including no right-turn-on-red, bike boxes, bike detection, signals, and green skipped markings; as well as improving visibility and signage for driveways.

#### Corridor 10: 116th Avenue Northeast

- There is concern about removing a vehicle travel lane due to future growth and potential impacts on traffic, local access, residents, and businesses/local economy.
- There is interest in vertically protected lanes, with many commenters asking for stronger protection than flexible posts, such as planters, curb, or bollards.
- There is interest in extending the bike facility further north and south to make 116th Avenue Northeast feel safer for cyclists; as well as to connect to the future Wilburton light rail station and regional facilities such as the Eastrail, I-90 and 520 trails.

#### Corridor 11: 140th Avenue Northeast

- There is interest in extending the bike facility further north and south to connect to Evergreen Village, future light rail stations, Sammamish High School, and the 520 trail.
- There is concern about removing a vehicle travel lane due to current traffic concerns as well as future growth and potential impacts on traffic, local access, residents, and businesses/local economy.
- Intersection and driveway improvements are desired including no right-turn-on-red, bike boxes, bike detection, signals, and green skipped markings; as well as improving visibility and reducing the number of driveways where multiple access points are present.

Refinements to the Bike Bellevue corridor designs will be informed by the community engagement process as well as insights from cross-departmental conversations underway with the Police and Fire Departments and Transportation maintenance staff. Updates to the DRAFT Design Concepts Guide will be shared in future Transportation Commission meetings and will also be available on the Bike Bellevue webpage.

#### **EMAIL AND LETTER COMMUNICATIONS**

On September 14, 2023, staff sought Transportation Commission guidance on how to manage the flow of constituent email and letter communications on Bike Bellevue. Commissioners requested staff forward staff responses to emails and letters when they are produced and to compile the communications into packets and share insights at meetings.

Between November 9 and December 6, 2023, staff received a combined 270 community emails and letters on Bike Bellevue. The following is a summary of the sentiments expressed in these communications:

- 45 communications expressed support for the Bike Bellevue projects (Attachment C).
- 215 communications expressed opposition towards Bike Bellevue projects (Attachment D).
- 10 communications requested additional information without expressing support for or opposition towards Bike Bellevue projects (Attachment E).

The above compilation of community emails and letters – for the period between November 9 and December 6, 2023 - is additive to the prior compilation of communication emails and letters shared with the Transportation Commission at its November 9, 2023, meeting (available on the project webpage).

At the December 14 meeting staff will offer insights derived from the current compilation of 270 communications received and staff responses to community emails (Attachment F). The Transportation Commission will continue to receive all email communications on Bike Bellevue sent to staff and to [TransportationCommission@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:TransportationCommission@bellevuewa.gov).

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN FOCUS GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

The DRAFT Community Engagement Plan – last shared with the Transportation Commission on November 9, 2023 (available on the project webpage) – is updated (Attachment G) and references the city conducting focus groups and stakeholder interviews in January-February 2024. As is the case with the DRAFT Design Concepts Guide, the

The focus groups and stakeholder interviews will prioritize engagement of people with limited English proficiency (including Mandarin and Spanish speakers) and low-income populations. This focus aligns with the City Council approved Bike Bellevue project principles. Pursuant to these Council principles, staff is directed to:

- *Engage community stakeholders in setting the priorities for Bike Bellevue investments. A targeted public engagement strategy will provide input on bicycle priorities from a range of stakeholders including residents, businesses, major institutions, under-represented communities, neighboring cities, transportation agencies, and other organizations.*
- *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.*

To engage with harder to reach populations, staff is coordinating with community-based organizations affiliated with the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative including Bridge Disability Ministries, Catholic Community Services, Chinese Information and Service Center, Eastside for All, Eastside Friends of Seniors, Eastside Neighbors Network, Hopelink, Imagine Housing, Indian American Community Services, Jewish Family Service, King County Housing Authority, and YWCA. Additionally, staff are coordinating with the city's Cultural Outreach Assistants to send out recruitment communications on this opportunity through their social media networks. The recruitment flyer (Attachment H) notes in English (as well as in Spanish and Mandarin) that:

The City of Bellevue is looking for community members to participate in paid online focus groups or interviews about how to improve the bicycle network in the city's urban core — including Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed. In support of the Bike Bellevue project, the city is conducting online focus groups or interviews, that are easy to participate in from anywhere where you are able to use a phone or computer and engage in a conversation. Participants will be paid \$100-150 as a thank you for participation. Please click on this link to complete this brief survey to determine your eligibility: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7564301/1be02caea28b>.

The five focus group sessions will explore design considerations applicable to all candidate Bike Bellevue corridors. One of the five focus group sessions will include targeted engagement of people who live, work, and play proximate to candidate Corridor 06: NE 1<sup>st</sup>/NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between 100<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and 112<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. This corridor-specific focus group differs from the four other focus groups due to the unique design changes associated with this candidate project – notably, the conversion of the westbound travel lane on NE 1<sup>st</sup> Street and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to a two-way curb-separated bike lane on the north side of the street between 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and Bellevue Way (making this portion of the corridor a one-way street). To reach these candidate Corridor 06 individuals, staff is sending out a message to NextDoor subscribers in Downtown Bellevue (3,334 members) and coordinating outreach with Bellevue Downtown Association, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, property managers, Old Bellevue Main Association, Bellevue Essentials Alumni who live in Downtown, and housing complexes in the Downtown neighborhood with affordable units.

#### **2044 TRAVEL DEMAND MODEL RESULTS**

The current DRAFT Design Concepts Guide, November 2023 includes vehicle performance results for 2035 based on the growth targets and the transportation network included in the 2033 Transportation Facilities Plan. Since that time, the Bellevue 2044 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update environmental review process has resulted in an updated land use forecast for the city. To be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Bike Bellevue modeling analysis will now use the 2044 horizon year as the best available land use forecast.

Staff will use the 2044 land use forecast, 2044 transportation network assumptions, and Bike Bellevue projects to produce new Build and No-Build scenarios. The 2044 modeling results will be included in an updated DRAFT Design Concepts Guide. In addition to updating the results, the tables, graphs, and graphics will be reviewed for both content and clarity. At the Transportation Commission's February 8, 2024, meeting, staff will share updated modeling results.

Attachment A – Project Principles

Attachment B – DRAFT What We Heard: Konveio Engagement Feedback for Bike Bellevue

Attachment C – Emails and letters supporting Bike Bellevue (11/9/2023 and 12/6/2023)

Attachment D – Emails and letters opposing Bike Bellevue (11/9/2023 and 12/6/2023)

Attachment E – Emails and letters requesting information (11/9/2023 and 12/6/2023)

Attachment F – Staff responses to emails and letters (11/9/2023 and 12/6/2023)

Attachment G – Draft Community Engagement Plan, updated for December 14 packet

Attachment H – Focus Group and Stakeholder Interview Recruitment Flyer