

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT:

Resolution No. 8777 adopting the Bellevue Transit Master Plan (TMP).

FISCAL IMPACT:

The capital improvements identified in the Bellevue Transit Master Plan will require additional project-level analyses to establish the fiscal impact of undertaking the full range of projects. These projects will be implemented incrementally and considered for funding with street projects through the City's Capital Investment Program (CIP), coordinated with transit service and facility improvement efforts by King County Metro and Sound Transit, and/or submitted for future grant funding opportunities.

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POLICY CONSIDERATION:

Comprehensive Plan:

Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan acknowledges that responding to anticipated growth in travel necessitates a multi-modal transportation solution that offers the public real choices about how they travel within, to, and through Bellevue. Comprehensive Plan Policy TR-50 recognizes the need to "Work with transit providers to implement the Bellevue Transit Plan as an attractive travel option for local residents, employees, students, visitors, businesses and other users of regional facilities."

Bellevue Transit Plan:

On June 2, 2003, Council adopted the Bellevue Transit Plan (Resolution No. 6859). The 2003 Plan was a major step forward in articulating what improvements are needed in transit service and capital investments throughout Bellevue and served as an important reference document for collaborations with the City's transit service providers.

Bellevue Transit Master Plan:

On July 9, 2012, Council initiated the Bellevue Transit Master Plan (TMP), an update of the City's 2003 Transit Plan. The TMP is being overseen by the City's Transportation Commission whose work is guided by Council-approved Project Principles (see Attachment 1) and input from members of the Planning, Arts, and Human Services Commissions and the Parks and Community Services Board.

BACKGROUND:

On May 20, 2013, Council approved a set of market-driven strategies that lead to a vision of "Abundant Access" to guide additional transit service to/from Bellevue's major activity centers (Downtown, Bel-Red, Crossroads, Eastgate, and Factoria) where transit demand is high and

expected to increase in the future. Ultimately, achieving this vision will require new financial resources. The draft Bellevue Transit Master Plan (posted to the Council Document Library) takes a realistic perspective on these financial uncertainties by carefully evaluating investment trade-offs and identifying the highest priority transit improvements to support the recommended Frequent Transit Network detailed in the Transit Service Report and Transit Capital Vision Report (both posted to the Council Document Library).

Although the City of Bellevue does not operate its own transit system, the draft Bellevue Transit Master Plan (TMP) is designed to positively influence regional transit agencies to keep Bellevue moving and enhance transit performance. The scalability of draft TMP strategies positions Bellevue to maximize the return on investment on existing and anticipated public transportation projects and to capture opportunities that might arise from improved economic conditions. Partnerships have already begun to coalesce around the draft TMP – such as the Bellevue College Connection Project – which bodes well for future opportunities to coordinate with local and regional efforts to meet Bellevue’s transit needs through 2030.

On May 8, 2014, the Development Services Department issued a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination of Non-Significance for the Bellevue Transit Master Plan (TMP). On June 2, 2014, Chair Simas of the Transportation Commission and staff presented Council with the Commission’s draft TMP.

At its June 26, 2014 meeting, the Transportation Commission hosted a formal public hearing on the draft TMP. Leading up to the hearing staff received two letters of support on the draft TMP from Bellevue College and King County Metro. Staff also received an email from the Bellecrest Neighborhood Association Board opposing the 112th Avenue SE HOV concept (referenced as project L4 in the draft TMP).

At the public hearing, staff received testimony from Joel Glass (Enatai resident) opposing leased lots as a commuter parking strategy and implementation of the Main Street HOV lane concept (referenced as project L13 in the draft TMP). Both Mr. Glass and Lincoln Vander Veen (Bellevue Chamber of Commerce) provided written records of their testimony. Although supportive of TMP adoption, Mr. Vander Veen’s testimony requested additional technical analysis and engagement before arterial lanes are repurposed for transit only.

Finally, the Transportation Commission heard testimony from Todd Woosley (Building Owners and Managers Association), Patrick Bannon (Bellevue Downtown Association), Bruce Nurse (Kemper Development), and Will Knedlik (resident). With the exception of Mr. Knedlik’s testimony, speakers at the hearing were supportive of TMP adoption; that said, they all expressed concern that bus usage projections from Bellevue’s travel demand model are overly optimistic. Speakers suggested that parking fee assumptions in the model should be revised downward.

Responding to community feedback, Commissioners believe that the Bellevue Kirkland Redmond (BKR) travel demand model informing the Transit Master Plan – a citywide planning effort – is appropriately based on regional parking cost assumptions. Although the BKR model may overstate projected retail parking fees in selected Transportation Analysis Zones in Downtown Bellevue, Commissioners believe that other demographic, technological, and economic factors may result in a continuation of current transit ridership trends. Indeed, between 2003 and 2013, transit usage in Bellevue increased by 144 percent, or an additional 32,000 daily

boardings and alightings (ons/offers). Commissioners felt strongly that model assumptions should be revisited on a recurring schedule to ensure that they are consistent with the best available information.

Following the public hearing and deliberations on the feedback received, the Transportation Commission voted unanimously in favor of recommending that Council adopt the draft TMP. City staff and representatives of the Commission will be available at the July 7 Council meeting to respond to questions about the public hearing and the proposed plan.

Once the Bellevue Transit Master Plan (TMP) is approved, staff will transmit a copy of the TMP Executive Summary (attached) along with a transmittal letter to the County Executive, King County Council, and Sound Transit Board of Directors.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

If approved, this Resolution becomes effective immediately upon Council adoption.

OPTIONS:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 8777 adopting the Bellevue Transit Master Plan (TMP).
2. Do not adopt Resolution No. 8777 and provide new direction to staff.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends Option 1.

MOTION:

Move to adopt Resolution No. 8777 adopting the Bellevue Transit Master Plan (TMP).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Council Project Principles

Attachment B: Bellevue Transportation Commission endorsement letter for adoption of Bellevue Transit Master Plan

Attachment C: Bellevue Transit Master Plan Executive Summary (Under separate cover)

Attachment D: Bellevue College letter of supporting TMP adoption

Attachment E: King County Metro letter supporting TMP adoption

Attachment F: Bellecrest Neighborhood Association email opposing proposed 112th Ave SE HOV lane

Attachment G: Bellevue Chamber of Commerce written testimony

Attachment H: Resident (Joel Glass) comment letter

Attachment I: Proposed Resolution No. 8777

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY:

- Draft Bellevue Transit Master Plan
- Bellevue Transit Service Vision Report
- Bellevue Transit Capital Vision Report