

City of Bellevue
Transportation Commission
450 110 Ave Ne
P. O. Box 90012
Bellevue, WA 98009

SENT VIA EMAIL: kmcdonald@bellevuewa.gov

RE: Bellevue Transit Master Plan Update

Dear Commissioners

On whole the Bellevue Transit Master Plan Update is a very well thought out plan that should serve the City well for the next 10 to 15 years. Thank you and the Transportation Department staff particularly Franz Loewenherz for the exceptional work in putting this plan together.

While I believe the overall plan is a good one there are couple of items that I believe will have negative impacts that will outweighs the potential good they may bring to the transit system. I respectfully request that you reconsider these items and remove them from this plan update. These are the conversion of church parking lots into Park n Ride lots, leased lots, and the conversion of one of the general purpose lanes on Main Street into a transit only lane.

The conversion of the church parking lots may work well in some areas but I don't believe it's a good solution for all. The churches that I have a concern with are the ones along SE Bellevue Way at roughly SE 10th. I understand the idea that people from the surrounding neighborhood will use these lots as a way to access the transit system. My concern is that these particular lots will become much like the overflowing South Bellevue Park n Ride and will attract traffic to our neighborhood that is not presently there. The traffic on Bellevue Way is already bad and is already using the neighborhood side streets to avoid the clogged arterial. Drawing people in I believe will simply lengthen the time that it's bad.

One comment I've heard is that the parking lots are there and why shouldn't we use the parking lot for parking cars. Well I think the answer is pretty obvious, these are church parking lots that generally have limited hours that they are busy and they are not heavily used every day of the week nor at all hours of the day. The particular churches that I have referenced are zoned R-4, a residential zone, and they are surrounded by single family homes. I don't believe that a Park n Ride lot and single family residential are uses that should be side by side.

I'm confident that we will hear some reassurance that some additional process will be required to convert these now quiet suburban church parking lots into Metro Park n Ride lots and there by obfuscating this Commission's role for this recommendation and to simply keep it in the plan and kick it down road. But if you elect to take it out none of this time and energy will be necessary. Lastly I believe the ridership gains from converting these church parking lots to Park n Ride lots will be modest at best. Please reconsider this aspect of the Transit plan.

Converting a general purpose lane on Main Street to a transit only lane will push more traffic on to the neighborhood side streets. As a resident of South East Bellevue that frequents Main Street to get home and to work every day I can tell you that the traffic on Main Street is nightmarish at times. It will only get worse in the near future when the development underway is completed. Every good side street to the south of Main has "neighborhood calming" devices which do little to persuade commuters to sit and idle on Main Street and Bellevue Way. Further reduction of the limited capacity of our arterial streets will only convince more drivers to look for alternatives to avoid this congestion.

During the presentation of the draft plan to City Council, the Commission commented that this particular change produced very small gains to the overall system. I request that the Commission reconsider the inclusion of this conversion a general purpose lane to a transit only lane.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these requests. I believe the modified plan will still produce the gains sought in transit ridership and efficiency and with these modifications will have reduced negative impact on Southeast Bellevue.

Regards,

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