



Transportation Commission

Commissioners:

*Janice Zahn, Chair
Vic Bishop, Vice-Chair
Clifford Chirls
Scott Lampe
Francois Larrivee
Todd Woosley
Vacant Position*

City Council Liaison:

*Kevin Wallace,
Councilmember*

Staff Contact:

*Kevin McDonald, AICP
Senior Transportation
Planner
425-452-4558
kmcDonald@bellevuewa.gov*

Date: June 27, 2016

To: Mayor John Stokes and Councilmembers

Subject: Potential 2016 Transportation Levy

As indicated in our May 12, 2016 communication to the Council (Preliminary 2017-2023 Capital Funding Priorities), we commend the City Council direction and staff efforts to investigate potential new funding strategies and cash flow mechanisms (specifically a voted levy and/or Transportation Infrastructure and Finance Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan). We appreciate being tasked by the Council to provide feedback on the Council's identified themes for a potential Neighborhood Safety and Connectivity levy.

As an overall message, the Commission would like to convey our support for new resources that will help Bellevue keep up with the demand for all modes of transportation, and to ensure adequate maintenance of existing facilities. Below you will find our recommendation for five (5) thematic levy funding categories – not intended to be in any prioritized order.

A. Capital Maintenance Program Enhancements

As indicated in our May 12 Funding Priorities transmittal, it is of vital importance that the City continue to adequately maintain its capital investments. Dramatic growth in the city creates new and increased demands on the existing transportation system which in turn requires additional maintenance. Deferred routine maintenance has proven to cost agencies significantly more in future dollars when infrastructure reconstruction or full replacement

may be required. For this reason we strongly encourage enhanced funding for two of the City's important capitalized maintenance programs, Street Overlays (CIP Plan No. PW-M-1) and Major Maintenance (CIP Plan No. PW-M-19). For Overlays, we encourage this enhancement be focused toward local streets which have been given a second tier priority to arterials in the program since 2010.

B. Neighborhood Safety Program Enhancements

We believe an enhancement to existing programmatic investment in this category can leverage significant safety benefits across the City. The Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program (CIP Plan No. PW-M-7) is constrained in its breadth and effectiveness by the limitations of capital allocations and staffing resources to address a backlog of neighborhood-identified traffic safety and management priorities. Other existing programs including the Minor Capital Programs for Traffic Operations, Signals & Lighting, and Collision Reduction (CIP Plan Nos. PW-M-2 & 20 and PW-R-46) could do more to enhance safety in a Vision Zero environment through additional mid-block crossings, enhanced crossings at signalized intersections, and focused attention on high-collision locations.

C. Sidewalk/Pathway and Bikeway Connectivity

Many ongoing capital programs and discrete projects systematically enhance the connectivity and safety of our transportation system, especially for non-motorized users. We believe funding for a significant enhancement to programs such as the Neighborhood Sidewalks Program (CIP Plan No. PW-W/B-76) and Pedestrian & Bicycle Access and Connections Program (PW-W/B-56) should be a priority for inclusion in a voted levy. These programs are currently unable to maintain their established work programs under the pressures of increasing public requests and project costs.

For bicycle system connectivity, again referencing our May 12 communication, we believe a significant investment in a new Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program (BRIP) is a priority and will help to meet the goals of the 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan. The BRIP would implement at least two complete and integrated North-South and two East-West priority bicycle corridors that connect the city limits and will install automated data collection systems to measure pedestrian and bicycle usage on a continual basis. BRIP

emphasizes physically separated bicycle facilities intended to minimize conflicts between roadway users.

D. Neighborhood Traffic Congestion Solutions

While we understand roadway capacity projects often turn into high-cost solutions to traffic congestion at a specific intersection or along a corridor, we believe that targeted vehicle capacity projects can reduce travel time and relieve stress for residents commuting to or from home, work, shopping or recreational activities.

E. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) & Advanced Technology

We believe an enhancement to the Transportation Department's ITS Plan Implementation program (CIP Plan No. PW-R-156) will go a long way toward advancing strategies such as travel time information and parking availability applications that inform the traveling public in "real time" leading to reduced trip making and/or shortened trip distances. This investment may also better position the City of Bellevue to benefit from new technologies under development and early implementation, including systems to accommodate automated vehicles.

We will attend the City Council meeting on July 5 to provide comments on behalf of the Transportation Commission during the Regular Session agenda item 5: Reports of Community Council, Boards and Commissions.

Thank you for considering our recommendations and for the opportunity to serve you and the community on the Transportation Commission.

Sincerely,

Janice Zahn
Chair, Bellevue Transportation Commission

Vic Bishop, Vice-Chair
Bellevue Transportation Commission