

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Draft Complete Streets Ordinance, Transportation Commission Recommendation

STAFF CONTACTS

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Transportation Department

POLICY ISSUES

The Transportation Commission recommends that the City adopt a Complete Streets ordinance to establish a Complete Streets policy framework. A Complete Streets ethic is currently embedded in the Comprehensive Plan with 31 policies that address multimodal mobility, and support the scoping, planning, designing, building, maintaining and operating the transportation system in Bellevue. Policies express the commitment in Bellevue to provide safe and reliable mobility options for people wherever they need to go throughout the City, whether they are walking, riding a bicycle, taking transit and/or driving a car. The Council may, through this ordinance, direct the Transportation Commission to review the Comprehensive Plan to determine if any updates or additional policies are warranted to incorporate a Complete Streets policy framework.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

☐ Action
☒ Discussion
☒ Information

Transportation staff seeks Council direction to bring back a Complete Streets Ordinance for adoption at the September 19 Regular Session.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Complete Streets is a national movement intended to inspire communities to consider all modes of travel in the planning, designing, implementing, maintaining, and operating the transportation system. The Washington state legislature enacted complete streets legislation in 2011, with expressed intent as follows:

“Urban main streets should be designed to provide safe access to all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, and public transportation users. Context sensitive design and engineering principles allow for flexible solutions depending on a community’s needs, and result in many positive outcomes for cities and towns, including improving the health and safety of a community. It is the intent of the legislature to encourage street designs that safely meet the needs of all users and also protect and preserve a community’s environment and character.”

Going further, in 2015 the legislature directed the Transportation Improvement Board to create a “Complete Streets Grant Program” (RCW 47.04.320) to encourage local governments to adopt urban arterial retrofit street ordinances designed to provide safe access to all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, and public transportation users, with the goals of:

- (a) Promoting healthy communities by encouraging walking, bicycling, and using public transportation;
- (b) Improving safety by designing major arterials to include features such as wider sidewalks, dedicated bicycle facilities, medians, and pedestrian streetscape features, including trees where appropriate;
- (c) Protecting the environment and reducing congestion by providing safe alternatives to single-occupancy driving; and
- (d) Preserving community character by involving local citizens and stakeholders to participate in planning and design decisions.

In May of 2016, the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) introduced the [Complete Streets Award Program](#). To be eligible for a Complete Streets Award, a jurisdiction must have a system-wide complete streets policy. As of August 22, 2016, 54 Washington cities and one county meet this eligibility requirement. Bellevue is not one of these 54 cities. While Bellevue has policies, plans and projects that integrate a complete streets ethic (components of which are itemized in the box below), this is not enough to satisfy the eligibility requirement.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive plan/complete streets integration • Strategic plan/complete streets integration • Specific modal plans for freight, bicycles and pedestrian • ADA transition plan adoption • Community engagement regarding design for all users • Performance data and statistics about users • Operational preparedness for all users and all modes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintenance ○ Sweeping ○ Striping ○ Landscape management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training in complete streets design • Standards that allow responsiveness to users • Budget prioritization of complete streets elements • Evidence of past implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clearly apparent integration of complete streets elements ○ History of compliant projects ○ Multimodal level of service standards ○ History of actively implementing modal plans ○ Presence of programs and enforcement of modal access ○ Controlling traffic and speed ○ Pedestrian scale lighting
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Request from Transportation Director

Transportation Director Dave Berg has requested that Bellevue strive to attain eligibility for the Complete Streets Award Program at the earliest possible opportunity. According to the TIB staff, Bellevue must have a complete streets ordinance adopted prior to October 1, 2016, to be eligible for the current award cycle. Of course, substantial funding opportunities are to be gained, as is an overall policy framework for organizing the many complete streets–type policies that Bellevue has currently embedded in the Comprehensive Plan and in modal plans – Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan, and Transit Master Plan.

Crafting a Complete Streets Ordinance

A special Transportation Commission committee on Complete Streets (comprised of Cliff Chirls, Scott Lampe, and Chair Janice Zahn) and staff reviewed existing Bellevue policies and practices related to planning, design, implementing, maintaining and operating a transportation system for all modes and for all users. Bellevue has 31 adopted policies in the Comprehensive Plan related to one or more components of a complete streets transportation system - multimodal transportation system, pedestrians and bicyclists, transit riders, freight mobility, design, and operating/maintaining the system.

The Complete Streets committee (with the review and concurrence of the City Attorney's Office) crafted a draft ordinance intended to: 1) establish the legislative intent, background and context through a series of "Whereas" statements; 2) amend the regulatory language of the Transportation Development Code, Chapter 14.60, to include the Complete Streets policy framework; and 3) direct the Transportation Commission to determine if additional or amended policies are needed to further advance the complete streets ethic in Bellevue and to recommend any Comprehensive Plan amendments to the City Council for consideration in 2017.

On September 8, 2016, the full Transportation Commission reviewed and discussed the committee's Complete Streets ordinance recommendation. The Commission approved a transmittal of the Draft Ordinance to the City Council.

ALTERNATIVES

The Complete Streets ethic is embedded in the Transportation Element and is implemented through the city capital investments. Adopting a Complete Streets Ordinance would create eligibility for Bellevue to apply for an award through the Washington Transportation Improvement Program. Absent a Complete Streets Ordinance, Bellevue is not eligible for the award program.

RECOMMENDATION

Transportation staff seeks Council direction to bring back a Complete Streets Ordinance for adoption at the September 19 Regular Session

ATTACHMENT

Transportation Commission recommended Complete Streets Ordinance

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY

N/A