

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES

January 24, 2019  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Wu, Commissioners Bishop, Chirls, Lampe, Marciante, Woosley

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Teh

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Chris Long, Jeremy Chin, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Breiland, Fehr & Peers; Tony Woody, Concord Engineering

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Wu who presided.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Bishop, who arrived at 7:00 p.m., and Commissioner Teh, who was excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Woosley. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chirls and the motion carried unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Lisa Whitener, 2840 138th Avenue SE, Unit 17, said she has lived at that address for 22 years. She referred to the bike lanes recently implemented on 139th Avenue SE between Eastgate Way and Kamber Road and noted that some of the painted lines have already worn off. She said she was disappointed by the fact that at the last Commission meeting on the Eastgate transportation study no one even considered asking about the demographics of the Eastgate residents. Most of the area does not have sidewalks. There are many who are physically challenged and do not have the option of riding bicycles. There is a large population of older folks who have limited transportation options. There are few places in the area to catch a bus. Many of the new homeowners moving to the area are multigenerational. The Commission should ask the staff for the Eastgate demographics to better understand the issues.

Ms. Michelle Wannamaker, 4045 149th Avenue SE, stated that the majority of the people who voted for the transportation levy did so because they wanted relief from vehicle congestion. Most did not vote to ensure that bicycle conditions are ideal. The Councilmembers voted for a higher levy tax rate to ensure that vehicle congestion would be addressed. The Councilmembers stated that they had heard loud and clear the people's dissatisfaction with vehicle congestion. The levy categories are bike, congestion, maintenance, safety, sidewalks and traffic technology. There is a

separate pot of money in the levy for bicycle improvements. The vehicle congestion reduction fund is not to be used for bicycle projects. Evaluating and prioritizing vehicle congestion projects using bicycle conditions is absurd. The statements made during Commission meetings have made it clear that the conditions for bicyclists will be given top priority. Despite the Commission's focus on bicycle commuters, the city's own data shows that given the expected conditions by 2030, the number of daily bicycle trips will be only 4000 out of 1.751 million total daily trips, or two-tenths of one percent. Even if the anticipated bicycle trips increase tenfold, it would still only represent two percent of the total trips. Common sense suggests the most commuters will be benefited by addressing vehicle congestion. Measures possibly improving transit service will supply extra bang for the buck. The Commissioners were reminded that they were appointed to the Commission to represent Bellevue's residents. A major reason for adding a corridor evaluation into multimodal LOS was to counteract the existing level of service standards. It is insulting to say the measure of the 150th Avenue SE corridor does not fail until the speeds drop below 12 mph. The final multimodal LOS report states that typical urban traffic travel in corridors is based on 40 percent of the posted speed limit; that is absolutely unacceptable and nearly as bad as the existing vehicle LOS. The Commission is moving to make decisions based on the new multimodal LOS standards which the City Council has not voted to approve. Staff and the Commission do not have the authority to do that.

Ms. Betsi Hummer, 14541 SE 26th Street, said her residence is across the street from the new Bellevue College dorms. She thanked the Commission for choosing to hold a meeting at the South Bellevue Community Center to address the Eastgate transportation study. She noted that during the previous Commission meeting at the South Bellevue Community Center the discussion was about Eastgate congestion relief. That meeting followed a meeting of the Planning Commission where the focus was on Eastgate transit-oriented development and at which a member of the public brought up the fact that the increased density that would result would increase traffic congestion in an area where it is already bad. She said it sometimes takes 30 minutes to drive from her home near Bellevue College to the South Bellevue Community Center. When the college was building its new dorms, it asked the city for a street vacation, and wanted it to be at no cost. She said the research she did helped the Council to not simply give away a street vacation valued at \$750,000. Ultimately the college paid for the street vacation. Money received from street vacations can only be used to purchase rights-of-way of park land, and it is hoped that the funds will be used to help reduce congestion in the area of the college.

#### 4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, AND MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Councilmember Zahn said she remembered during her time on the Commission talking about the Eastgate projects. She said she was excited to be present to listen to the study findings and to catch up with what is being discussed relative to multimodal LOS.

Commissioner Woosley reported that he attended and participated in an informal coalition to fund additional improvements along the I-405 corridor, particularly in the city of Bellevue. He said the state is formulating a new transportation package and has a draft project list on which a hearing was held earlier in the day. Unfortunately, no projects on the draft list, drawn from the I-405 master plan, are physically located in Bellevue. Mayor Chelminiak, the Deputy Mayor of Bothell and members of the private sector have all communicated to the elected officials in Olympia the goal of finishing the I-405 master plan and having critical projects serving Bellevue included in the next phase.

Commissioner Lampe reported that earlier in the month the Citizen Oversight Panel for Sound Transit, on which he serves, received a 2019 financial plan update from Sound Transit's Chief Financial Officer. It was noted their budget has gone up by about \$4 billion over the course of the 25 years. Much of that is due to higher right-of-way and construction costs, but it is also due to increased operating costs. All of their work is contracted through King County Metro, which is the highest-cost transit agency in the country.

## 5. STAFF REPORTS

### A. Status Report on Eastgate Area Projects

Traffic Engineering Manager Chris Long distributed to the Commissioners copies of a list of Eastgate area projects that will be going to construction during 2019. He noted that at the top of the list were four projects that were completed in 2018, including three bike projects that were part of the bicycle master plan, specifically an uphill bike lane on 142nd Avenue SE approaching Bellevue College; a bike lane on 139th Avenue SE completing a segment from Eastgate Way to Kamber Road; and extending the bike lanes on SE 36th Street to connect with SE 38th Street. The remaining piece from Allen Road to 154th Avenue SE will be completed during the summer months as part of the overlay project. Eastgate residents have also seen a lot of activity at various intersections where curb ramps were replaced, all in preparation for the overlay and to meet ADA standards. While the overlay project was planned to be completed in 2018, a strike by asphalt workers meant the project had to be delayed to 2019.

Continuing, Mr. Long said the list of projects to be constructed in 2019 include five locations that will be overlay projects, most of which were supposed to have been done in 2018. They include Newport Way from Allen/Somerset all the way down to Factoria Boulevard; Newport Way from just past Eastgate elementary all the way over to 164th Avenue SE; some neighborhood streets; and Eastgate Way from Factoria Boulevard to the end of the road at SE 35th Street.

Chair Wu asked what funding source was being used for the bike projects. Mr. Long said the projects on the list marked by a blue asterisk are those being addressed with levy funds. All of the bike projects completed in 2018 were levy projects funded from the bike category. The overlay is built into the capital program and as such is paid for outside of the levy.

Mr. Long said one of the initial Eastgate projects identified for the Neighborhood Congestion Reduction Program involved adding a southbound right-turn lane on 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE to Newport Way. He said design of that project has been completed and the project will go out to bid in February along with another project to replace a rockery wall along 150th Avenue SE that will be paid for with Eastgate annexation funds; the project will include widening the sidewalk.

The Newport Way multiuse path project will construct a path on the north side of the roadway between 150th Avenue SE and Allen Road, as well as a sidewalk segment on the south side of the roadway between 150th Avenue SE and the South Bellevue Community Center.

The Mountains to Sound Greenway project will get started in 2019. The trail segment to be addressed is along 118th Avenue SE and will go over Factoria Boulevard to the west side of SE 36th Street and will connect to 132nd Avenue SE. The project funding pool involves mostly federal dollars by way of a grant. The project will start in 2019 and will continue into 2020.

Commissioner Woosley said it was his understanding that a part of the project involves making the off-ramp at eastbound I-90 to Factoria Boulevard two lanes instead of one. Mr. Long confirmed

the project and said one of the lanes will be extended another 800 feet to the west.

Mr. Long said the list of projects includes a mini roundabout at the intersection of Newport Way and 164th Avenue SE to address congestion during the evening peak. The project will take only a couple of months to complete. The intersection is currently a four-way stop. A roundabout provides a way for vehicles to progress through the intersection at a slower speed but without having to stop. Roundabouts provide for traffic calming and improve intersection operations.

As part of the Eastgate Way overlay project, the corridor will be channelized to include buffered bike lanes through to SE 35th Street. The bicycle improvement portion of the project will be funded from a grant received from King County Metro because it improves transit connections.

The King County Metro project regarding Route 245 will involve making improvements at two locations, including the addition of a bus stop at the end of 142nd Street SE and widening the street to create a place for buses to stop and to improve the turning radii for buses going to and from the transit center. The project will improve the connection to the flyer stop, and on 148th Avenue SE where there is a very wide shoulder, the shoulder will be turned into a bus only lane to permit buses to bypass congestion on that roadway and get to the bus stop near Eastgate Way and from there into the transit center.

In the spring of 2019 King County will be wrapping up the ongoing sewer project on SE 35th Street.

The list of WSDOT projects includes the I-90 interchange project at Lakemont Boulevard and Eastgate Way that will add an auxiliary lane in both the eastbound and westbound directions. As part of that project, a ramp meter will be installed on the eastbound on-ramp along with additional storage on the ramp for 80 to 100 cars, which will help to relieve congestion on Bellevue streets. The intersection improvement project for SE 37th Street will be held back given the indication that the ramp operation improvements will make the intersection operate better. The project is part of what is being studied in the Eastgate transportation study.

The westbound off-ramp to 156th Avenue SE will be widened to include dual left-turns onto Eastgate Way. During the morning peak, the ramp backs up quite a way down the collector/distributor.

Commissioner Woosley pointed out that some of the SE 37th/150th Avenue SE I-90 off-ramp/on-ramp project lies partially on WSDOT right-of-way and suggested the argument could be made that it is the responsibility of WSDOT to improve operations there. He asked to what extent the city is coordinating with WSDOT on the design for the project. Mr. Long said the city has addressed the issue with WSDOT. He noted, however, that there is no plan yet for generating funding. It will be better to wait until the results of the I-90 interchange project at Lakemont Boulevard and Eastgate Way are known. He stressed that the project is relatively small, noting that the entire improvement as originally planned had a price tag of only about \$2 million.

Mr. Long said the I-405 Bellevue to Renton toll lane project will start construction toward the end of 2019. He also explained that a number of minor safety improvement projects are planned around Tyee middle school with construction beginning and being completed in 2019 before school starts. Finally, he said the road repair work on Lakemont Boulevard, while technically outside of Eastgate, will impact Eastgate residents due to some roadway closures during the summer months to accommodate culvert repair work.

Commissioner Woosley commented that the last remaining segment of the Mountains to Sound Greenway project is in Eastgate. Mr. Long said the first piece will start construction during the summer of 2019. The design work done is for the entire segment to just west of the 150th Avenue SE interchange and the project is being shopped for grant money. Grant dollars have been obtained to start the preliminary design work for the remaining segment from 150th Avenue SE through to Lakemont Boulevard.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Eastgate Transportation Study

Mr. McDonald introduced consultants Tony Woody with Concord Engineering, and Chris Breiland with Fehr & Peers to review with the Commission their analysis of what vehicle congestion will look like in 2035 given various assumptions about land use growth and the associated vehicle trips, and a comparison with the 2018 numbers in terms of intersection levels of service, and corridor travel speeds.

Mr. Woody said a total of 27 intersections are included in the Eastgate transportation study area, 15 of which are identified as MMA system intersections. He said the key corridors analyzed were 148th Avenue SE, 150th Avenue SE, Richards Road and Factoria Boulevard. Both the morning peak of 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and the evening peak of 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. were analyzed. The morning peak hour analysis involved 20 intersections; all 27 intersections were evaluated for the evening peak hour.

Mr. Woody noted that under the 2018 baseline numbers, 13 of the 15 MMA intersections met the mobility standards established by the city. The projections for 2035, however, drops the number of MMA intersections that meet the mobility standards to only eight. All 12 of the non-system intersections met the standards in 2018, while the 2035 projection indicates only nine meet the standards. Referring specifically to the 148th Avenue SE/150th Avenue SE corridor, he noted that of the six system intersections, four of them met the standards in 2018, while in 2035 only two of them met the standards. He said the 2035 projection showed that because of the traffic volume and land use growth, the intersections of Eastgate Way/148th Avenue SE, SE 37th Street/150th Avenue SE, SE 38th/150th Avenue SE and Newport Way/150th Avenue SE would all push over the V/C standard.

With regard to the 148th Avenue SE/150th Avenue SE corridor speeds, Mr. Woody pointed out that the full corridor segment speed in 2018 was 7.2 mph. The segment between SE 24th Street and SE 38th Street came in at 6.3 mph, while the segment between SE 38th Street and Newport Way measured 10.6 mph. Neither of those sub-segments met the corridor travel speed guidelines. The 2035 projection showed the southbound sub-section between SE 24th Street and SE 38th Street degraded to 5.6 mph, while the sub-section from SE 38th Street to Newport Way would improve to 15.4 mph. He said the improvements were the result of planned background improvements.

Mr. Breiland explained the color coding used for the corridor travel speed, noting that they represent how close a number is to the typical urban speed as determined by the Highway Capacity Manual thresholds. He said the colors that meet the guidelines vary in the different parts of the city. In Eastgate, numbers shown in yellow meet the guideline, whereas in South Bellevue yellow does not meet the guideline.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bishop, Mr. Breiland clarified that the typical urban speed is what the color-coding is based on. He stressed, however, that the typical urban speed is not the guideline across the city; the guideline in fact varies throughout the city with higher speeds on arterials in residential areas of the city, and lower speeds in the more urban parts of the city.

Mr. Woody said all six of the MMA system intersections in the Richards Road/Factoria Boulevard corridor met the standards in the 2018 baseline. The projection showed that in 2035 three of the six would meet the standards. The intersections projected to exceed the standards are Richards Road/SE 32nd Street, Factoria Boulevard/SE 36th Street, and Factoria Boulevard/SE 38th Street. While the intersection of Eastgate Way/Richards road was shown in the 2035 analysis to meet the standard, it was on the bubble. In terms of the full segment travel speed, it was 4.3 mph in 2018 and was shown to be 3.6 mph in the 2035 baseline. The segment between SE 26th Street and SE 32nd Street was 4.0 in 2018 and 3.2 in 2035, and between SE 32nd Street and SE 38th Street the travel speed was 4.6 mph in 2018 and projected to be 4.0 in 2035. Along Factoria Boulevard, the guidelines were not met in 2018 and were projected to degrade by 2035 due to growth.

Mr. Woody said of the other intersections being considered in the study, all three of the system intersections meet the standards in 2018 as well as in the 2035 baseline. Additionally, all nine of the non-system intersections met the standards in 2018, but six are projected to meet the standards in the 2035 baseline. The intersections of Eastgate Way/164th Avenue SE and Allen Road/Newport Way will not meet the standard or are approaching the standard in the 2035 baseline.

Mr. Woody verified that the 2035 numbers reflect roadway capacity project improvements that are planned but that are not yet built.

Commissioner Woosley asked if a recommendation will be made to update the system intersection designations to use non-system as well as system intersections. Mr. McDonald said the Eastgate transportation study will have no implication for the concurrency work that is embedded in the transportation code. The system intersections will remain as they are until the Council changes them.

Commissioner Woosley asked if there are any proposed level of service standard revisions being considered for any of the MMAs. Mr. McDonald said there are not.

Mr. Woody said the next step for the Eastgate transportation study would be to identify concepts and projects to help alleviate some of the projected congestion. Currently the team is working at a high level but over the next month or two will be refining concepts and packaging them in order to provide analysis and evaluation results to be reported to the Commission in March. The focus is primarily on the corridor segments where the travel speeds are lower, as well as intersections that are not meeting the MMA V/C standards. The work will not start from scratch and will take into account work already done as part of the TFP, Neighborhood Congestion Reduction and the Transit Master Plan. The work done previously will be updated to 2035.

With regard to the 148th Avenue SE/Eastgate Way intersection, Mr. Woody said some of the project concepts under consideration include standard channelization and signal improvements. Other options will be considered as well, including construction of a roundabout and potential lane additions. For the section between Eastgate Way and SE 38th Street, the concepts under consideration include addressing some of the weaving movements. To the south on 150th Avenue SE at SE 37th Street, the focus is on channelization and signal improvements; reducing the

weaving between SE 37th Street and I-90, and a possible roundabout. For the intersection of 150th Avenue SE and Newport Way, the concepts under consideration include channelization on key approaches and modifying signal coordination and phasing.

Commissioner Marciante asked how difficult it is to make signal improvements and asked why they are not just looked at all the time if they are not difficult to make. Mr. Woody said in fact signal improvements are being looked at all the time. There are very sophisticated adaptive signal control systems in place in Eastgate. The best outcomes are usually achieved through signal coordination in combination with channelization.

With regard to the Richards Road/Factoria Boulevard corridor, Mr. Woody said particular attention will be paid to the three intersections that are projected to not meet the standard in 2035, beginning with Richards Road/SE 32nd Street. At that location the focus is on channelization of the east and west approaches, as well as signal coordination and phasing. The same considerations are being given to the intersection of Factoria Boulevard and SE 36th Street. Additional corridor-wide measures will be considered, such as access management strategies and demand management strategies.

Commissioner Bishop asked if the access management strategies would include dealing with driveways. Mr. Woody allowed that it would and said it could also address the consolidation of driveways, restrictions and U-turns. He said there is already a lot of access management occurring on Factoria Boulevard, but as traffic changes and the forecast changes, it makes sense to review things to identify the best strategies for the corridor.

Commissioner Woosley commented that the city recently expanded the transportation demand management requirements in new developments from just the downtown to citywide and asked how those requirements are being factored in. Mr. Woody said that has yet to be addressed but will be factored as the study moves forward.

Commissioner Chirls asked if the sensitivity to the demand management changes will be looked at, and if the Commission will be shown the kinds of impacts demand management improvements might have. Mr. Woody said that absolutely will be the case. He said demand management is not a perfect science and that is why some sensitivity must be applied.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Chirls, Mr. Woody explained that references to channelization generally refer to things like turn pockets. There are situations in which both the right-turn vehicles and through movements have to use the same lane. In that case a channelization improvement might include creating a separate right-turn pocket, increasing the capacity and adding flexibility to the signal system. Channelization could also include adding a left-turn pocket or an additional left-turn lane.

Chair Wu commented that in general the project types are fairly targeted to congestion relief at intersections, though also included are some considerations are also given to corridors in terms of access management and demand management. She said she would like to see segment corridor-wide projects to the degree that they are helpful.

With regard to the Factoria area, Chair Wu asked how significant pickup/drop-off activities and bus stops are. She suggested the all potential solutions should be considered to the degree they are practical and helpful.

Commissioner Woosley said the approach will serve as a good way to look at all manner of

opportunities to help traffic flow. He said at some point it would be helpful to have some idea of what the costs will be. He agreed there should be a sensitivity analysis involved in the study. Much of the traffic the study area sees is not actually generated in the area, and that can be expected to continue into the future.

Commissioner Bishop suggested it should come as no surprise that fixing a problem in one spot could create a problem in another spot. The modeling system will need to be sufficient to identify those kinds of issues. Mr. Woody agreed and said the VISSIM model is a microsimulation tool and is very adept at yielding a richer understanding of how various improvements will play out.

Commissioner Chirls asked if the model looks at the nature of the increase in congestion based on demographic changes that are implied by the land use changes. Mr. Woody said it does, though not in the operational models from which the performance metrics come. The upstream forecasting models like BKR all take into consider land use changes as well as different kinds of travel behaviors based on various demographics.

Commissioner Lampe commented that while roundabouts create better safety, they also require more right-of-way. He asked if they generally increase capacity? Mr. Woody said they can but it depends on factors such as the flows coming from each approach. Roundabouts will typically increase safety, capacity and flow up to a certain point, but they have an upper limit. They have to be analyzed on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Woosley commented that the I-405 and I-90 direct access ramps that are part of the master plan are not funded, and the way things look they are not likely to be funded for the 20-year planning scenario. In the interim there is an impending congestion nightmare. He asked if the city could do an analysis that would show the benefits to the mobility of the area with and without the planned but unfunded improvements. Mr. Woody said he would have to look at the modeling to see exactly what has been done. Mr. McDonald pointed out that the access ramps are outside the Eastgate scope of work and it would require separate study and a separate funding source to address.

Commissioner Chirls referred to the comments made earlier about the park and ride being a bottleneck and about the limited number of bus stops in the Eastgate area. He asked if things like neighborhood shuttles have been considered to eliminate congestion at the park and ride and to serve residents who do not have alternatives like walking and biking to access transit. Mr. Woody said that is something that will be considered, though he allowed there would not be much quantitative information available. Mr. Breiland added that there are a lot of unknowns and the way they are tested is by assuming varying degrees of trip reduction that could result from various options.

Chair Wu said there is a clear need to connect the dots and she asked the staff to do that in upcoming meetings. She said the idea of operating a shuttle is good, but that is probably something that will occur down the road. The current study may not be able to quantify the benefits of having a shuttle.

Commissioner Marciante said she traffic on 142nd Avenue SE is significant as a result of the two large demand point sources of the park and ride and Bellevue College. She commented that something as simple as shifting class start times at Bellevue College might help to alleviate traffic during peak work commute times. She asked if that is something that can be modeled. Mr. Breiland said the model can get to that level of detail, but there is a need to manage the total number of scenarios to be tested. That is why the model will work within a range of total demand



change in which flexible start times are quantified in that they are a common way to look at demand management. He added that much of the traffic growth adjacent to the park and ride is related to the commercial office properties that are in the vicinity.

Commissioner Bishop referred to the I-90 westbound to northbound I-405 ramp and said it was his understanding that the current WSDOT I-405 Bellevue to Renton project will make some significant improvements at that location. That might attract some trips off local streets and onto I-405. He asked if the network assumptions for the future include the WSDOT upgrades. Mr. Woody said it does along with the associated travel pattern shifts.

Commissioner Chirls commented that sometimes with respect to demand management people manage themselves through adaptive behavior. He said that is being played out currently with the viaduct closure in Seattle. He asked if the model acknowledges people changing their own behaviors without being driven to do so. Mr. Woody said the model is not that sophisticated. Commissioner Chirls said in order to travel to the South Bellevue Community Center from his home in downtown Bellevue to attend the Commission meeting, Google Maps suggested avoiding I-405 and taking Bellevue Way instead. He said he adapted his behavior accordingly, but not because of any demand management program that is in place. He asked if the model takes into account those changes where, because of congestion in certain areas, people choose to change their travel patterns. Mr. Woody said the model makes equilibrium assignments, which is essentially what people do when trying to find the best paths to suit their travel needs. The difference is that in real life circumstances change daily, whereas the model must work from the best representative scenario possible.

Commissioner Bishop voiced support for the process.

Commissioner Marciante suggested that where congestion increases to the point where people choose not to travel, there can be a corresponding decrease in economic activity. She asked if there is anything the model informs relative to economic development. Mr. Woody said the model does not return data exclusive to economic development.

A motion to recommend proceeding to the next step was made by Commissioner Chirls. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Woosley and the motion carried unanimously.

8. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL – None

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

12. COMMISSION CALENDAR

Mr. McDonald reviewed the calendar of upcoming meetings and agenda items.

13. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Lampe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chirls and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Wu adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

---

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

---

Date

---

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

---

Date