

City of
Bellevue



Transportation Commission Study Session

DATE: Feb 21, 2019
TO: Chair Wu and Members of the Transportation Commission
FROM: Michael Ingram, Senior Transportation Planner, 425-452-4166
mingram@bellevuewa.gov
SUBJECT: Transportation Facilities Plan Update—Environmental Analysis

DIRECTION REQUESTED

☐ Action
☐ Discussion/Direction
☒ Information

At the Commission meeting on February 28, staff will provide an overview of the environmental analysis conducted in support of the proposed 2019-2030 Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP). A Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) is being prepared for the 2019-2030 TFP, with publication of a Draft SEIS document anticipated for early March.

BACKGROUND

Bellevue City Code ([Section 22.16.050](#)) requires that the Transportation Commission present an update of the TFP to the City Council for approval and adoption every two years or as otherwise directed by the Council. The TFP serves as the City's 12-year, or intermediate-range, transportation capital facility planning document. The current 2016-2027 TFP was adopted by the City Council in December 2015. The TFP update process now underway started in September 2017, with the Commission endorsing a set of recommended priority projects in June 2018. The following month, staff and Commission Chair Wu briefed the City Council on the TFP process and the recommended project list. The Council endorsed moving forward with the next stage of the TFP update process, an environmental analysis using the set of projects endorsed by the Commission (along with one additional project recommended by staff: TFP-158, which involves installation of sidewalk and bicycle facilities on SE 16th Street between 148th

and 156th Avenues). Because the list of projects proposed for the 2019-2030 TFP is very similar to the list of projects included in the current 2016-2027 TFP and the prior 2013-2024 TFP, it was determined by the that a “Supplemental” EIS would be the appropriate approach to the environmental review. A Supplemental EIS builds on existing SEPA documentation, updating and augmenting it as necessary to address revisions to the proposal (the project list), changes to relevant regulations as well as the shift in existing (base) and horizon year conditions.

INFORMATION

The analysis for the SEIS focused on the 2030 horizon and considered two alternatives:

- CIP Network alternative (2019-2025 CIP with no additional projects)
- TFP Network alternative (2019-2025 CIP, plus the additional projects proposed for the 2019-2030 TFP)

Attachments A and B are, respectively, a list and map of the projects, with indication of which projects are included with each alternative.

Primary areas of analysis were transportation, air quality, noise, land use & aesthetics and the natural environment.

Transportation:

- The transportation analysis shows essentially similar results with the CIP Network alternative and with the TFP Network alternative.
- Areas with the greatest projected increase in traffic volumes are in the northerly part of the city, especially MMA 12 BelRed/Northup and, to a lesser extent, MMA 2 Bridle Trails.
- For each of the alternatives, the 2030 projection shows that 10 of the MMAs meet the adopted Comprehensive Plan LOS vehicle mobility standard (volume/capacity) and three MMAs fail to meet the areawide LOS standard and in two cases also fall short of the congestion allowance standard (the maximum number of intersections allowed to exceed the areawide standard). The MMAs projected to fall short in 2030 are MMA 2 Bridle Trails (areawide V/C standard), MMA 6 Northeast Bellevue (areawide V/C standard, congestion allowance standard) and MMA 9 East Bellevue (areawide V/C standard, congestion allowance standard). Attachment C shows the results of the transportation analysis at all “system” intersections. Attachment D is a map, indicating the system intersections.
- While the scope of the analysis did not include identifying the cause of the growth in roadway demand it seems likely that anticipated land use growth in BelRed and Overlake (in both Bellevue and Redmond) is a contributing factor.
- Previous TFP forecasts have also identified locations where the adopted mobility standards are not met. The TFP environmental review is not a concurrency test but it does serve to identify potential issues relative to adopted standards. It’s also worth

noting that the projected LOS does not necessarily come to pass (forecasting is imperfect).

- Approaches that the city may take – individually or in combination – to address the potential future vehicular LOS challenges include:
 - Make major vehicle capacity improvements at one or more system intersections to improve the LOS in a MMA (or require development to make the improvements)
 - Make minor vehicle capacity improvements at multiple system intersections that will cumulatively improve LOS (or require development to make the improvements)
 - Change the LOS standard, congestion allowance or designated “system” intersections for one or more MMAs
 - Reduce the pm peak hour vehicle demand on the roadway network through demand management strategies, transit plan implementation and/or by reducing the capacity for future development (zoning)
 - Coordinate with Redmond to evaluate growth in Overlake and revise existing transportation plans to address the forecast needs.
- Both alternatives fall short of the target set in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan to add 25 miles of sidewalk along arterials (by 2019). At the end of 2018, 12.5 miles of arterial sidewalks have been added (50% of the target). The CIP Network alternative adds 4.5 miles (67.9% of target); the TFP Network alternative adds an additional 0.4 miles (69.5% of target) and also includes a Pedestrian and Bicycle Reserve allocation that could support implementation of additional sidewalk segments (at locations to be determined).
- Both alternatives also fall short of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan target to have two north-south and two east-west Priority Bicycle Corridors completed across the city (by 2019). Attachment E shows the current completion status of the Priority Bicycle Corridors and the additional segments associated with each of the alternatives.

Air quality analysis

- In general, impacts from vehicles will lessen owing to improvements in the vehicle fleet. Air quality in Bellevue is anticipated to remain well within applicable standards.
- Analysis performed by the Puget Sound Regional Council for the region indicates a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector for the region, which includes travel in Bellevue. There is essentially no difference in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) between the CIP Network alternative and the TFP Network alternative.

Noise analysis

- Predicted future noise levels are basically equivalent between the two alternatives. Background growth in traffic volumes is the key driver of increases in noise levels.

- Under both alternatives, the number of residential areas predicted to be exposed to traffic noise exceeding the city's threshold of 67 dBa Leq would increase from 2019 to 2030. Roadway capacity projects in the vicinity of residential areas where current or predicted noise levels exceed 67 dBa Leq will include a more detailed acoustical analysis during the implementation phase.

Land use and aesthetics

- Projects in both alternatives could impact driveway locations and parking supply. Projects in the TFP Network alternative are more likely to affect buildings and land uses.
- Projects with the greatest aesthetic impacts are generally new roadways, substantial widening of existing roadways and widening for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Where a roadway is bounded by native vegetation, these impacts may be perceived as a negative. Some projects may enhance visual character by filling in gaps or missing elements of the streetscape.

Natural environment

- Included evaluation of impacts to geology & soils, wetlands, aquatic resources, wildlife & vegetation, flood hazards, shorelines.
- Several projects are adjacent to wetlands and may affect wetlands or wetland buffers and the hydrologic recharge of the affected wetlands. City critical areas code criteria will guide the evaluation of alternatives for project design to minimize impacts.
- Most proposed projects will result in an increase in impervious surface area. However, the potential increase is small in relation to the existing impervious surface in drainage basins. The TFP Network alternative has more projects and thus greater impacts. Project design can ameliorate stormwater runoff volumes and flow rates and mitigate water quality impacts, but cannot fully replicate the function of a natural system.

NEXT STEPS

Publication of the Draft SEIS for the proposed 2019-2030 TFP is anticipated for early March. Publication of the Draft SEIS marks the start of a 30-day period for public review and comment. The city will review and respond to comments received and publish a Final SEIS that incorporates any necessary revisions. Staff will brief the Commission on the Final SEIS, likely in May, and seek a Commission recommendation of the proposed 2019-2030 TFP to the City Council. The proposed 2019-2030 TFP continues to support the current, adopted Transportation Impact Fee schedule.

If you have questions or need additional information prior to the meeting, please contact Michael Ingram at 425-452-4166 or email mingram@bellevuewa.gov or Eric Miller at 425-452-6146 or email emiller@bellevuewa.gov. Staff are available to meet with Commission Members to discuss details of the environmental analysis in advance of the Commission meeting, if desired.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. 2019-2030 Preliminary TFP Project List
- B. 2019-2030 Preliminary TFP Project Map
- C. Existing and Projected Levels of Service (at “system” intersections)
- D. Mobility Management Areas and System Intersections Map
- E. Priority Bicycle Corridor Completion Status (2018) and TFP Projects