

**City of  
Bellevue**



# Transportation Commission Study Session

**DATE:** July 11, 2019

**TO:** Chair Wu and Members of the Transportation Commission

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**SUBJECT:** Main Street Bike Lane Project

## **DIRECTION REQUESTED**

☒ Action (Endorsement)

☒ Discussion

☐ Information

At its July 11 meeting, staff seeks Transportation Commission endorsement to incorporate rapid-build bicycle facilities on Main Street between 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast and Bellevue Way as the next logical element of a downtown bicycle network (implementation through Fall 2019).

Attached is a draft transmittal letter for Commission discussion and action (Attachment A). Staff requests Commission representation at the City Council's August 5 study session meeting to share insights and the transmittal letter.

## **BACKGROUND**

With Transportation Levy funding available to build on the downtown bikeway network in 2019, staff brought forward an assessment of two Main Street alternatives for Transportation Commission consideration at its March 28 meeting (see [Memo](#) and [Presentation](#)). The Transportation Commission voted to table further discussion of Main Street bike lane alternatives pending Council direction.

At its May 13 meeting, the City Council received an update on the Transportation Commission's assessment and proposed next steps on the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE bikeway and discussed two Main Street bike lane project alternatives (see [Memo](#), [F. Preliminary Assessment of Main Street Bike Lane Alternatives](#), and [Presentation](#)). Council concurred with Commission's determination to retain the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast Demonstration Bikeway with refinements to the design per community feedback and staff observations. Additionally, Council directed the Transportation Commission to evaluate a potential Main Street bike lane project, followed by an update to Council.

At its May 23 meeting (see [Memo](#)), the Transportation Commission received an update on Main Street bike lane alternatives and staff addressed the following considerations:

- Provided additional details on the existing Main Street bike lane and explained that the decision to incorporate these bike lanes did not result in an adverse impact to traffic operations at the Bellevue Way intersection.
- Provided an assessment of NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as an alternative east-west bicycle connection through Downtown as compared to Main Street.
- Explained that WSDOT's I-405 Bellevue to Renton project would not impact the viability of implementing a rapid build bicycle lane on Main Street between Bellevue Way and 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.
- Confirmed that Bellevue staff will conduct a limited before-and-after assessment of the Main Street bike lane project.
- Presented analysis that showed that the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE bike lanes and the proposed Main Street bike lanes when considered together represent a repurposing of 1.7% of the total lane miles in Downtown (total: 41 miles).
- Explained the implications of the new Vulnerable user/Safe passing legislation on vehicle capacity.

Additionally, staff shared a new alternative (Alternative 2.1) that responds to community requests to reduce projected motor vehicle delay experienced at the 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE intersection (see slides 12-20 in the [Presentation](#)).

At its May 23 meeting, the Transportation Commission requested staff investigate public testimony asserting that were the City to repurpose travel lanes for bicycle lane purposes that the City would be required to reimburse Washington State for any constitutional trust funds it might have received when it originally constructed Main Street. As follow-up to Commission's request, staff coordinated with Bryce Brown (AAG) at the Washington State Office of the Attorney General who noted that no forensic investigation of funds is required given direction in [RCW 35.75.060](#) (see excerpt below).

***Use of street and road funds for bicycle paths, lanes, routes and improvements authorized—Standards.***

*Any city or town may use any funds available for street or road construction, maintenance, or improvement for building, improving, and maintaining bicycle paths, lanes, roadways, and routes, and for improvements to make existing streets and roads more suitable and safe for bicycle traffic: PROVIDED, That any such paths, lanes, roadways, routes, or streets for which any such street or road funds are expended shall be suitable for bicycle transportation purposes and not solely for recreation purposes. Bicycle facilities constructed or modified after December 31, 2012, shall meet or exceed the standards adopted by the design standards committee under RCW [35.78.030](#).*

Finally, the Transportation Commission requested staff seek business community feedback on the three Main Street bike lane alternatives. At its June 5 meeting, staff responded to BDA Transportation Committee questions where its members considered bike lane alternatives and finalized a recommendation to the BDA Board of Directors (see [Agenda](#) and [Presentation](#)). On

June 18 the BDA Board held a meeting but as of this writing has not provided a recommendation to the Transportation Commission. Additionally, staff is scheduled to provide the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce Public Affairs Council a presentation on the Main Street bike lane alternatives at its July 11 meeting.

On July 1 staff met with Chair Lei Wu to prepare for the Transportation Commission's July 11 meeting. Chair Wu requested staff provide additional context for projects proximate to the candidate Main Street bike lane project; these include:

- **East Main TOD:** The City Council initiated [station area planning around the planned East Main light rail station](#). The vision developed by the Council through use of the East Main Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) required both Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code changes. Bicycle facilities on Main Street are affirmed in:

The CAC's [East Main Station Area Plan](#) (June 16, 2016):

- Complete projects identified as high priority in Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan in and near the station area, including Main Street off-street path on south side, Bellevue Way to 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue (\*O-121 S).
- Develop and implement pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements along the entire Main Street corridor between Bellevue Way and 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The [East Main Transit Oriented District Proposed Plan Amendment](#) (April 22, 2019):

- Support improved non-motorized connections on Main Street to the Wilburton neighborhood and the Eastside Rail Corridor.

- **Grand Connection:** The [Grand Connection Framework Plan](#) notes that: "Improved safety for cyclists and pedestrians was a top priority for public engagement respondents. The expansion of the route, and including a dedicated bike route, creates opportunities to improve the safety of more routes and corridors for cyclists and pedestrians." In other words, the [Grand Connection](#) is envisioned as a complement of non-motorized facilities – including connections to Main Street – that will link the waterfront of Lake Washington at Meydenbauer Bay Park, extend through Bellevue's dynamic downtown and ultimately connect with the regional Eastside Rail Corridor Trail in the Wilburton commercial area.
- **Eastside Rail Corridor Trail:** The Wilburton segment of the [Eastside Rail Corridor \(ERC\) Trail](#) – identified as a bicycle priority corridor (Corridor NS-3) in Bellevue's 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan – runs from I-90 north through Bellevue to 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE near Kirkland. The Main Street bike lane project – also a component of the 2009 Plan's bicycle priority corridor network (identified as Corridor EW-3 or the Lake-to-Lake Trail that completes a continuous east-west route between Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish) – when ultimately extended east of I-405 will connect to the ERC in the Wilburton area.
- **Wilburton:** The [Wilburton Commercial Area visioning process](#) was guided by a Council-appointed citizen advisory committee (CAC). The [Draft Environmental Impact Statement \(Transportation Section\)](#) calculates (Exhibit 3.9-16) the existing Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) on Main Street at an LTS-4; only suitable for "strong and fearless" riders (i.e., people

who are comfortable riding a bicycle on-street with high volume fast moving traffic). The CAC expressed that LTS 3 would be appropriate on arterials in Wilburton. The DEIS asserts that the impact of the No Action Alternative includes: “A bicycle corridor failing to meet LTS 3 on designated routes in the City’s bicycle network.” The CAC recommended improvements for bicycles on 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to connect to Main Street.

- **Downtown Development Projects:** As indicated in the [Major Project List \(Q1 2019\)](#) there are multiple land use changes underway in Downtown Bellevue. On Main Street, Alamo Manhattan 2 (10625 Main Street) is nearing completion and Main Street Apartments (10777 Main Street) is scheduled to break ground in Summer 2019. Given that construction staging for the Alamo Manhattan 2 project and its neighbor to the west occupied the eastbound travel lane for several years (until recently) replacing the construction staging area with a bike lane would not reduce the available lane capacity for motor vehicles.
- **Transit Circulation:** The [Bellevue Transit Master Plan](#) (TMP) establishes strategies and projects to meet the City’s transit needs for a 20-year planning period. Specific to Main Street, the TMP identifies a potential transit project L11 (Main Street HOV Lane) that would convert one eastbound travel lane to a PM peak-only HOV lane on Main Street from Bellevue Way NE to 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE (see page 158). It is envisioned that if/when this HOV lane is required – not prior to 2030 – that the bikeway on Main Street will have transitioned to an off-street facility on the southside of Main Street consistent with the project description in the 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan and the 2013 Downtown Transportation Plan.
- **I-405 Access Projects:** WSDOT’s [I-405 Renton to Bellevue Widening and Express Toll Lane Project](#) was designed with forward compatibility in mind and includes a number of design considerations for accessing Downtown Bellevue, including a potential new bridge and a half diamond interchange at NE 2nd Street. Additionally, WSDOT could begin replacement of the Main Street bridge over I-405 as early as 2020 (note: schedule is dependent on the Design-Builders who won’t be selected until August). This project includes a 14-foot-wide multi-purpose path on the southside of the new bridge (a component of the Lake-to-Lake Trail). These I-405 related projects are not impediments to moving forward with a low-cost (estimate: less than \$50K), rapid implementation (completion: Summer 2019) bicycle lane project on Main Street between Bellevue Way and 108th Avenue NE.

The above projects envision a more expansive (both in scale and length) bicycle facility improvement on Main Street (i.e., off-street path in the eastbound direction and separated bike lane in the westbound direction) than the bicycle lanes brought forward for Transportation Commission consideration at this time. In this context, the current proposal should be regarded as an interim quick-build bicycle facility that delivers improved safety and connectivity in the near-term – per Council direction through the Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program and more recently at the briefing on May 13 - while larger scale land use and transportation projects gradually come to fruition. Over time there will be opportunities for both the public sector (in the form of capital projects) and the private sector (in the form of conditions of development

approval) to improve/upgrade the Main Street bike lane – enhancing the facility to promote Downtown Bellevue’s high-density, mixed use urban environment.

At its July 11 meeting staff seeks Transportation Commission endorsement of Alternative 2.1 – the staff recommended Main Street bike lane alternative detailed along with others evaluated in Attachment B. Additionally, staff seeks Commission feedback on the draft transmittal letter endorsing staff proceed with implementing Alternative 2.1 as the next logical element of a downtown bicycle network (implementation through Fall 2019). Finally, staff requests Commission representation at the City Council’s August 5 study session meeting to share insights and the transmittal letter.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Transmittal Letter from the Transportation Commission
- B. Staff Assessment of Alternatives and Recommendation on Main Street Bike Lane Project
- C. Emails from May 23 to July 2 on Main Street Bike Lane Project