

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

June 27, 2019
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Wu, Commissioners Bishop, Leitner, Marciante, Teh, Ting

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Jeremy Chin, Paula Stevens,
Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 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 6:47 p.m.

Commissioner Lisa Leitner introduced herself as a 22-year resident of Bellevue currently residing in the Eastgate area. She said she was excited to be a part of the Commission and looked forward to learning from the seasoned Commissioners, the staff and the public.

Commissioner Albert Ting said he has lived in Bellevue for 26 years and has recently become more civically involved. He said he also was excited to be a member of the Commission and looked forward to doing some big things.

Transportation director Andrew Singelakis noted that he previously served as director of land use and transportation for Washington County, Oregon, and as deputy director of transportation for Tucson, Arizona.

Principal Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald noted that the resignation of Commissioner Chirls created a vacancy in the Vice Chair position. According to the bylaws, a new officer must be selected to serve on an interim basis until the next formal election of officers.

Mr. McDonald stated that prior to the meeting he had received a nomination for Commissioner Teh to serve as Vice Chair. He said absent additional nominations, no vote would be necessary to establish Commissioner Teh as Vice Chair.

There were no other nominations and Commissioner Teh was chosen to serve as interim Vice Chair.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Michelle Wanamaker, 4045 149th Avenue SE, thanked the Commission for its hard work on the Eastgate Transportation Study and said she was very pleased with it. She said the final report was excellent and that she was looking forward to seeing the projects progress.

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

Councilmember Lee said it was good for the Commission to be meeting in the community away from City Hall. He congratulated Commissioner Teh for his selection as Vice Chair. He also welcomed and congratulated the two new Commissioners chosen from some 18 well-qualified applicants.

Commissioner Leitner reported the city's neighborhood group put together two neighborhood walks last year. For the current year there will be three walks: Woodridge, July 10; West Lake Sammamish, July 17; and Eastgate, July 18. Each walk will start at 6:30 p.m. The Commissioners were encouraged to attend.

5. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. McDonald reported that the Commission's recommendation on the Transportation Facilities Plan was presented to the City Council. The Council received the recommendation on the TFP as well as the recommendation to develop a transportation master plan and a Northeast Bellevue transportation study that may be coordinated with Redmond. The process for getting those items on the work program will involve both financial and staff resources.

Commissioner Bishop noted that the discussion by the Council included the notion of doing the work in the next budget cycle. Mr. McDonald said the process of developing the next budget will begin in January. Commissioner Bishop said it was his understanding that there is a process for amending the budget at the halfway point of the two-year cycle and he asked if the project could be addressed and funded before the end of the year.

Assistant Transportation Director Paula Stevens said the mid-cycle adjustments made to the budget usually do not include substantive items. That does not mean, however, the Council could not consider the project in light of the Commission's suggestion. She proposed having staff do some checking to see what the opportunities might be and report back to the Commission. As proposed, the transportation master plan likely will cost in excess of a million dollars and take more than a year to complete.

Chair Wu pointed out that both the Council and the staff were generally supportive of the Commission's recommendation in regard to the study.

Mr. McDonald added that Commissioner Bishop was instrumental in the drafting of the transportation master plan policy in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Eastside Transportation Study

Mr. McDonald acknowledged that Commissioners Bishop and Ting attended a briefing the afternoon of June 25 at the office of the consultants. The focus was the content of the transportation study. Handwritten notes, edits and comments were offered by Commissioner Bishop regarding the draft document for incorporation in the final product.

Mr. McDonald stated that the Eastgate Transportation Study began in November of 2016 with the Council discussing congestion in Eastgate and what should be done about it. The focus was on current conditions and what the future would look like given the 2035 land use forecasts and transportation network assumptions. The study's intent was to identify and what congestion reduction projects should be considered in a 2035 time-frame, including projects that could be implemented in the short term.

It was pointed out that there are 27 intersections in four Mobility Management Areas in the Eastgate study area. Each MMA has different expectations for mobility and different standards by which to measure mobility. Each of the 27 intersections were studied, but primarily the study focused on how people move along the corridors, particularly the north-south corridors of 148th Avenue SE and 150th Avenue SE, and the Richards Road and Factoria Boulevard corridors. The focus was on what could be done to help reduce congestion along the corridors at both the morning and afternoon peak periods.

While the metrics vary between MMA, the main metric, which is adopted in the Comprehensive Plan and the Traffic Standards Code, is the Volume to Capacity (V/C) ratio at intersections. For 2018, the study found that for the most part the intersections met the V/C ratio for the morning peak, and indeed most met the thresholds for the afternoon peak as well. However, looking out to 2035 and taking into account the land use projections and transportation network assumed for that horizon year, the study showed less vehicle mobility in two or three of the intersections, both in the morning and the afternoon.

With regard to vehicle travel speeds, the 148th Avenue SE/150th Avenue SE corridor was measured northbound in the morning and southbound in the afternoon. Modeling tools were used to project conditions in 2035 and found that for both the morning and afternoon commutes the travel speeds tended to be slower than current conditions. Vehicle speeds were also studied on southbound Factoria Boulevard for the evening peak and not surprisingly they were identified as being quite slow under current conditions. If nothing is done, by 2035 vehicle speeds will be even slower.

Continuing, Mr. McDonald noted working internally and with the consultants, the staff identified more than 20 project concepts that could potentially help to reduce delay and improve intersection function. Each of the concepts was tested using a number of tools, including traffic modeling, to compare their performance relative to each other and to the 2035 baseline. The information gleaned from the modeling tools, and after developing a basic cost/benefit analysis, some projects were screened out. Some performed well but were shown to be extraordinarily expensive, while others did not perform well or simply moved the congestion somewhere else. The projects in the final report are those that were deemed beneficial and were approved by the Commission in May. While the projects are scattered around the Eastgate/Factoria area, where the extraordinary benefit comes in is in how the projects align along corridors and help the progression of vehicles along those corridors by

reducing delay.

Mr. McDonald pointed out that in the 2035 baseline, during the morning peak 12 of 19 intersections are projected to meet the V/C threshold. With the projects in place, 13 of the 19 intersections would meet the V/C threshold. He stressed that some of the intersections currently do not perform well, but with the projects in place they perform better even if they do not meet the V/C threshold. Similarly, during the evening peak 17 of 27 intersections are projected to meet the V/C threshold in the 2035 baseline, and with the projects in place 20 of the intersections meet the threshold. Most of the intersections will see some level of improvement with the projects in place. Similarly with corridor travel speed, in the 2035 baseline, morning northbound traffic on 148th/150th Avenue SE travels at 11 mph, and 4.9 mph southbound in the afternoon. With the projects constructed, the travel speed increases to 16.3 mph northbound in the morning and 9.5 mph southbound in the afternoon. The projects improve the performance of Richards Road/Factoria Boulevard a little bit, moving from 3.6 mph to 4.0 mph in 2035. While intersection improvements in and around the I-90 interchange make some difference, much of the delay occurs to the south of SE 38th Street, so the value of projects at those intersections is diminished as congestion backs up from further to the south.

Mr. McDonald briefly reviewed the proposed project for the intersection of 150th Avenue SE/SE Eastgate Way, noting that improvements would be made through a combination of right-turn and left-turn enhancements. Similarly, he noted that at Factoria Boulevard/SE 38th Street, the proposed improvement to add a dedicated left-turn lane will make a big difference for egress from the T-Mobile complex in the evening peak.

The Commissioners were informed that the list of recommended projects would have no standing until they are adopted. Once added to project lists, including the TIP, the TFP and the Comprehensive Transportation Project List, the projects can compete for funds and be eligible for grant applications. There is no guarantee that projects will rise to the top of the respective lists, however. In the short term, funds from the Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion levy could be tapped for certain projects.

Answering a question asked by Vice-chair Teh, Mr. McDonald stressed that the list of projects is not prioritized in the plan report. The projects are described and each has a cost estimate associated with it, and importantly there is a performance benefit analysis included. He said the process of prioritization will occur as the projects move through the TFP and CIP processes.

Commissioner Bishop asked if there are any restrictions against including one or more of the projects in the next budgetary CIP even though they would not have made it onto the TFP. Mr. McDonald said he was working with staff in the community development department to get the projects included on the Comprehensive Transportation Project List during the current year. If that can be done, the projects will become eligible for short-term funding. They would not necessarily need to be on the TFP project list.

Commissioner Ting asked if there is a way for the report to express which of the projects should be taken together. Mr. McDonald explained that the Comprehensive Transportation Project List includes a narrative section for each project. Embedded in that there would be a description of which projects work well together to achieve synergy along a corridor.

Commissioner Leitner referred to Page 8 of the executive summary and the notation in regard to the Bellevue College Connector project. She asked if there are any dependencies or correlations between that project and other projects. Mr. McDonald said there is a benefit to

transit speed and reliability associated with the Bellevue College Connector, and there is a benefit associated with removing buses from congested intersections along 148th Avenue SE. There is no specific interdependency, however, necessary to accomplish any of the intersection projects or the Bellevue College Connector.

Commissioner Bishop said the final report was well written and clearly outlines how to do some great things to improve traffic congestion in an area that the Council identified back in 2016 as being in need of congestion relief. The area was in fact a poster child for the congestion relief levy and in fact levy funds were used for the study. Appendix G, the cost estimates, adds up to \$15 million worth of projects, which is a relatively modest amount of money. The modeling projections for growth in traffic in the areas through 2035 is significant at 30 percent in a number of locations and up to 50 percent in Factoria. Even with that much forecasted growth, the projects still show a benefit. Three of the projects, C201, C203 and C302 are at the SE 37th Street I-90 off-ramp, and all are either within WSDOT right-of-way or within WSDOT's limited access limits. Typically WSDOT takes some responsibility for things within its access limits. Those projects add up to only \$3 million and WSDOT has an existing project from Eastgate to SR-900 that has a \$73 million price tag for which the bid came in at \$43 million, which means they have money sitting on the table, funds that could be tapped for the three projects. There should be some communication with WSDOT along those lines.

Commissioner Ting asked if the feedback recently submitted by the community would be handed off to staff for review, leaving the Commission to approve the final report as drafted. Mr. McDonald said the proposed edits would be incorporated into the final report, along with the ones discussed with staff and the consultants on June 25. He said he would also accept any additional comments for inclusion in the report to the Council.

A motion to approve the final report and send it to the Council was made by Commissioner Marciante. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bishop and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the transmittal memo was made by Commissioner Bishop. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Teh and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Bishop volunteered to represent the Commission before the Council at the presentation of the final report and transmittal memo.

Mr. McDonald thanked the Commissioners, staff and consultant team for all the hard work over the last year.

8. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL

- A. May 9, 2019
- B. May 23, 2019

A motion to approve both sets of minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Marciante. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bishop and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioners Leitner and Ting abstained from voting.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

12. COMMISSION CALENDAR

Mr. McDonald reviewed the calendar of upcoming agenda items and meeting dates. He noted that October 24 was under consideration as a date for the Commission's annual retreat. Chair Wu recommended that the retreat date be earlier.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that for some time the Transportation Commission has been talking about scheduling a joint meeting with the Planning Commission to discuss issues of interest to both commissions. He said it was his understanding that the Planning Commission would also like to meet jointly with the Transportation Commission.

Commissioner Ting said he supported the notion of the Commission moving out of its silo and working jointly with other commissions. He asked if there is a standard method in place for sharing joint-interest information between commissions.

Mr. McDonald allowed that the city's boards and commissions often encounter overlapping issues. That typically does not trigger the need for joint meetings of the entire bodies, rather representatives of each body can attend meetings of the other body to express a position or interest. A case in point is the Comprehensive Transportation Project List for the Eastgate transportation projects. The Planning Commission is the steward for the Comprehensive Plan and the role of the Transportation Commission is to present to the Planning Commission recommendations for updates to the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission in turn forwards a recommendation to the Council. Where policy level issues emerge from the Transportation Commission are reviewed by the Planning Commission, there is always the opportunity for communicating the interests of the Transportation Commission to the Planning Commission.

13. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Leitner. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bishop and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Wu adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date