

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

October 7, 2019  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Chelminiak, Deputy Mayor Robinson, and Councilmembers Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Robertson, Stokes, and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately one hour to discuss one quasi-judicial matter.

The meeting resumed at 7:07 p.m. Mayor Chelminiak indicated that Councilmember Robertson would be joining the meeting shortly.

2. Study Session Items

- (a) Update on Transportation Capital Investment Program (CIP) and Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion Levy

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced staff's update on the Transportation Capital Investment Program (CIP) and the projects underway as part of the neighborhood safety, connectivity and congestion levy.

Ron Kessack, Assistant Director of the Transportation Department, said the Transportation CIP totals approximately \$278 million and represents approximately 40 percent of the overall CIP Plan. The Transportation CIP includes \$209 million for discrete and new programs and \$69 million for ongoing maintenance programs. Major taxes (Sales, Business and Occupation, Real Estate Excise Tax, and Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax) support 46 percent of the Transportation CIP. Additional revenues include 20 percent from the neighborhood transportation levy, 22 percent from the federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan, and 12 percent from grants and other sources.

Mr. Kessack reported that 17 transportation projects are currently under construction, and those do not include the annual overlay program, development-related projects, or the franchise utilities work. Public outreach activities include mailers to property owners in the vicinity of projects, social media, open house meetings, and email/text alerts.

Mr. Kessack provided an update regarding the TIFIA loan projects and recalled that the City was required to provide a 67-percent match for TIFIA funding. The City was able to apply the loan funds to certain BelRed-area projects already programmed in the CIP Plan or recently completed. Two large TIFIA match projects currently under construction are 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE (Spring Boulevard to Ichigo Way) and Spring Boulevard (116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE). The completed match projects are NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street (116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE), 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Phases 1 through 3 (NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street to Spring Boulevard), and Spring Boulevard Zone 1. Mr. Kessack noted there is a waiting period of eight to nine months for steel used in transportation-related projects.

*[Councilmember Robertson arrived at 7:15 p.m.]*

The Spring Boulevard project between 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is under construction, and the City is coordinating with nearby Sound Transit light rail construction and the development of the REI building. Additional TIFIA-funded projects include 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE (Bel-Red Road to Spring Boulevard and Ichigo Way to Northup Way), 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE (Bel-Red Road to Northup Way), and Spring Boulevard (130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE). Additional major transportation projects under construction are the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail and the Newport Way/150<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE congestion reduction improvements. The trail project includes a bridge over Factoria Boulevard, a tunnel underneath, and improvements to the Factoria Boulevard freeway ramp.

Transportation CIP projects currently in the design phase are SE Newport Way (Somerset Boulevard to 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE), West Lake Sammamish Parkway Phase 2, 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Stage 4 (Spring Boulevard to Northup Way), Spring Boulevard (130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to 132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE), and the Bellevue College Connector. For the latter, the City is working with the college and King Country Metro on a three-party agreement to each contribute \$100,000 to identify the project scope, property impacts, and potential project cost. The CIP funds ongoing programs including pavement overlays, major maintenance, neighborhood traffic safety, pedestrian-bicycle improvements, and neighborhood sidewalks.

Mr. Kessack encouraged the Council to visit the Tam O'Shanter neighborhood to see the new roadway and sidewalk improvements. He noted that Sound Transit's East Link light rail project is approximately 63 percent completed.

Mr. Kessack said the 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE wall replacement project required more and larger blocks to meet seismic standards. The added construction costs will be reimbursed by King County.

Mr. Kessack recalled that the City received \$16 million in state funding for the east end of the Mountains to Sound Greenway project that extends to Lakemont Boulevard. The grant required

construction within 10 years of the acceptance of the grant. However, the City has not allocated funding for construction. Mr. Kessack said staff recommends turning back the grant funds of \$635,000 for that portion of the project. He said the City may then apply for grants for the trail phases currently funded by the City for construction. The City will receive \$2.7 million in federal funds and \$1 million from the Sound Transit Board to extend the Mountains to Sound Greenway trail to 142<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SE. A \$1.4 million grant will be provided by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) for the 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE Preservation project. Mr. Kessack said the City applied for a Washington State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) grant for 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and the grant awards will be announced in November.

John Murphy, Senior Planner, provided an update on the projects included in the 20-year neighborhood transportation levy approved in 2016. The levy designates \$5.4 million annually for safety and connectivity projects (sidewalk and trail maintenance, safety and traffic management technology, new trails and sidewalks, neighborhood safety, and bike facilities) and \$2 million annually for neighborhood congestion reduction projects.

Mr. Murphy reported that 22 projects have been completed through the neighborhood transportation levy, and 14 projects are currently under construction. He said the City is working to provide flashing school zone signage near middle schools and high schools, which were previously provided only in the vicinity of elementary schools. He noted that more than half of the Bellevue School District's schools have a levy-funded safety project nearby.

A full levy progress report will be completed by the end of the year. Staff anticipates completing most of the projects funded for 2017 through 2020 next year. The City will continue to design and schedule projects for 2021 and beyond through the neighborhood transportation levy. Mr. Murphy highlighted the following levy projects: 1) 119<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE (near Newport Heights Elementary School) sidewalk, 2) 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE crosswalks, medians, bike lanes, and maintenance, 3) 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE crosswalks, and 4) 158<sup>th</sup> Place SE sidewalk (near Phantom Lake Elementary School).

Mayor Chelminiak noted that 52 percent of the City's capital budget funds transportation projects and activities, if you include the debt service.

Councilmember Lee, liaison to the Transportation Commission, said the transportation projects are good investments in the community that affect our daily lives. He expressed support for projects that provide multimodal transportation options. Responding to Mr. Lee, Mr. Kessack said the new bike traffic signals on Factoria Boulevard near Newport High School will protect cyclists in the bike lanes. Mr. Lee said it would be helpful to educate the public about the new road and bike lane design and the new traffic signals when they become operational.

Mr. Lee complimented the sidewalk project near Tyee Middle School. He noted, however, that some residents have expressed concern regarding street parking and the lines of vehicles picking up and dropping off students. Mr. Kessack said the school opened an additional lot for drop-off and pickup. He said staff will address the issue with the school.

Councilmember Zahn expressed enthusiasm for the completion of transportation projects. She questioned whether the City attempts to collect feedback from the neighborhoods upon the completion of improvements.

Ms. Zahn said she has heard concerns about temporarily losing the pedestrian walkway along the Newport Way and 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE project. She said she is pleased to see more bike lane projects throughout the community. However, she noted that cars are parked in certain bike lanes, including along 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

Ms. Zahn noted the comparison provided by staff of original bid amounts and actual project costs. She said it would be helpful to compare the engineer's estimate, low bid amount, and actual project costs as well.

Mr. Kessack said that work on the Newport Way/150<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE project will resume soon. He said the City has conducted post-project surveys for certain major projects.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis complimented staff on their work and said he is pleased to see that projects are distributed across the community. He said he hears questions from residents regarding the lack of a continuous sidewalk on 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue between NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Lake Hills Boulevard. He expressed concern that 164<sup>th</sup> Avenue is experiencing increased traffic volumes, and the mailboxes are all located on one side of the street.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for their public outreach efforts. He suggested adding a feature to the MyBellevue App that would allow an individual to enter the name of their neighborhood and to receive alerts on projects in their area. Mr. Murphy said staff is increasing its use of Nextdoor.com to target updates for specific neighborhoods.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis asked staff to follow up with him regarding 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 164<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Councilmember Stokes observed that the increased communication on Nextdoor.com has been helpful to the community. He said it is exciting to see the completion of so many projects. He noted that the Eastgate Way improvements at the I-90 interchange have improved the traffic flow. Responding to Mr. Stokes, Mr. Kessack said there are two connections to the Eastrail in the Spring District area, one near Children's Hospital and the second one is farther north near SR 520.

Councilmember Robertson said she is proud of the City's accomplishments with the neighborhood levy projects. She suggested that the City educate the public about how to negotiate traffic circles and roundabouts.

Noting the pending Bellevue College Connector three-party agreement, Ms. Robertson recalled that the City had an agreement with Metro approximately 10 years ago to develop a downtown circulator service. However, the project was set aside due to the recession. She suggested that the Council discuss the potential for a downtown circulator during next year's budget process.

Deputy Mayor Robinson said the public can experience fatigue and frustration with the continuous development of transportation projects.

Responding to Ms. Robinson, Mr. Kessack said the East Link light rail project is approximately six months ahead of schedule, and Sound Transit anticipates beginning operations in 2023. The City intends to complete its TIFIA projects in the BelRed area by that time, and the West Lake Sammamish Parkway improvements and Newport Way improvements will be completed by that timeframe as well.

Responding to Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Kessack said there are two major pole fabricators in the country and the backlog for orders is 8-9 months due to the availability of steel. Mr. Kessack said the City is limited to where it can obtain certain materials for the TIFIA loan projects due to federal regulations. Mr. Chelminiak said he supports the Buy America program. However, he is concerned about the slow delivery of steel products.

Mr. Chelminiak said he would like to see the Tam O'Shanter neighborhood sidewalk and road improvements. Mr. Kessack said staff will provide information regarding the specific streets and can provide photos as well.

3. Discussion of Upcoming Items: None.

At 7:58 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared recess to the Regular Session.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

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