

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

September 26, 2019
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Paula Stevens, Chris Long, Andrew Singelakis, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: Councilmember Lee

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Wu who presided.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Teh, who arrived at 6:56 p.m., and Commissioner Marciante, who arrived at 7:25 p.m.

A. Introduction of New Commissioner

Principal Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald introduced new Commissioner Kirill Tropin.

Commissioner Tropin said he was excited to be a member of the Commission. He said he works as a product manager for Google and lives in the Crossroads area. He said he enjoys traveling, visiting other cities, and photography.

B. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. McDonald noted that he had received nominations for Chair Wu to continue as Chair and for Commissioner Leitner to be elected to serve as Vice Chair.

Absent additional nominations, the nominees were elected to serve in the respective positions.

A motion to allow Commissioner Ting to participate remotely in the October 24 Commission meeting was made by Commissioner Leitner. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bishop and the motion carried unanimously.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Ms. Michelle Wannamaker, 4045 149th Avenue SE,, 4045 149th Avenue SE, referred to SE 38th Street and stressed how difficult it is for businesses on the south side of the street to exit and cross traffic. She asked if there was something the city could do to address the situation. Those same business owners are having to pay someone to spend all day monitoring their parking lot to keep T-Mobile employees from parking there. It is not fair to them that they are losing customers because of how bad the traffic is.

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

Councilmember Lee congratulated Chair Wu and Commissioner Leitner for being elected to serve as Chair and Vice Chair. He also welcomed Commissioner Tropin to the Commission. He noted that many Councilmembers served on the Transportation Commission before being elected to the Council and said that is a sign of how great the Commission is.

Commissioner Leitner shared with the Commissioners that on two occasions she has seen rideshare drivers and passengers stop in the middle of roads, including on 148th Avenue SE at Lake Hills Boulevard, and on 142nd Place SE at the crossover that accesses Bellevue College. Passengers proceed to get out in the middle of the street and they do not always walk carefully. She said she was not expecting the Commission or staff to take any specific action, rather that there simply be an awareness of the issue.

With regard to pedestrian safety, Commissioner Leitner said on her block where Amazon picks up and drops off its employees, as well as T-Mobile moving into the office park, there are many who are not using the sidewalks and the crosswalks. Instead, they chose to simply wait for cars to stop and cross in the middle of the street. That is also an issue that should be addressed.

5. STAFF REPORTS

A. Comprehensive Transportation Project List

Mr. McDonald reported that he attended the September 25 meeting of the Planning Commission to present the Commission's recommendation for updates to the Comprehensive Transportation Project List, specifically the projects from the Eastgate Transportation Study. The Planning Commission was appreciative of the work done by the Commission and moved to have a public hearing on the topic on October 23, following which the Planning Commission will prepare a final recommendation for the Council to consider and approve.

Commissioner Bishop said for most of the seven years he has served on the Commission, ways to coordinate with the Planning Commission have been sought. He stressed the need for there to be some overlap between the two incredibly important commissions. Land use drives transportation, and transportation drives land use. He said he only recently met the chair of the Planning Commission and allowed that he does not know most of the Planning Commissioners. It is incumbent on the two commissions to look for ways to interact with each other. The major transportation plan for Eastgate approved by the Transportation Commission was transmitted to the Planning Commission, all without any time spent by the two bodies working together.

Commissioner Ting asked if there are easy ways for the two commissions to meet together. He suggested it would be useful for both commissions to at least know each other and have some basic understanding of the priorities and challenges of each body.

Chair Wu said having the two commissions meet jointly could be viewed as part of improving the Commission's process. She suggested talking a little more about it at the upcoming retreat.

B. SE 38th Street/Factoria Boulevard Westbound Approach Improvements

Mr. McDonald said one of the items from the Eastgate Transportation Study was the early implementation of the improvements on SE 38th Street approaching Factoria Boulevard from the west. He informed the Commissioners that the design of the relatively inexpensive and quick implementation is about to get under way. The design work will proceed through the fall and winter months and construction will occur in the first or second quarter of 2020.

C. Open Public Meeting Act (OPMA) Training Fall 2019

Mr. McDonald said it was his understanding that all of the new Commissioners had been made aware of the requirements and the video to be watched to receive the training.

D. Northeast Bellevue Transportation Study

Mr. McDonald noted that the Commission had recommended the study to the Council in the transmittal of the Transportation Facilities Plan. The staff have begun doing some preliminary scoping work, partly from the direction provided by the Council and partly from their own knowledge of what is going on in Northeast Bellevue. A conversation about Northeast Bellevue will be had with the Commission at the November 14 meeting, beginning with the project principles and the guiding framework for the study, which are typically created collaboratively by the Commission and the staff and then forwarded to the Council for review and approval. The Council must provide direction to proceed with the work.

Chair Wu said she made a request to the staff that the Commission would review the study scope, community involvement process and expected outcomes. It is clear from public comments that improvements are needed in that area. The discussion needs to occur before establishing the guiding principles.

Mr. McDonald said the study would be the third time the city has worked with Redmond concerning the Northeast Bellevue area. The first Bellevue Redmond Overlake Transportation Study (BROTS) was a very cooperative analysis done by the two cities with full recognition of the dominance of the Microsoft campus in Redmond. There were numerous recommendations that flowed out of that process. Ten or more years later the two cities got together again for the second BROTS study, which was also a cooperative work of the two jurisdictions. Additional recommendations were made and projects got implemented. In moving ahead, it will be critical for both cities to be part of the study, something that will require Council direction.

Commissioner Tropin pointed out that Microsoft is a huge part of the study area and he suggested they should be part of the study.

Commissioner Leitner agreed that the study should start with community engagement. Commissioner Ting concurred with the need to engage the community as early as possible.

E. Bike Share Program Update

Mr. McDonald shared with the Commissioners a memo from the bike share pilot program manager Andreas Piller. He indicated that no Commission action was needed.

Commissioner Bishop asked if the Council had approved the extension of the bike share program through 2020. Mr. McDonald said the Council had not been asked to do so, adding that he did not believe the Council would be asked to do so. Commissioner Bishop pointed out that the pilot project, which ended in July, was reported by staff to the Commission to have been extended until December 2019. The data provided to date represents only a partial report. The Commission spent quite a lot of time focused on the program prior to its implementation in the summer of 2018 and offered multiple recommendations for metrics and conditions, including safety and the use of helmets, yet the report includes no data about helmet use or safety. The report indicates the staff are planning to move ahead with a new program for 2020 with a new set of recommendations and conditions, which neither the Commission nor the Council have weighed in on. He asked if the Commission will get a chance to discuss the program.

Assistant Transportation Director Paula Stevens said the permit structure is administrative and is something the transportation director reviews and approves. The idea of having bike share was something that required a much higher level of vetting given that it was new to the community. Once the permit system was established along with the terms and conditions, adaptation is all that is needed to make the program better. It is the director's role and responsibility to approve the permit and conditions. However, if the Commission has input it wants to provide to the director, it will be welcomed. The program will not, however, be going back to the Council for review and permitting.

Chair Wu asked how the extension of the pilot program ties into the performance criteria evaluations. Ms. Stevens said the evaluation criteria established for the pilot are intended to serve as the basis for assessing the performance of the system and the next steps forward. If the Commission believes there are things omitted from the assessment based on the original criteria, staff wants to know about them so any gaps can be filled in.

Commissioner Bishop suggested that there should be a public discussion at the Commission level about the criteria and the information in the report, and the public should be given the opportunity to weigh in. The report essentially says all the hard work that went into creating the system absolutely failed. It was set up to accommodate up to three vendors with up to 400 bikes each, but it turns out only one vendor sought to be permitted and the maximum number of bikes they got up to was 302. For two-thirds of the weeks they were operating under the permit they violated the minimum number of bikes on the ground. There is nothing in the report to indicate the vendor has any effective way of dealing with helmets. It was clear there were going to be some costs associated with implementing the program and that the permitting structure would be drafted to make things cost neutral, but nothing is included in the report about the program costs or revenue received. Staff say the program has been wildly successful and should continue.

Ms. Stevens said she would not characterize the staff as having said the program has been wildly successful. That would be very much overstepping what the results show. She reiterated that staff will welcome any comments and suggestions from the Commission about the program.

Commissioner Bishop asked when the new permitting process will be published. Ms. Stevens said she did not know the exact date but would find out and inform the Commission.

Chair Wu agreed the program should be made a topic of discussion at the Commission level. Commissioner Ting concurred. Commissioner Teh pointed out that while the report includes a lot of facts, it does not indicate whether the data is good or bad in terms of how effective the program has been. He agreed there should be an overall briefing from staff to the Commission at an upcoming meeting.

F. October 10 Retreat

Mr. McDonald said the retreat would begin at 5:30 p.m. with dinner followed by a welcome from the Chair and the Council liaison. Transportation department director Andrew Singelakis will provide a few words about his experience so far and where he thinks Bellevue mobility might be in the future, and the role the Commission will play in helping to shape mobility. The East Link project construction managers will provide a briefing regarding what goes on behind the scenes working with Sound Transit. The agenda will also include a discussion on the roles and responsibilities of the Commission with respect to the Council, the staff, each other and the community. That discussion will be facilitated. Mr. McDonald said he also would provide the Commission with a glimpse into the 2020 future relative to projects and issues.

Chair Wu said she would rather hear from the city's economic development director than a report about East Link. Mr. McDonald said the economic development director would not be available on October 10, and he said he could provide the East Link report some other time. He added that economic development is currently on the agenda for the Commission's November 14 meeting.

Commissioner Leitner said she would welcome a presentation on East Link, either at the retreat or at a future meeting. Commissioner Ting concurred but stressed that time should be given over at the retreat to focusing on the primary issues, leaving a presentation on East Link to a future meeting.

Mr. McDonald said it is possible to provide briefings outside of Commission meetings, including through archived videos and materials.

Commissioner Teh said he would like to see outcomes established for the retreat discussions.

Commissioner Bishop said Mr. McDonald's glimpse into the 2020 future will be very important element of the retreat.

Chair Wu called attention to the three-question survey she sent to the Commissioners. She said she would be working with the facilitator to use the responses to help shape the discussions.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Neighborhood Congestion Relief Projects Report

Traffic Engineering Manager Chris Long sought comments and input on moving forward with

the Neighborhood Congestion Relief program. He noted that the Commission had initially helped staff refine the program, which did not exist prior to passage of the levy. The issues of how to create projects and evaluate them were addressed in collaboration with the Commission over the course of three meetings. The program evolved given the size of the lift needed for the first stage, specifically the creation of a backlog of projects to kick off. Going forward things will come in smaller chunks, possibly in the form of something like the Northeast Bellevue transportation study or a couple of one-off studies.

Continuing, Mr. Long said the levy that was approved by the voters in 2016 established an ordinance creating the Neighborhood Congestion Relief program. The goal was to tackle small to medium sized projects using the fixed amount of \$2 million per year. Staff began working with the Commission in November 2017 in creating the project scoring criteria, and by January 2018 the process was completed along with identification of which projects would move forward. The first major traffic study was focused on Eastgate and was completed in June 2019.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that the Commission was very much involved with the process. The Commission reviewed the recommendations developed by staff as to how to go about doing things, and played with the numbers and the percentages.

Mr. Long said a pass/fail criteria aimed at weeding out projects over which the city does not have full control in order to keep the focus on the near term served as the first tier in project selection. For projects that pass, the first tier involved an evaluation to determine which projects to study first based on a needs assessment looking at level-of-service at a particular intersection relative to the Mobility Management Area adopted standard. The maximum points given to the intersection scoring portion of the first tier was 80 points. The remaining 20 points were assigned based on an evaluation of safety needs. In the final tier, the focus is on the projected LOS result and the maximum awarded points was 70 for high need/high benefit projects.

Mr. Long said the scoring and the amount of points given to the congestion portion versus the safety portion was in fact decided by the Commission. The congestion element and scoring falls in line with how projects are evaluated in the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP). After the initial need list was compiled in early 2018, the results of the traffic studies were used to determine the level of benefit from a project, compared it against the need, and came up with a score. High need high benefit projects received a score of 70. In the final round, the remaining points came from various different criteria, including multimodal LOS and ease of implementation.

The original project list that was finalized in early 2018 drew from several different sources, including input from the public, the Comprehensive Transportation Project List, the TFP, the 2017 concurrency report, and staff and Commission recommendations. All of the necessary traffic studies were completed during the summer of 2019, including the Eastgate Transportation Study. There is currently one project in design for the 112th Avenue NE/NE 24th Street traffic signal which is slated for construction in 2020. Two projects are currently under construction, specifically the SE Newport Way/164th Avenue SE mini roundabout, and the 150th Avenue SE/SE Newport Way southbound right-turn pocket.

From the initial needs assessment, nine projects ranked as the top locations to study. The nine projects were spread across three consultant contracts, with the consultants charged with following a similar scope and preparing a similar report for each project location. The sixth

project on the list is somewhat unique in that it involves three all-way stops on 156th Avenue SE. The intersection with Lake Hills Boulevard ranked out as a top project to receive a traffic signal. The feedback from the public regarding the other two locations at SE 16th Street and SE 24th Street strongly favored pedestrian safety improvements over congestion relief improvements. Accordingly, the all-way stops at those two intersections are no longer considered neighborhood congestion intersections, rather they are now safety projects and will be looked at for funding through other programs. All of the projects were opened for public feedback, either at open house events or online. Overall it was a very collaborative process.

The Commissioners were shown the final results of the scoring. Mr. Long said the concept of doing the scoring was to help determine which projects should go first, but stressed that nothing binds the projects to being done in the order shown given opportunities to partner with other projects. That said, the current plan is to tackle the first five projects and the tenth project on the list in 2020 and 2021. The Eastgate Transportation Study identified projects on 150th Avenue SE at the intersections at SE 37th Street and Eastgate Way that would yield significant benefits. Those projects, however, will be expensive to build, together costing about \$8 million. The corridor, however, has a would compete well for grant dollars because of the location, the level of congestion, the connectivity in the area and the impact on the freeway. Accordingly, the plan is to take those two intersections to 60 percent design in 2020 and shop them for grant money. At the 60 percent phase it is possible to be fairly certain regarding project costs, and at that stage the potential issues have been vetted.

Mr. Long informed the Commissioners that the 150th Avenue SE/SE 37th Street intersection project has already been designed to 60 percent. Prior to the levy, the Mayor asked for a study of 150th Avenue SE in conjunction with the Eastgate area Land Use Code Amendment. The project at SE 37th Street was, however, put on hold when the state came in with a traffic analysis for I-90 improvements, which evolved into the auxiliary lanes being built between Eastgate and Lakemont Boulevard. The consultant for the Eastgate Transportation Study worked into the modeling the findings from the state's work and slightly different recommendations were brought to the table, and those tweaks are what still need to be brought to the 60 percent design stage.

With regard to the SE 8th Street/Lake Hills Connector and 156th Avenue SE/Lake Hills Boulevard projects, Mr. Long said depending on where things land in terms of the budgets, both projects could potentially be built in 2021. The idea is to take both projects to 60 percent design and then see which project is ready to go first.

The Lake Hills Boulevard/148th Avenue NE project is unique is that while there are right-of-way impacts, the project needs to be on the books with a final design in order to address the need to meet concurrency in the East Bellevue MMA. The project will be designed in house and will kick-off by the end of the year and will go out to bid for construction in late 2020/early 2021.

Commissioner Bishop asked if impact fee revenues can be used for what is a concurrency project. Mr. McDonald said projects on the TFP list can be eligible for impact fee funding. Mr. Long said he did not believe the project is on the TFP.

Mr. Long noted that the Factoria Boulevard/SE 38th Street project final design is underway and will go to construction in 2020.

The Commissioners were shown graphics of various projects showing existing conditions and

proposed conditions, specifically Factoria Boulevard/SE 38th Street, Lake Hills Boulevard/148th Avenue NE, Lake Hills Boulevard/156th Avenue SE, SE 8th Street/Lake Hills Connector alternatives 1 and 2, 150th Avenue SE/SE 37th Street, and 150th Avenue SE/Eastgate Way.

Commissioner Tropin asked if the Lake Hills Boulevard/148th Avenue SE project would have the effect of increasing traffic flow on 156th Avenue SE and Lake Hills Boulevard. Mr. Long said he could not definitively say that. If anything, it may provide a better connection to get traffic off of 156th Avenue SE, which could serve as a diversion back to 148th Avenue SE.

Mr. Long allowed that a roundabout was considered for the Lake Hills Boulevard/156th Avenue SE intersection but was found to be too impactful on the homes on three of the four corners. There are driveways that are far too close to where a roundabout would have to be located and there is no good way to mitigate that in the intersection. The traffic signal solution was deemed the better option. Over the last five years, the intersection has seen the most collisions of all of the city's all-way stops.

Commissioner Marciante pointed out that middle schoolers use Lake Hills Boulevard to go to the library. The project will significantly improve safety.

With respect to the SE 8th Street/Lake Hills Connector project, Mr. Long said the alternative proposed by staff is to move forward with adding a second left-turn in the northbound direction, which will require a minor rechannelization of the eastbound movement. The longer-term solution identified involves going to a multilane roundabout. The roundabout drew mixed reviews from the neighbors in Wilburton who voiced concern about being able to get into it due to a continuous stream of cars. The modeling showed the roundabout would bring about significant improvements in the queuing and a sustaining future V/C ratio. At an estimated \$8 million, the roundabout is a long-term solution that should be kept in mind as funding becomes available. Given the forecasted V/C ratio for the intersection, a roundabout will likely be needed there by 2035.

Commissioner Tropin asked if there would be merit to putting off any improvements at SE 8th Street/Lake Hills Boulevard for a couple of years while seeking funds for a roundabout. Mr. Long said the concern is that with the level of congestion, a roundabout is not yet compelling. The thinking is that the interim improvement will yield a lot of value until the full project is ready to go.

Commissioner Leitner asked how the improvements to I-405 will impact the intersection. Mr. Long said the state is in the process of picking off projects on the I-405 master plan that was drafted in the early 2000s. The Bellevue-to-Renton high-occupancy toll lanes project will start construction in early 2020 and it will include some minor interchange improvements, but not at SE 8th Street. There is nothing in the plan that addresses the SE 8th Street interchange, though there is the concept of another interchange in Bellevue, either at NE 2nd Street or Main Street. That will be scoped in the South Bellevue Access Study.

Commissioner Marciante asked how bicycles will navigate the corridor. Mr. Long said the long-term plan for the corridor includes an off-street path on the east side of the Lake Hills Connector and the south side of SE 8th Street. It is hoped that by the time the roundabout is built, there will be funds to build that section of the Lake to Lake bike route through the city.

Mr. Long reviewed the 150th Avenue SE/SE 37th Street improvements with the Commission.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that the right-hand turn onto 150th Avenue SE is fully within the WSDOT right-of-way. He said there needs to be a coordinated effort to get funding and help from WSDOT to build the intersection. The off-ramp backs up onto the main line on the freeway, which is a safety problem. Mr. Long said that is one reason the project will be held at 60 percent design and then shop it for state or federal grant dollars. He added that as part of the auxiliary lane project on I-90, WSDOT will be moving the ramp meter 500 feet to the east. Along with the four lanes of queuing, there will be much more vehicle storage area.

Mr. Long said the companion project to the previous project is the intersection of 150th Avenue SE/Eastgate Way where a recent modification was done to support bikes. In addition to adding a dual left from 150th Avenue SE onto Eastgate Way, the future plan calls for punching through with a third lane on the shoulder of the southbound lanes of 150th Avenue SE, which is currently a dedicated transit lane. A lot of coordination is needed with the state in working through the concept.

Prompted by Commissioner Bishop, Mr. Long pointed out that the 2019-2020 budget includes the allocation of an additional \$5 million for the program over the next five years. The funds are available for project design.

Commissioner Tropin asked if the 150th Avenue SE/SE 37th Street and 150th Avenue SE/Eastgate Way projects will need to be moved ahead concurrently given how close together they are. Mr. Long said there is some benefit to be gained from moving the 150th Avenue SE/SE 37th Street project on its own. It would not work well to do the 150th Avenue SE/Eastgate project first. Another project in the Eastgate Transportation Study looked at the eastbound ramp at SE 37th Street and identified it for a traffic signal. The state showed some interest in doing a roundabout at that location. The project is not, however, required to make the rest of the projects work.

8. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL

A. June 27, 2019

No amendments or corrections were made to the minutes.

B. July 11, 2019

Commissioner Ting called attention to the eighth paragraph on page 16 and pointed out that Commissioner Bishop's reference to a right-hook problem was in regard to Alternative 2, not to alternative 2.1.

C. July 29, 2019

No amendments or corrections were offered to the minutes.

A motion to approve the June 27 meeting minutes as submitted, the July 11 meeting minutes as amended, and the July 29 meeting minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Teh. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ting and the motion carried unanimously.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chair Wu pointed out that about three months ago the Commission made a recommendation to

the Council regarding the development of a transportation master plan. The Council received the suggestion and agreed with it. A month later Commissioner Bishop proposed making another request to the Council for some money to get the project going, which the Commission chose unanimously to do. A transmittal memo was sent to the Council on September 6 expressing the request. Department of Transportation Director Andrew Singelakis said the City Manager's Office was not entertaining any biennial budget requests. He said in discussions with Chair Wu and Councilmember Lee, staff agreed to develop a scope of work for the transportation master plan study ahead of submitting a budget request by the end of April. The exercise will include working with the Commission to determine what the scope should look like.

Mr. McDonald commented that the issue of developing a transportation master plan has been a policy in the Comprehensive Plan for several years. He said he has spent a lot of time looking at transportation master plans from other cities, pulling out items that are relevant to Bellevue as part of initially creating a scope. He suggested that a committee of Commissioners should be appointed to work with him in drafting a scope for presentation to the full Commission. He proposed talking about that approach at the retreat.

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

12. COMMISSION CALENDAR

Mr. McDonald reminded the Commissioners of the annual retreat scheduled for October 10 beginning with dinner at 5:30 p.m.

13. ADJOURN

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

Chair Wu adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.