

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

December 12, 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, Franz Loewenherz,
Andrew Singelakis, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Chair Wu who presided.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present in the room with the exception of Commissioners Marciante and Ting, both of whom participated electronically.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Jamie Marconi, 1040 145th Place SE, voiced support for the Vision Zero effort in Bellevue. He said in July he had been involved in a crash in which his bicycle collided with a vehicle. He said he broke his clavicle and a rib and was rushed to the hospital and has spent most of his time since recovering from the injury. He said it was a beautiful day and he was riding in a clearly marked bike lane. He stressed that he is an experience bike rider who commutes by bike every day. He said his daughter has always walked to school, something that will not be an option once she starts middle school next year because it is too far. All of the schools she could attend are within biking distance, but he said he did not feel comfortable having her bike due to safety concerns. Bicycle safety improvements are needed throughout the city, not just in core areas.

Ms. Sue Amorosi, a resident of Kirkland who works in Bellevue at 222 112th Avenue NE, encouraged the Commission to act on Vision Zero 2030 for safe systems strategies. The statistics are staggering that there is a fatality or serious injury every 17 days in Bellevue, 43 percent of which involve bikers or pedestrians. She said she sometimes drives but also sometimes bikes or walks to the bus and on one occasion while walking up NE 4th Street toward 112th Avenue NE a car turned across her path and at the last moment stopped in front of her. She said she on occasion also walks up 114th Avenue NE, a two-lane road that is used often by bikers going north along the I-405 corridor. Many walk their dogs there as well. At NE 2nd Street, however, the advantage is

given to cars by virtue of the free left turn, which makes it unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists. Systems improvements are needed, not just in the downtown area.

Mr. Brad Haverstein, a Kirkland resident, said he works in Bellevue at 110 110th Avenue NE. He said Bellevue needs a strong Vision Zero policy, and urged the Commission not to delay or put on hold the Vision Zero action strategy. He said he either rides his bike to work or takes the bus and walks. He said neither he nor his wife feel safe traveling through Bellevue while biking and accordingly take elaborate precautions. One time while riding together a driver intentionally passed very closely to his wife; the driver was clearly unhappy with the speed they were going on NE 10th Street close to the library. He said he has had drivers swerve toward him intentionally, unhappy at having to change lanes to get around. Many have yelled and honked. Before riding into Bellevue, time is spent strategizing which route to take. He said at intersections he often will hit the crosswalk button to have the light remain red for a little bit longer. The transportation system should work better for all users and if Bellevue is serious about preventing serious injuries and deaths, and wants to see more people walking and biking, Vision Zero needs to be a top priority.

Mr. Chris Randalls, 1505 145th Place SE, Apt A1, thanked the Commission, the Council and the staff for taking a systems-oriented approach to Vision Zero. He said it is vital to look at collisions as products of a larger issue rather than isolated incidents. They need to be rectified through culture change, design change and policy change. He said he was not clear on how much Bellevue can do to combat market trends that show increased SUV and truck purchases, vehicles that are heavier and therefore more dangerous and which have been shown to cause more damage in collisions with pedestrians and cyclists, the most vulnerable roadway users. Education to improve safety can only go so far. Recently there was a bit of outrage with the Bellevue police department and its recent initiative on NE 8th Street and Bellevue Way. The controversy involved a photo taken of the police advising pedestrians when and when not to cross. The controversy was somewhat ameliorated by the fact that the police were also seeking to educate motorists about when and when not to proceed through a crosswalk. So long as the system is designed to prioritize automobile movements, the culture shift being advocated will not occur. System design changes to improve safety will need to come first. Given that some 45 percent of Bellevue's greenhouse gases emissions come from transportation, something will need to change to meet the city's aggressive climate targets.

Mr. Andrew Pardo, 10915 SE 1st Street, said he commutes by bike to South Lake Union and also drives and walks in Bellevue. He said he is an aggressive pedestrian. On November 17 a 67-year-old gentleman visiting from India was in a crosswalk on SE 18th Street who was struck and killed by an automobile. An 85-year-old woman who raised her family in Bellevue was in a crosswalk at Bellevue Way and NE 24th Street on November 24 was also struck and killed. A 72-year-old man on September 22 was biking on SE 8th Street at 145th Avenue SE when he was struck and killed. A 33-year-old man the morning of August 14 was hit by a car that had just passed him and then turned in the bike lane he was riding in. The driver complained of blinding sunshine even though the driver was headed west as the sun was coming up in the east. Infrastructure is not wholly to blame or even always to blame, but there are examples where infrastructure has clearly played a large role in the tragedies. A 27-year-old woman who was sitting on a bus stop bench on June 12 at NE 8th Street and 120th Avenue NE when a truck drove over the bench. A two-year-old, who in 2015 was being pushed by her mother in a stroller along 140th Avenue NE, was hit and killed by a car. Bellevue is a well-run city that has amazing city staff, but there are things that can be done better.

Mr. Lyndon Heywood, 16248 NE 2nd Street, said he recently started working in the downtown and commutes by bicycle. He thanked the Commission for its work over the last couple of years to

improve safety. He urged the Commission to continue working toward making improvements.

Ms. Claire Martini spoke representing Cascade Bicycle Club, 77 87th NE, Seattle, urged the Commission to act on Vision Zero immediately. She noted that the previous speakers had talked about the costs of placing the burden of safety on individuals rather than creating safe systems. The next step for the city in realizing its commitment to ending traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 will be to adopt an actionable plan. The urgent work of the Commission will make possible the next steps toward an integrated systemwide plan. She noted that it was three years to the day since the city first adopted its Vision Zero ordinance and said the citizens can no longer wait for safe streets. Every 17 days someone is killed or injured on Bellevue's streets, yet it has come to be expected that fatalities are part of how traffic moves in a city. For too long facts have been portrayed that way. It should go without saying that loss of life is not an acceptable externality. Thanks for the Vision Zero commitments made by city leaders and previous Transportation Commissions, the city is called on to identify and dismantle systemic barriers to Vision Zero within the transportation networks. It is worth noting that some of the existing bureaucratic processes for making the streets safer have a strong status quo bias. Road design changes that can save lives take far too long to implement. A commitment to Vision Zero is a rejection of the status quo and should change the way the city makes decisions. The pilot project on 108th Avenue NE is a good example of what it looks like to move quickly to implement safe streets. The longer the city waits to create an actionable plan, the greater the number of people who may be killed or wounded on the city's streets. In the last six months of 2019, at least five people have been killed and others seriously injured. The Commission should act to approve the changes to the Comprehensive Plan that integrate Vision Zero into short- and long-range planning, ensuring that the flow of work toward an integrated systemwide plan will continue. The work is important and is part of creating the vibrant safe and welcoming city everyone wants Bellevue to be.

Mr. Steve Fantle, 4722 130th Avenue SE, said he volunteers with the city's transportation planning and engineering departments contributing to bike network infrastructure and Vision Zero projects. He stressed, however, that he was speaking only as a Bellevue resident concerned with the safety of the city's roads. He said he and both of his children are avid bicyclists, adding that his son has been injured three times while riding, once by a driver who opened the door of a parked car without looking, once by a car that sideswiped him and then drove away, and once by a distracted pedestrian. While he was not seriously injured in any of the accidents, others have not been so fortunate. He said his daughter rides extensively for her commute and is able to relate many stories of dangerous interactions with motor vehicles related to unsafe road conditions, lack of bicycle infrastructure, poor driving practices and road rage. He said his riding is largely recreational and noted that he relies on his mirror and his bell to stay safe. Safety should not be dependent on luck. Safety is dependent in part on physical factors such as appropriate bike and pedestrian infrastructure, including protected lanes, lighted crosswalks and dedicated signals. Safety is also dependent in part on mechanical factors such as having properly functioning wiper blades, brakes, lights, horns, bells, helmets and clothing. Safety is also dependent in part on legislative factors such as appropriate education, laws and enforcement for the proper operation of motor vehicles and bicycles, and the regulation of distracted driving, riding and walking. Most importantly, safety is dependent on human factors for which everyone must take personal responsibility, including maintaining a safe distance, being aware of the surroundings, following the laws, acting predictably, anticipating trouble and leaving an escape route, and being courteous rather than entitled. Vision Zero will move the needle toward a safer community.

Ms. Kaylie Panto spoke representing REI, 410 116th Avenue NE, and voiced support for Vision Zero. She said the plan is needed in order to reach zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. The Commission's work to date has been and will continue to be critical to achieving the goal. She said

she lives in Kirkland and commutes into Bellevue by bicycle. She said her commute begins on bike lanes in Kirkland but upon reaching Bellevue the bike lane disappears, leaving her to rely on her reflective gear, making eye contact and riding defensively. Kirkland's approach to bike lanes gets much right and serves as a future vision for Bellevue. Strides have been made by Bellevue to improve bicycle systems and that is helpful. More is needed. She thanked the Commission for its support.

Ms. Claire Johnston spoke also representing REI, 410 116th Avenue NE, thanked the Commission for its work to date on Vision Zero and for listening to the public. She noted that it had been three years since the city adopted the Vision Zero plan and said REI supports the city taking action on Vision Zero now rather than later. She said she commutes to work daily by bicycle from Kirkland and observes very dangerous situations on a daily basis. She said she is a bike-shop head technician and an experienced rider on roads and mountains but still is often forced to ride on sidewalks and to use pedestrian crossings. She said she was recently almost sideswiped by a car making a right turn on Main Street. On that same commute she said she observed a rider nearly hit by two separate vehicles coming out of two separate automobile dealers. One of the major goals of Vision Zero is equity in transportation methods. While pedestrians and bicyclists are involved in only five percent of the reported collisions in Bellevue, they account for 43 percent of all fatalities and serious injuries. That is not equitable. A collision-free commute is not expected or aided in any way by the city's infrastructure. The safety of drivers is inherently favored, forcing bicyclists and pedestrians to fight for a safe environment every day. REI encourages the community to take action on an integrated systems plan so steps can be made toward closing the equity gap in Bellevue transportation.

Mr. Anton Babadjanov, 555 110th Avenue NE, noted his support for Vision Zero. He noted that by state law, a pedestrian can only enter a crosswalk when the pedestrian signal displays the white hand. They are not to enter when a countdown clock is running or when the light is blinking red. In downtown Bellevue there is a five-second period during which a pedestrian can enter a crosswalk. If they miss their opportunity, they must wait up to two and a half minutes for the next opportunity. Those who are driving have a much larger window for entering and crossing through an intersection. That is an inequitable situation that discourages walking. If more people would walk more and drive less there would be a reduction in the number of serious injuries. He proposed looking into reducing the cycle lengths so pedestrians do not have to wait two and a half minutes for the next opportunity to cross, and to look at implementing all-way walk phases such as the one by the transit center. The intersections along the Grand Connection corridor especially should have all-way signals.

Mr. Leonardo Barreto, 11013 NE 14th Street, said he has been a resident of Bellevue since 2000 and has during that time been witness to the tremendous growth of the city. He said as a homeowner he has benefited from that growth in many aspects, but added that the growth has brought with it new challenges, including safety of the streets. He said six months ago he elected to walk more in the downtown to various locations and found it literally to be a free for all. Pedestrians are on their own when crossing the streets. Drivers do not respect the right turns, either because they do not know the rules or because they are bigger by virtue of having a car. He said he has lost count of the number of times he has been in the right when crossing a street but almost being hit anyway. Most disturbingly, on rare occasions the Bellevue police look at pedestrians as though they are annoying to drivers and thus have a talk with them about it. He proposed there is a need for more education of drivers concerning the rights of pedestrians, and a need for Bellevue police in the downtown to be seen enforcing the law. Everyone wants safe streets, and Vision Zero offers a tremendous opportunity to achieve that.

Mr. Michael Stark, 10595 Main Street, said he lives and works in the downtown and commutes on foot. He noted that residential and commercial buildings are being built right next to each other in the downtown, which is making Bellevue more of a walking city. As such, commuting by pedestrians should be encouraged, respected and made safe. He agreed that signal timings are terrible for pedestrians. More than just being dangerous, they encourage pedestrians to be impatient and cross against the signal. There is also a lack of adequate bicycle facilities which encourages bicyclists to ride on the sidewalks, which is also dangerous for pedestrians. He said he lived for many years in New York City where the drivers are resigned to the fact that they will not be going anywhere fast. Bellevue drivers possess the illusion that they can get somewhere fast, which of course is not actually possible. The city should act to put in place measures that will make that clear to drivers, including traffic calming measures such as narrower lanes and the addition of bike lanes.

Ms. Lindin Wing, 2113 182nd Avenue NE, Redmond, said she works at the University of Washington and Harborview Medical Center. She said simply hearing about the number of fatalities and injuries is not the same as actually seeing them in person at the hospital. Instead of just numbers, they are persons who are hurt or who are dead and whose families will never see them again. Too often the incidents are preventable, making the injuries and deaths senseless. The city should recommit to Vision Zero and take every opportunity to make systems safe for everyone.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, AND MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION – None

5. STAFF REPORTS

Principal Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald said he was working to make sure that the Commissioners bellevuewa.gov emails are the only form of communication used for Commission business. He said he has been advised against sending communications to personal email addresses and noted that he would cease doing so after the first of the year.

Principal Transportation Planner Franz Loewenherz announced that the city recently received national recognition. He said Transportation for America selected Bellevue as one of the three pilot cities for its 2020 Smart Cities Collaborative, along with Boston and Minneapolis. The focus will be the topic of curbside management. Technical assistance will be provided by outside experts at no cost to the city. He said staff would keep the Commission updated as the project progresses.

With regard to the city's micromobility efforts, Mr. Loewenherz announced that SAE International selected Bellevue to participate in its Mobility Data Collaborative. Bellevue will be part of a nationwide group to establish industry standards for how mobility data should be collected and evaluated. This will help Bellevue and other communities develop policies to expand shared micromobility as a travel option for residents and others.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. 2020 Census

Assistant Planner/Demographer Gwen Rousseau with the Department of Community Development

said the nation's decennial census would be taken in 2020 beginning on April 1. She said the census involves taking a head count of every single person living in the United States. The census sets the basis of the population for the next ten years. The United States Constitution requires the census, which serves as a cornerstone of American democracy in that it determines how many seats each state gets in the House of Representatives. The 2010 census yielded an additional seat in the House for the state of Washington. In addition to ensuring fair representation, the census also ensures the fair distribution of billions of dollars of federal resources. Based on the population, during 2016 over \$16 billion was distributed back to Washington state from 55 federal programs, including the Highway Planning and Construction Fund. Over the past ten years, the city of Bellevue has received from the federal government over \$76 million in transportation project funding, more than \$7 million for parks projects, and almost \$6 million for Community Development Block Grants. Through the taxes paid by Bellevue residents, close to \$41 million in state distributions flowed to the city, in addition to more than \$112 million to the Bellevue School District.

Continuing, Ms. Rousseau said the census is the city's way of being able to make intelligent decisions based on good data. It helps the city understand what facilities are needed and where so resources can be put in the right places. The data is used to make sure that facilities are equitably distributed so that everyone has access to them. There are many ways to look at equity but the main point is to make sure that resources are available for the people who need them. Geographic equity is one element, but equity also applies to issues such as age and ability.

Councilmember Lee added that equity involves engaging with the community, and in order to do that it is necessary to know the community. The census is a process that involves reaching out to everyone in the community in a good way.

Ms. Rousseau said the Census Bureau in mid-March 2020 will be sending out invitations by mail asking people to for the first time go online to fill out the census questionnaire. The approach is expected to save the government a great deal of money. For those who do not respond, reminders will be sent out in early April. Those not comfortable or able to fill out the questionnaire online will be allowed to participate either by phone or by mail. Those who have not responded by April 15 will be sent paper questionnaires by mail. If people do not respond at all, census takers will come to their door starting in May.

There are only about ten questions, it takes only about ten minutes to fill out the questionnaire, and the data will last for ten years. The questions are simple and relate to age, Hispanic origin, race, relationship to the householder, sex, tenure in terms of owner or renter, and some operational questions, such as the number of people living in the household, the telephone number of the person filling out the questionnaire in case there is a need to follow up, the names of the people living at the address, and whether anyone usually lives or stays somewhere else. The goal is to count everyone once, only once, and in the right place.

Bellevue faces a number of challenges when it comes to the census. For one thing about 17 percent of the city's population moved to the United States after 2010 and have never experienced being part of the census. They will need to have an understanding of how important the census is and what the benefits are. A large portion of Bellevue's population speaks a language other than English at home, so it will be necessary to make sure there is a way to communicate with them effectively. About 34,000 of Bellevue's residents are not US citizens and there has been some confusion as to whether or not they are non-residents are supposed to participate. Some areas of the city are predicted to have low response rates and the strategies in place to reach out to those areas includes publications, people and places.

Ms. Rousseau said the Council issued a proclamation in May and an event was held to kick off the process. The city has chosen to contribute to a regional census fund along with King County and the cities of Redmond, Kirkland and Seattle and the Seattle Foundation. Bellevue contributed \$50,000 in part to fund community based organizations that have trusted messengers who can conduct outreach in the community. The city has set up a website where people can find more information, and a task force has been established to get information out.

All census data is confidential and secure. The Census Bureau is not allowed to share the data with any other government agency, including enforcement agencies. The only data that can be shared is that which has been aggregated.

Ms. Rousseau urged the Commissioners to educate themselves and to become census ambassadors. Efforts are under way to hire census takers. She urged the Commissioners to post information on social media regarding the what, why and how of the census, and to include information in local newsletters.

The hope is that a census party will be hosted at Crossroads on April 1. Indeed, everyone is being urged to hold a census party on that day.

Commissioner Leitner said it would be helpful for the city to put together an information packet for residents to include to distribute to their homeowner associations, including to resident non-citizens. Ms. Rousseau said the city has sample newsletters and social media posts, most of which has been produced by the state and the federal government. She said the resources will be pushed out on the website and will be made available to anyone who asks.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bishop, Ms. Rousseau explained that there is no longer a long form and a short form. The long form has been turned into the American Community Survey which involves a continuous process. Commissioner Bishop said the long form information is absolutely critical to making the transportation forecasting system function. There is an enormous amount of data that comes from it and gets wrapped into the travel forecast model.

B. Vision Zero Action Plan

Mr. Loewenherz reminded the Commissioners that the Vision Zero Action Plan is a citywide transportation safety initiative that is intended to help the city reduce to zero the number of fatal and serious injury collisions by 2030. He said for all intents and purposes, the safe systems approach is active and that staff is not waiting for adoption of the action plan to work on safety measures. The action plan, once adopted, will clarify the work program going forward and put it into a faster and more prominent timeline, including a performance monitoring aspect.

By way of background, Mr. Loewenherz pointed out that staff worked closely with the Commission and the Council to see a Vision Zero resolution adopted. In the resolution, the Council included a clause calling for the development of policy language to incorporate Vision Zero into the Comprehensive Plan, a step that occurred in December 2016 when the Council adopted the Vision Zero ordinance. The Council at that time also directed staff to develop an action plan. He stressed that action on the part of the Commission to approve the safe systems approach and strategies will directly respond to the Comprehensive Plan directive in Policy TR-61.2 to develop a programmatic approach.

The safe systems approach is a well-established international best practice. The approach proposed

by Bellevue reflects the comprehensive approach for moving toward zero. International best practice has influenced national guidance as reflected on the Institute of Transportation Engineers webpage where there is a wealth of information endorsing the safe systems approach. What it all comes down to is a recognition that humans make mistakes, that humans are ultimately frail when it comes to being struck by vehicles, and that the overall goal is to save lives. To reach the goal will require a systematic approach with everyone working together toward vehicle safety, safe streets, vehicle speeds and personal responsibility.

From a safe vehicle standpoint, seatbelts are an important element. But even though the technology was in some vehicles in the 1950s, it really was not widely used until the 1980s when New York state passed a law that allowed officers to ticket those not using them. Nationally, nine out of ten drivers now use seatbelts. It is not, however, enough to just have seatbelts in vehicles, they must be used and that is where the safe people aspect comes into play.

Much has been said about safe streets and there is ample evidence that bike facilities improve safety for people who ride bicycles and make for a safer and more predictable environment for motor vehicle drivers. The issue of safe speeds speaks to the vulnerability of users in terms of the devastating impact speed can have on survivability. The statistics show that a person struck by a vehicle going 40 miles per hour has only a 20 percent chance of survival, while the same person struck by a vehicle going 20 miles per hour has a 90 percent chance of survival. The data in Bellevue shows that speeding is among the top five contributing factors to fatal and serious injury. Bellevue's streets with a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour or more see 41 percent of all fatal or serious injury accidents while accounting for only 13 percent of the total street mileage.

Mr. Loewenherz said there is a significant conversation afoot at the national and state levels with regard to safe vehicles. The focus is not limited to autonomous vehicles and includes existing technologies such as advance driver assistance systems, each element of which makes a significant contribution towards getting to zero. Bellevue sees about 15 killed/serious injury occurrences per 100,000 population. The statewide level is at about 35 killed/serious injury per 100,000 population. Countries like Norway are approaching two per 100,000, even with far more inclement weather conditions. The reason cited is the effectiveness of the safe systems approach. An analysis conducted in 53 countries found that those having a safe system based approach have achieved both the lowest rates of fatalities per 100,000 population and the greatest reduction in fatality levels over the past 20 years.

Not all safe systems approaches are equal in terms of effectiveness. Mr. Loewenherz shared with the Commissioners a graphic from the 2019 Target Zero Plan, the statewide document that is currently awaiting the Governor's signature. He said the graphic was inspired by work done by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. Arranged in order of effectiveness, the graphic showed personal protective equipment as being the least effective. Simply telling pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers to be apprised is not enough. There is a robust body of research, including work done by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, that outline measures that work.

Mr. Loewenherz noted that the Commission had previously approved the four pillars to comprehensively move towards zero, namely safe people, safe vehicles, safe speeds and safe streets. In March the Commission added to that by approving the four supportive elements of leadership, culture, partnerships and data. The Commission's discussion in January focused on the lead-in statements for each facet of the safe systems approach. In March the Commission turned to the strategies that are nested within each of the four pillars.

Chair Wu noted that she and Commissioner Leitner met with staff to discuss what the Commission has done so far, which included unanimous approval of the four pillars framework and the supporting elements. She pointed out, however, that the Commission now has three new Commissioners who need to buy into the safe systems framework. Mr. Loewenherz agreed and said the reason for having the discussion is to be methodical in approach, moving from the why statement, or the goal, to the what or the steps to get there. Ultimately, with the approval of the Commission, the safe systems approach will be forwarded to the Council for approval by resolution.

Commissioner Teh said the four pillars were clear to him but asked for clarification regarding the four supportive elements. Mr. Loewenherz explained that when the original diagram was before the Commission in January a recommendation was made and approved to include the supportive elements. They resonated with the Commission and made sense to the staff in that leadership, culture, partnerships and data lie at the heart of what Bellevue is all about. The organization is data driven, engages in partnerships in ways to learn from the broader industry, has an organizational structure that includes a commitment from the executive team and the Council, and enjoys a community that hopes to create a culture of safety.

Commissioner Bishop called attention to the trend line chart showing what has happened between 2010 and 2018. He pointed out that Bellevue has been doing very well by being very proactive in the safety arena when compared to the state as a whole and to the top five Washington cities by population. He said automotive safety is not a new subject and was in fact in vogue when he graduated from the University of Washington in 1968. He said he spent the decades of the 70s and the 80s operating under one traffic safety grant or another around the state and in Bellevue. During his time in graduate school about 50,000 people annually died on the nation's roadways. Since then the number of vehicle miles traveled has tripled and the number of fatalities fell to a low of 35,000, though it has been creeping back up for various reasons. That Bellevue is a leader is evident from the chart and it is attributable to good engineering, education and enforcement. He said there are wonderful elements to the Vision Zero approach and suggested the city will continue to do good things while attempting to move to zero, but he allowed that there are very difficult problems to be faced in the process.

Commissioner Ting stated that life/safety is a very important thing for the Commission and the city to focus on. He pointed out that in a past Commission meeting, someone from the public addressed the Commission about the ability of emergency vehicles to get from incident sites to the hospital, which needs to occur as quickly as possible. He asked if that element of life/safety could somehow be incorporated into the overall plan. Mr. Loewenherz said development of the plan has been carried out by a core team comprised of technical staff and a steering team comprised of executive staff. In both groups there are representatives from both the police and the fire departments. He said the Commission should rest assured that emergency vehicle travel has been considered in developing the plan, adding that there will be even more conversations going forward given the challenges faced. For instance, traffic calming can reduce killed/serious injury rates but they can also negatively impact travel by emergency vehicles. Those conversations to date have been lively and they will continue to be so.

Mr. Loewenherz explained that approval by resolution by the Council of the Commission-approved Safe Systems approach and strategies will enable the staff to move forward with finalizing the action plan and commence work on the work program in the second quarter of 2020. The Council will also be asked for direction relative to the development of policies for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan, which would be taken up by the Commission later in 2020. Such policies could either be initiated via a Comprehensive Plan amendment in the 2021 update process or be

put on hold until the more expansive 2023 Comprehensive Plan update process.

The Commissioners in turn indicated their support for the four pillars and four supportive elements approach. Attention was then given to the lead-in messages on a per topic basis.

Commissioner Bishop asked where neighborhood involvement concept fits into the framework. He said one of the most important traffic safety issues is sight distance, particularly at driveways and intersections, and that is very much a community based issue. Mr. Loewenherz said there are a couple of facets to the approach that relate to involving the neighborhoods, namely the safe people aspect, which seeks the active engagement of people in the topics, and the culture approach, which entails creating a safety culture while keeping it neighborly.

Commissioner Leitner sought a clear understanding of what is meant by “personalize transportation safety” in the context of the lead-in statement. Mr. Loewenherz responded by saying it means to take responsibility for one’s actions to create a safe environment for all.

Commissioner Leitner said the work will be the Commission’s high-level representation to the community of what the city is trying to achieve. Accordingly, the words used have to mean something.

Commissioner Bishop said his reading of the safe people statement was that the focus is on education. He said while education is both good and critical, the statement does not feel complete.

Commissioner Marciante said she would prefer to use “engage and educate” to lead off the statement. Commissioner Teh agreed and suggested that would be a much clearer statement. Commissioner Bishop concurred as well.

Commissioner Ting said it should be made clear that the word “vehicles” as used in the statement includes cars, bicycles and other forms of transportation. He also suggested replacing “personalize” with “internalize” to be clear about the need to bring the concept of safety into each individual. The word “personalize” could be interpreted to mean that each person will have a different way of addressing safety.

Commissioner Marciante said the last phrase could be clarified by having it read “and to take personal responsibility for transportation safety.” Commissioner Teh proposed moving the concept into the first part of the statement by having it read “Engage and educate people to take personal responsibility in Vision Zero transportation safety by ensuring they use the transportation system as intended and know how to utilize the safety systems of their vehicles.”

Chair Wu questioned why vehicles should be emphasized. Commissioner Tropin agreed, pointing out that that would mean pedestrians are not part of the statement.

Commissioner Ting suggested the Commission should shy away from getting into the minutia of the phrasing and focus instead on having full sign-off on the concepts behind each statement. Chair Wu said it was her intention to have the Commissioners define the concepts proposed by the staff.

Commissioner Teh agreed with Commissioner Ting and cautioned against seeking to wordsmith each statement. The Commission should seek consensus on the purpose and intent of each statement. Anyone wanting to wordsmith should do so offline.

Commissioner Bishop disagreed. He said the words in each statement will be absolutely critical in

moving ahead with the development of systems over the next few years. The Commission should take the time needed to think about and clarify the words in each statement. Mr. Loewenherz said the discussion with the Council can be postponed if it needs to be.

Commissioner Marciante stated that wordsmithing by group is very difficult and can take a long time. She proposed going through each statement and highlight the words and phrases in each that are not clear. Commissioner Ting concurred and suggested that a later discussion should be scheduled to focus on the highlighted words that are unclear or controversial.

Commissioner Leitner suggested the statements should be reviewed with an eye on marking the unclear words, and then having each Commissioner provide the chair and vice chair written comments and suggestions for wordsmithing, allowing time to get a final version to the staff in time to meet the timeline for presenting the package to the Council.

Mr. McDonald said taking action on the words would require convening a meeting of the Commission. He agreed the individual Commissioners could submit proposed language for the chair and vice chair to compile, but a future meeting would be needed to decide on recommended language.

Chair Wu said she would support extending the meeting to continue reviewing and discussing the statements. Commissioner Leitner concurred, pointing out that some of the statements may take far less time to work through.

Attention was given next to the safe streets pillar. Commissioner Tropin pointed out that other countries focus on reducing the number of serious crashes, not just the likelihood of crashes occurring. Chair Wu suggested the concept is covered in the statement as drafted in that the first part addresses reducing the likelihood of crashes and the second part addresses minimizing the consequences of the crashes that do occur. Commissioner Bishop agreed that covers it.

Commissioner Leitner suggested the notion of improving the safety of the streets could stand as a concept on its own. She proposed accomplishing that by having the statement read “Improve the safety of our streets by significantly reducing the likelihood of crashes occurring and minimizing the consequences of those crashes that do occur.”

Commissioner Ting agreed with Commissioner Tropin that the word “serious” should be included in that it would emphasize the types of crashes to be reduced.

Commissioner Bishop said the safe streets pillar will serve as the basis for the engineering to follow. As worded, the statement only calls for improving the streets. Commissioner Leitner agreed that is true from the 30,000-foot level, but the strategies that follow the statement offer the necessary clarity.

Commissioner Ting asked if the strategies would include a focus on seeking to reduce the more serious crashes even if that means not focusing on reducing the number of less serious crashes. If that is not the intent or the best practice, the wording should make that clear. Mr. Loewenherz said adding the word “serious” could complicate things. The intent of Vision Zero is to reduce to zero the number of fatal and serious injury crashes. In that light, including “serious” in referring to crashes would seem to argue in favor of also including the phrase “serious injury.” The confusion would come in where the statement calls for minimizing the consequences of those crashes that do occur. The staff believes the language as originally crafted covers the bases in totality. It is fully realized that humans make mistakes and that Vision Zero will not get to zero crashes, thus the true

intent is to minimize the consequences of the crashes that do occur.

There was consensus to accept the proposed revision to the Safe Streets lead-in statement that read “Improve the safety of our streets by significantly reducing the likelihood of crashes occurring and minimizing the consequences of those crashes that do occur.”

With regard to the Safe Speeds lead-in statement, Commissioner Marciante said the word “educate” should be removed, noting that while it is possible to implement and enforce speeds, it is not possible to educate speeds. She said it would be better to have it read “...educate about...” Mr. Loewenherz said use of the word “educate” was intentional given the third strategy which focus on educating people about the link between speed and safety. He said so long as the action is captured in the strategies, it would be fine to eliminate the word “educate” from the lead-in statement. Commissioner Marciante said she had no argument with the concept, just on the grammar.

Commissioner Teh suggested the Safe Speeds pillar is actually covered in the first two pillars that address safe people and safe streets. Speed is a modality of those two.

Commissioner Tropin proposed revising the statement to read “Implement, enforce and educate about speeds that reduce the risk....” Chair Wu agreed.

Commissioner Bishop cautioned the Commission to be careful what it asks for. He said it is possible the result of lowering speed limits will be to increase speeds on the streets. It is also possible the speeds on the streets will be reduced by raising the speed limits. There should be no language aimed at reducing speed limits without any additional consideration as to unintended consequences.

Commissioner Tropin pointed out that the first strategy under the Safe Speeds pillar speaks about designing and redesigning roads and intersections in ways that will manage speeds. The lead-in statement says nothing about design or the end goal of reducing speeds. Mr. Loewenherz said the intent of the statement is not to reduce speeds but rather to evaluate without any predetermined outcome. The Commission and the Council will be very much involved in the assessment process.

Commissioner Leitner proposed revising the statement to read “Implement, educate and enforce changes in speeds that reduce the risk of bodily harm for people inside and outside of vehicles.” Commissioner Marciante again stressed the need to include the word “about” following “educate.”

Commissioner Tropin said that would mean the city would seek to enforce changes in speeds.

Commissioner Leitner said the intent is to implement and enforce changes in speeds that reduce the risk of bodily harm. She said the education element is also critical and should be included in a way that makes grammatical sense.

Mr. Loewenherz pointed out that the proposed “...enforce changes in speeds...” would seem to predetermine the outcome. The fact is the speeds may or may not be changed depending on the assessment process. A number of the implementation strategies are speed related but may not involve a change in speeds.

There was consensus to have the Safe Speeds lead-in statement read “Implement, educate about and enforce speeds that reduce the risk of bodily harm for people inside and outside of vehicles.”

A motion to extend the meeting by 60 minutes was made by Commissioner Tropin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Leitner and the motion carried unanimously.

Turning to the Safe Vehicles lead-in statement, Commissioner Bishop suggested the driver of the vehicle should be included along with passengers and people outside the vehicles. He also asked if the city is in fact in a position to implement improvements to vehicle design. Mr. Loewenherz said the second of the associated strategies speaks to improving the safety of public vehicles on the roads, which is a direct role for the city to play when it comes to purchasing vehicles for the city's fleet. The city can also work with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission to broadly ensure that people are purchasing vehicles that incorporate safe vehicle technologies.

Chair Wu proposed revising the last part of the statement to read "...to reduce risk of injury to people inside and outside the vehicles." Commissioner Leitner offered as an alternative "...to reduce the risk of injury to drivers, passengers and people outside the vehicles."

There was consensus to approve the statement worded as proposed by Chair Wu.

****BREAK****

Chair Wu asked where the issue of technology shows up in the framework. Mr. Loewenherz said it is prominently featured in the Safe Vehicle strategy. In the first strategy under that pillar the underlying reference is to Advanced Driver Assistance Systems. According to the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, that technology alone could have prevented nearly 9000 crashes in Washington state. The city is interested in seeing the technology more widely in use on the roads. That can be done in a number of different ways, some of which will necessitate legislative actions, such as rebate programs. The city is actively working with the state on the topic as a precursor to autonomous vehicles. Technology is also the topic of the second strategy relative to the types of vehicles the city purchases for its fleet. New York City and Chicago are both requiring different kinds of technologies on their fleet vehicles. On December 3 the Mayor of Boston sent a letter to the National Transportation Safety Board urging them to integrate into their documents a commitment to accelerate the deployment of safe vehicle technologies. The city can play a role locally and in how it interfaces more broadly with the industry. In regard to the fifth strategy, the city is an active participant in the Washington state autonomous vehicle workgroup in seeing the technologies come to fruition.

Commissioner Teh asked where technology as it relates to streets is covered. Mr. Loewenherz said the Safe Speeds action list features technologies. The city has an adaptive signal control system in place that can give pedestrians an advance time for getting out into and clear crosswalks before cars are allowed to proceed. The technology is in use at 15 intersections in Bellevue. Any technology the city currently has is captured in the section, and there are also forward-looking statements on technologies like autonomous vehicles.

Chair Wu commented that technology has become a much more prominent tool under each of the pillars. She suggested that in one of the supporting documents that fact should be clearly stated. Mr. Loewenherz said technology pops up frequently in the actions but agreed it could be highlighted overall as well.

While reviewing the paragraphs in Attachment 3, the proposed lead-in messaging for the four supportive elements of the Safe Systems approach, Commissioner Ting said he wanted to see added to the Culture statement something around the transparency of the pros and cons around the proposed solutions. He said getting the zero is the only acceptable number, but it is important to

understand the tradeoffs associated with the different ways for getting to zero. Mr. Loewenherz commented that culture is about language in the statement as drafted. Language informs beliefs and values and the statement is all about how to communicate about the topic. The indication that zero is the only acceptable number is consistent with the goal statement.

Commissioner Teh said to him culture is not about language, though it is about beliefs and values. Mr. Loewenherz said when conversations around culture arise, there is a commonly used series of infographics that illustrate language as a starting point along with beliefs, values and priorities. All of that comes from a recognition that the term “accident” should not be used in describing crashes. Rather, they are preventable incidents about which something can be done. Earlier in the week, Barbara Chamberlain, director of the Washington State Department of Transportation, spoke at an event in Council chambers. She spoke about the topic of how words matter and how the way crashes are framed influences our cultural perspective.

Councilmember Lee noted the lateness of the hour and suggested that unless there were any lingering concerns about some of the words in the four pillars, the Commission should act to approve the general framework. He said if there is any discomfort, there is no reason to rush the final product.

Commissioner Bishop proposed finalizing the wording of the Safe People pillar but not get into the individual strategies until a later meeting. The suggestion was agreed to.

Commissioner Teh said the last suggestion made regarding the Safe People statement was to have it read “Engage and educate people to take a personal responsibility in Vision Zero by ensuring they use the transportation system as intended, and know how to utilize the safety systems of their vehicles.”

Commissioner Leitner noted it had also been suggested that “vehicles” should be changed to “modes” given that safety systems are not just about vehicles, and to use “internalize” instead of “personalize.”

There was consensus to have the statement read “Engage and educate people to take a personal responsibility in Vision Zero by ensuring they use the transportation system as intended, and know how to utilize the safety systems of their modes of travel.”

A motion to recommend the four pillars, the four supportive elements and lead-in statements of the Safe Systems framework as amended was made by Commissioner Bishop. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Teh and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Wu proposed diving into the strategies. Commissioner Bishop opposed that given the lateness of the hour. Commissioner Tropin agreed with Commissioner Bishop.

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Bishop, who then withdrew the motion before it was seconded.

Commissioner Leitner stated that there is a lot of detail in the 36 strategies. She challenged the Commissioners to review the strategies in-depth ahead of the next meeting and come prepared to offer the staff constructive comments. Chair Wu agreed and pointed out that the agenda memo include a link to a site with a review of actions taken across the nation relative to each strategy.

Mr. McDonald urged the Commissioners to individually send any questions or comments

regarding the strategies to the staff. He said staff would consolidate the ideas, answer questions and have it all ready for inclusion in the packet for the next meeting.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 14, 2019

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Tropin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bishop and the motion carried unanimously.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

Mr. McDonald said the Commission's next meeting was slated for January 9, 2020 and noted that a second meeting may need to be added that month. He briefly reviewed the upcoming agenda items.

13. ADJOURNMENT

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

Chair Wu adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date