

City of
Bellevue



Transportation Commission Study Session

DATE: February 13, 2020

TO: Chair Wu and Members of the Transportation Commission

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SUBJECT: Transportation Master Plan –Topics

DIRECTION REQUESTED

No Action is requested on February 13, 2020. Information is provided for discussion regarding the topics that could be included in a Transportation Master Plan. Transportation Department staff will prepare a budget proposal for a Transportation Master Plan that, if funded, would commence in the 2021/2022 Biennium.

Action

☒ Discussion/Direction

☒ Information

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Comprehensive Plan policy TR-37 provides direction to “*Develop and utilize a citywide Transportation Master Plan to identify and prioritize the implementation of transportation system improvements.*”

Funding/staffing resources are needed to prepare a Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Staff seeks input from the Transportation Commission on February 13, 2020 on the recommended topics for a TMP. The Transportation Department will submit a TMP budget proposal to the City Manager for the 2021/2022 biennium.

The powers and duties of the Transportation Commission for multimodal system planning fall under Bellevue City Code Section 3.63.070.H. (linked here as [PDF](#)). Therefore, advising staff in the planning for a Transportation Master Plan is within the Transportation Commission purview.

BACKGROUND

The earliest comprehensive planning documents in Bellevue acknowledged that all modes of travel would be needed to provide options for people to get around. Under the Growth Management Act, Bellevue adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 1993 that clearly articulated

policy direction for each mode, and integrated planning for land use and transportation. Here are a few select policies from the 1993 Plan:

TR-1. Integrate land use and transportation decisions to ensure that the transportation system supports the community land use vision.

TR-25. Follow guidance provided in the city's long-range transportation plans to identify, prioritize, and implement transportation system improvements.

TR-53. Develop a detailed transit plan in 1994, in coordination with the regional transit provider, identifying the facilities, services, and implementation measures needed to make transit a viable and attractive travel mode throughout the city. *(author's note: the Transit Plan was adopted in July 1994)*

TR-56. Implement the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan by designing and constructing a safety-oriented and connective non-motorized transportation system. *(author's note: the Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan was adopted in May 1993)*

Bellevue implemented policy direction with adoption and subsequent updates to a Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan, a Transit Master Plan, and with many capital projects for all modes that were adopted into the Comprehensive Plan as subarea plans were updated. Within each of these separate plans, projects were identified, prioritized and implemented as resources became available.

As the demand for mobility increased with the fulfillment of the land use vision and the success of economic development strategies, it became clear to the Transportation Commission that a comprehensive approach should be considered to replace the "ala carte" transportation planning that had served Bellevue well.

A first step toward a more comprehensive approach was the consolidation of all of the transportation projects in each of the subarea plans into a Comprehensive Transportation Project List, with references to the Transit Master Plan, the Pedestrian, Bicycle Transportation Plan and the Downtown Transportation Plan. The Transportation Commission reviewed each project and determined if it was already constructed, if it was modified or superseded by subsequent planning work, or if it should be repealed. Council adopted the resulting streamlined and consolidated project list in the 2015 update of the Comprehensive Plan. While this was an important step, it did not establish travel mode priorities nor did it reconcile competition for right-of-way and resources between modes.

Recognizing the previous point, the City Council adopted policy TR-37 in the 2015 update of the Comprehensive Plan: *"Develop and utilize a citywide Transportation Master Plan to identify and prioritize the implementation of transportation system improvements."* The Transportation Commission prepared this future-focused policy recommendation based on its review of best practices and the approach of peer cities. It was vetted through the Planning Commission including at a public hearing, and ultimately the policy was embedded in the [Transportation Element](#).

More recently, the Transportation Commission, in its Transportation Facilities Plan recommendation to Council on June 10, 2019 and in a subsequent related memorandum dated September 6, 2019, reiterated the value of a Transportation Master Plan for Bellevue. Excerpts from the Commission's September 6 memorandum follow:

"We believe that a Transportation Master Plan would support the City to better plan for equitable, multimodal mobility, resulting in a transportation system that is well integrated among the vehicle, transit, pedestrian and bicycle modes."

"Our previous work on Complete Streets policy and Multimodal Level-of-Service, plus criteria for the Transportation Facilities Plan, Neighborhood Sidewalks, and the Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion Levy provide a strong foundation for making prioritization decisions. A Transportation Master Plan would compile previous work on policies, priorities and projects, and provide a fresh approach to planning for mobility in Bellevue."

INFORMATION

Many of the fundamental components exist for a Bellevue Transportation Master Plan. For instance, the [Transit Master Plan](#), the [Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan](#), and the recommended [Multimodal Level-of-Service Metrics, Standards and Guidelines](#) create a strong foundation for a Transportation Master Plan. Current Bellevue policy and ongoing planning and implementation are additional components that would be integrated within a TMP, including: Complete Streets; Vision Zero; Transportation Demand Management; Transportation Facility Plan; smart mobility; Environmental Stewardship Initiative; and curbside management, plus the plans of regional mobility partners including Eastlink; RapidRide; and the I-405 Master Plan and Bus Rapid Transit.

There are many models for a Transportation Master Plan adopted by other jurisdictions in the region. [Redmond](#) updated their TMP in 2013. [Tacoma](#) adopted the city's first TMP in 2015 and [Vancouver](#) BC adopted a long range strategic mobility vision in 2018. Each of these plans emphasize a multimodal level-of-service approach to achieve equitable mobility. That approach is one that the Transportation Commission has recommended for Bellevue, backed by adopted policy.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

A Bellevue Transportation Master Plan would articulate a safe, equitable, and sustainable multimodal approach to mobility. Prior to the Commission and staff engaging in any substantive work on a TMP, the City Council would provide budget resources for professional services, together with specific direction and principles.

Based on policy support and initial best practices research, staff recommends the following topics that would form the "chapters" of a Transportation Master Plan.

- Context: Land Use, Economic Development and Regional Transportation
- Context: Transportation Policy, Plans and Regulations;

- Performance Metrics: Multimodal Level-of-Service Standards;
- Performance Metrics: Environmental Sustainability Plan;
- Implementation: Vision Zero and Complete Streets;
- Implementation: Equity and Access;
- Implementation: Technology and Smart City;
- Implementation: Prioritization, Funding, Maintenance and Operations.

The Commission is asked to discuss these and other potential topics for chapters of a TMP on February 13, 2020.

NEXT STEPS

Department proposals for consideration in the 2021/2022 budget are likely to be due to the City Manager's Office by beginning of May, 2020. It is anticipated that the City Council will adopt a budget in December 2020. If Council allocates funding for a TMP, staff will return to the Transportation Commission in early 2021 to seek input on the topics that would be covered.