

**CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION**

Ordinance 1) authorizing execution of a grant agreement (and supplements if necessary) with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to accept up to \$350,000 in state Regional Mobility Program grant funding to support the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and SchoolPool programs in state fiscal years 2021 to 2023; and, 2) amending the 2021-2022 Operating Grants, Donations and Special Reserves Fund to increase the appropriation by \$350,000.

Andrew Singelakis, Director, 452-6468  
Paula Stevens, Assistant Director, 452-2802  
Eric Miller, Implementation Planning Manager, 452-6146  
Kate Johnson, TDM Program Manager, 452-7896  
Mia Waters, Grant Program Manager, 452-4859  
*Transportation Department*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Ordinance authorizes an agreement with WSDOT that accepts state funding for the time period July 2021 through June 2023, for the City's TDM program activities to increase the use of transportation modes other than driving alone among workers, residents and businesses.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Move to adopt Ordinance No. 6588.

**BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS****Definition and Program Overview**

TDM is defined as strategies to reduce demand on the transportation system by increasing the use of transit, carpooling, vanpooling, walking, bicycling, teleworking, flexible work hours, and compressed work weeks. TDM increases the overall efficiency of the transportation system by focusing on the movement of people, rather than vehicles. TDM staff works with the traveling public, as well as those who affect transportation choices of others (such as employers or property managers), to encourage the use of non-drive-alone transportation modes through activities such as marketing, education, assistance, and provision of incentives.

The City has been engaged in TDM measures and activities since the mid-1980s, and TDM has a strong basis in policy support and longstanding practice. TDM plays a supporting role in the City's work to plan and implement a multimodal transportation system. A key program since the early 1990s has been the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program, based on state law and City code, and requiring employers with 100 or more employees at a worksite to implement employee commute programs.

**Grant Application and Award**

In fall 2020 Bellevue applied for a \$600,000 WSDOT Regional Mobility grant requesting Transportation Demand Management program funding for two state biennia (2021-23 and 2023-25), including SchoolPool funding for one biennium (2022-23), for a project entitled "TDM for the Future." In May the

Washington State Legislature approved \$350,000 for the project's first two years. The legislature will determine whether or not to grant the second biennium (remaining) funding request of \$250,000 at the close of the 2023 legislative session. This successful grant application represents the City's first direct TDM grant award in recent history.

### **Why was this grant needed?**

Bellevue workers, residents, and students face commuting and mobility challenges. Bellevue is a growing major employment center and economic hub of the Eastside, with over 150,000 workers and 145,000 residents. Major transportation corridors through Bellevue (I-405, I-90, SR 520) experience high peak-hour congestion. Growth is expected to continue: In downtown from 2018 to 2035, the City of Bellevue projects increases of 35.1 percent for workers and 81.9 percent for residents (Citywide figures are 25.7 percent and 12.6 percent, respectively). Increased housing costs are pushing people to reside in transit-limited areas which leads to lengthening commutes and exacerbated congestion problems. Seventy-six percent of Bellevue workers commute to Bellevue from outside the City, and about 58 percent of Bellevue residents who work do so at locations outside of Bellevue (source: U.S. Census 2015 American Community Survey). Commuters from outside the City travel to Bellevue worksites 13.7 miles each way on average; for commuters traveling from Bellevue to worksites outside Bellevue, the average distance is 9.8 miles (source: Puget Sound Regional Travel Survey).

In addition, I-405 has the second-most delay in the Puget Sound region. Vehicle delay along the corridor was higher at most locations in 2017 than in 2015, except at the section between Kirkland and Bothell, where delay decreased substantially.

Within the approximate 14-mile radius targeted by this proposed TDM program, most recent census data identify areas with up to 53 percent poverty level, up to 38 percent elderly populations, up to 17 percent disabled populations, and between 29 and 75 percent minority populations.

In a post-pandemic world, further barriers to connectivity include the potential for travelers to return to single-occupant vehicles and clog the transportation system, due to fears about traveling in close quarters with others on transit or in car- and vanpools. The TDM program is needed to inform travelers of the continuing viability of transit: An October 2020 report by the American Public Transportation Association indicated no correlation between the use of public transit and the transmission of COVID-19. The TDM program includes communication of protocols to enhance safety of transit ridesharing, and encourages and supports employers in maintaining, to some degree, an increased level of teleworking as compared to before the pandemic.

This grant will focus on solutions, providing resources for materials, incentives, and new vendor services as needed to:

- Support activities to reduce solo driving and increase uptake in new services, including East Link light rail, post-COVID-19 through best practices of marketing, outreach and assistance to workers, residents, employers, property managers and students;
- Facilitate non-drive-alone travel through development/launch of a new Choose Your Way Bellevue mobile app to boost engagement in program activities and modes. The app will feature access to trip logging software, incentives, commute plans, ORCA card distribution, portals to real-time trip planners;

- Support travel demand management marketing, outreach and trip logging/rewards programs, including a communication element (such as thermometer showing trip reduction progress) to highlight how individual travel choices help the City reach its mode share goals and improve mobility for the whole community;
- Amplify the reach of the TDM program by supporting communications to employers/property managers about the benefits of non-drive-alone commute programs for their employees returning to office post-COVID-19; and
- Assist schools and school children implement safer methods of getting to and from school through funding support for the Bellevue SchoolPool program.

The new Regional Mobility grant's work program will complement existing TDM and SchoolPool activities, currently implemented in part with the assistance of trip reduction services vendor Bellevue Downtown Association/TransManage, funded by federal grant funding passed through to the City from King County Metro.

The project aligns with the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element and 2035 non-drive-alone mode share targets, and implements the 2015-2023 Transportation Demand Management plan, which identifies goals, objectives, and strategies for progressing toward those targets of 45 percent for Citywide residents, 40 percent for Citywide workers, and 65 percent for downtown workers. The City has been progressing toward those targets since they were identified in 2015. This project conducts activities prescribed in the TDM Plan, including capitalizing on emerging technologies and environments of travel to resonate with the cultural needs and desires of Bellevue commuters and travelers. It also aligns with Puget Sound Regional Council Regional TDM Action Plan to expand programs, provide information people need, enhance the existing transportation system, maximize new investments, and conduct research.

The City coordinates TDM activities with other transit agencies, cities and WSDOT through the Puget Sound Regional Council TDM Advisory Committee and other regional/statewide forums.

The match for this project is funded by the Transportation General Fund.

## **POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS**

### **Policy Impact**

Acceptance of this grant and authorization of the funding agreement with WSDOT is consistent with the following policies in the Comprehensive Plan:

- TR-8, TR-9, TR-11, TR-15, and TR-18, which direct the City to coordinate with other organizations to facilitate the use of transit, carpooling, vanpooling, walking, bicycling and alternative work schedules through increasing awareness of travel options, and encouraging their use through outreach and assistance.
- UT-71. Facilitate and encourage conservation of resources.
- EN-3. Minimize, and where practicable, eliminate the release of substances into the air, water, and soil that may have harmful impacts on people, wildlife, or the environment.

The grant supports progress toward the Comprehensive Plan non-drive-alone mode share targets for commute trips of 65 percent for downtown workers, 45 percent for Citywide residents, and 40 percent for Citywide workers, by 2035.

**Fiscal Impact**

Executing the grant agreement will provide, on a reimbursable basis, up to \$350,000 (73.6 percent of the project) in state funding to support the development, coordination and implementation of TDM and SchoolPool activities from July 2021 through June 2023. The total cost of this programmatic work is estimated at \$480,000; the remaining \$130,000 (26.4 percent match for the project) will be funded by the Transportation General Fund budget in the form of salary support for staff conducting the work. This action will increase the 2021-2022 Operating Grants, Donations and Special Reserves Fund appropriation by \$350,000.

**OPTIONS**

1. Adopt the Ordinance 1) authorizing execution of a grant agreement (and supplements if necessary) with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to accept up to \$350,000 in state Regional Mobility Program grant funding to support the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and SchoolPool programs in state fiscal years 2021 to 2023; and, 2) amending the 2021-2022 Operating Grants, Donations and Special Reserves Fund to increase the appropriation by \$350,000.
2. Do not adopt the Ordinance and provide alternative direction to staff.

**ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS**

Proposed Ordinance No. 6588

**AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY**

WSDOT Regional Mobility grant award of state funding  
WSDOT Public Transportation Division Regional Mobility grant agreement (draft)  
Bellevue Transportation Demand Management Plan 2015-2023