

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

September 14, 2023
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Hybrid Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Kurz, Magill, Marciante, Rebhuhn

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: Commissioner Ting

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Stash, Vice Chair Helland,

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Paula Stevens, Andrew Singelakis,
Mike Ingram, Franz Loewenherz, Jay Backman,
Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Breiland, Fehr & Peers

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Commissioner Kurz who presided.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Stash and Vice Chair Helland who were excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald noted the receipt of numerous written communications regarding Bike Bellevue, all of which had been forwarded to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Kurz read into the record a message from the City Attorney's Office regarding oral communications. The message read that in compliance with Washington state campaign laws regarding the use of public facilities during an election, no speaker may support or oppose a ballot measure, or support or oppose a candidate for an election, including one's own campaign. Any speaker beginning to discuss such topics will be asked to stop. In addition, there are new rules adopted by the City Council that limit the topics about which the public may speak during meetings. Under Ordinance 6752, the public may speak during public comments only about subject matters that are related to city of Bellevue government and that are within the power and duties of the Transportation Commission. Additional information about the new rules of decorum governing the conduct of the public during meetings can be found on the City Council website in Ordinance 6752.

Lori Gardner, a Lake Hills resident, voiced support for the Bike Bellevue project and reported

having earlier in the year been too scared to ride a bike in the city due to unapproachable hostile infrastructure. With support from new friends, the summer was spent in gaining experience bit by bit, and now biking is the favorite way to get around as well as a favorite social activity. Biking has the additional bonus of being space, energy and resource efficient. Biking is a powerful tool for combatting climate change, the increasing cost of living, and for improving the health of the community. It is now easy to get to places like Downtown Redmond, Kirkland, Mercer Island and Seattle by bike, but it is not easy to get to Downtown Bellevue without a car. Relying on a slow and inconsistent bus or driving alone are the best options for traveling to Downtown. People are incentivized to travel via whatever mode is easiest, fastest and the most reliable. Bellevue by design incentivizes people to choose the least efficient and most detrimental mode of transportation for all trips. The infrastructure proposed by Bike Bellevue will enable riding to the Downtown by bike on corridors that are currently overbuilt for the traffic they see. The staff report indicates that adding bike infrastructure to corridors like BelRed and Northup Way will not add to traffic delay. Owning and maintaining a car is expensive, yet it is incredibly difficult to maintain a job and meet basic needs without one. Working toward eliminating such a massive expense is key to keeping people housed and enabling all in the community to thrive. Biking is better for mental and physical health, allows for connecting with the environment, and establishes a sense of place and connection with the city. Bellevue will be better for everyone with fewer cars on the road, and Bike Bellevue is a great way to empower people to get around without a car.

Maria Frost, transportation director for Kemper Development Company, voiced struggling the value of spending millions on lanes that deliver so little value to the Bellevue community, especially in a time when bicycling is on the decline in cities like Seattle, Portland and Bellevue. The Bike Bellevue plan will do more to increase traffic congestion and worsen conditions at intersections than it does to increase bike ridership, much less do anything for people living below the poverty line who will not bike to work. With regard to safety benefits in the plan, many proposed bike lanes are not compatible with auto travel lanes, especially on truck routes like 116th Avenue. Other projects in the plan implement bidirectional bike lanes in front of driveways, such as on 100th Avenue. Drivers who are not familiar with the area, and even those who are, would have to navigate not just pedestrian traffic but also bidirectional bike traffic to pull out into bidirectional car traffic. The design is ripe for conflict. Implementing bike lanes through busy intersections that have level of service problems already, like NE 2nd Street and Bellevue Way, and adding separate signal phasing, will add the potential for conflict. Regarding sustainability and road utilization in the plan, the plan states that taking lane capacity will not be a problem because Downtown roads are overbuilt and underutilized much of the day. The claim is remarkable and defies logic and experience. The report authors appear to have arrived at the conclusion by comparing bidirectional demand to bidirectional capacity in each corridor at all hours of the day. Staff should instead compare bidirectional demand to directional capacity during peak hours of the day which is when and where vehicular traffic needs to be accommodated the most. That information should be shared with the Commission at the October work session. The report claims the Bike Bellevue improvements will greatly expand the number of employment opportunities that people can comfortably get to by bike within the project area. The suggestion is made the improvements will help those who are under the poverty line. The city's own data undermines the claim. The report states that only 210 more new bike tours would occur in the Downtown under the build scenario, none of which would be for work. Outside of the project area, 376 new bike tours would take place under the build scenario, and 13 of them would be for work. Access and proximity does not necessarily translate to use. The implementation of Bike Bellevue as a whole will not meet Bellevue's transportation needs. The Commission should pursue efforts that support growth, accommodate the public's preferred mode of travel, and ensure that

Bellevue remains accessible and welcoming to everyone.

Christopher Randalls with Complete Streets Bellevue said Bike Bellevue is a great body of work. The staff have worked hard on it. Everyone should read the report in its entirety. All of the details and all the facts and figures are in the report. Staff undertook a very robust equity and sustainability analysis. The greenhouse gases emissions that were forecasted are very robust and are in line with any greenhouse gases emissions to be found in any company or organization or agency. Staff are to be commended for the intentional modeling and data gathering done as part of the process. Continuing to build for cars will yield more cars. Building for bikes will yield more bikes. The policies, vision and plans set in motion in the Environmental Stewardship Initiative and Vision Zero should be followed in regard to reducing emissions by 50 percent by 2030 and reducing fatalities to zero by 2030. Bike Bellevue is a first step toward achieving both of those goals.

Hanuk Yeong, a three-year resident of Bellevue, noted being a daily cyclist and deeply rooted in the cycling community across King County, and indicating liking biking in Bellevue. Many improvements have been made during the last three years, including the extension of the I-90 trail to 142nd Street, Eastrail and the Mountains to Sound Greenway. Even so there remains a chasm when it comes to BelRed, which is largely unreachable. There is much in BelRed that riders would enjoy, but it is not safe to ride there. Bike Bellevue will change the game for a lot of people. Biking to Bellevue should be something people want to do in the way they now bike to Kirkland, Redmond and Seattle.

Tyler Zendor, a Spring District resident, said many living in Bellevue do not have access to vehicles. Many apartments in the Spring District do not have more spaces for vehicles. Bike Bellevue will be impactful for those people. The current network of bike lanes and infrastructure in Bellevue is lacking and makes getting to places by bike inaccessible. The only other option for those without cars is to walk to places like grocery stores and recreational facilities. Transit is either non-existent or extremely undependable. Those working on the Bike Bellevue project are to be commended. The project is ambitious and will be a game changer.

Vic Bishop, a resident of Bellevue for six decades, a professional traffic engineer, a retired business owner and past member of the Transportation Commission, said the Commission is embarking on a major initiative that may have a profound impact on the residents and voters of the city, all of them. The Bike Bellevue concept guide is a new major document that deserves significant review and comment by a wide range of stakeholders, including the users of all modes of travel throughout the city. A number of factors will play a prominent role in the analysis. First is Comprehensive Plan Policy TR-2 which calls for aggressively planning and expanding transportation investments to reduce congestion. Second is the 2018 annual budget survey that unambiguously identified traffic as the most significant issue on the minds of people in the city. Third is the BKR travel forecast model that says the mode of choice by 81 percent of the people is travel by car; less than one percent travel by bike. Fourth is the fact that the analysis time period for traffic evaluation is the PM peak hour, it is not an average of 12 hours. The bidirectional information makes no sense whatsoever.

Alex Tsimerman began with a Nazi salute and called the Commissioners dirty damn Nazi Gestapo bandits and dirty garbage bags. With regard to the new rule under Ordinance 6752, it was stated that idiots made the rule. The Seattle City Council made a similar rule several years ago and they call it the Alex Tsimerman rule.

Commissioner Kurz interrupted to indicate the Transportation Commission has no control over

rules established by the City Council in Ordinance 6752.

Continuing, Alex Tsimerman said the Bellevue City Council made a rule to prevent speaking at every meeting. Last year the rule they made precluded speaking at the end of a meeting. They have also limited public comment to only 30 minutes, and where before one could speak for five minutes, now the limit is three. The rules have been made only to limit Alex Tsimerman. As the speaker's time for addressing the Commission ended, the Commissioners were called Nazi pigs and fascists and continued to talk loudly.

Jackie Kimzie spoke on behalf of Bike Bellevue and as a resident of an apartment on the east side of Bellevue. The apartment was chosen because it is close to buses that can be taken to work. Trying to ride a bike to bus stations, however, is not safe, making it necessary to ride on the sidewalk instead. Biking to work would be preferable, but there is just no room on 156th Avenue. Bike infrastructure is needed to facilitate those who want to bike. Having it would reduce car traffic. More bike riders will mean fewer cars on the roads. Bike riders need safe facilities.

Michelle Wannamaker, an Eastgate resident, said the community engagement plan indicates that there has been a lot of outreach, but sadly like so many other projects at the city, Bike Bellevue has not been specifically presented to residents with time allowed for feedback. There has also not been any citywide mailer announcing the presentation and inviting residents to attend. While there was an open house, experience has shown that such events consist of presentation boards and city staff answering questions. There is typically no cohesive explanation of the project or plan. Transportation staff attended the Bellevue College transportation fair in August, but at that time most students were on their summer breaks. The draft community engagement plan assumes that only people and businesses within the project boundaries will be interested or affected by the project. Northup Way and Bel-Red Road are major streets used by businesses and people who live and work all across Bellevue. Bike Bellevue mailers and project flyers should be distributed throughout the city.

Carl Vander Hoek spoke on behalf of Vander Hoek Corporation which has operated businesses for four generations and which has owned property in Old Bellevue for more than 85 years. The city's website says the goal of Bike Bellevue is to make the transportation safer, more equitable, sustainable and accessible for everyone. Taking public right-of-way and designating it for only mode of transportation does not make things equitable. With the city's projected growth, the plans cannot be called sustainable. Removing street capacity will not improve access or support businesses. It is a false equity claim that people are forced to drive cars. The daily vehicle volume charts for each corridor in the report show that 2015 and 2018 traffic volume data is lower than the projected 2035 vehicle volumes. Are the growth projections factored in? Why is the last daily vehicle volume measurement from 2015 or 2018? On page 132 of the packet the daily vehicle volume for Corridor 7 is depicted and it jumps from 2018 to 2035 in the projections. The more recent data collected for the corridor in 2022 is found on page 315, however it is not included on the charts. The way the data is presented appears to be very intentional. Regarding Corridor 6, the city wants to make its first one-way street. That will create circling around the block and will increase demand on Main Street, Bellevue Way and 100th Avenue NE. Traffic will be forced to other streets that were not considered or measured for impact in the study. The NE 1st/NE 2nd corridor is already achieving an LTS of 3, and the target is 3. The one-way concept will cripple access to Downtown Park, Inspiration Playground and events held at the park. All the traffic will be pushed to adjacent streets and neighborhoods. The Main Event, being held on Main Street, has shut down the roadway with the support of the local merchants. It is questionable if that could be done if the east-west street

directly north of Main Street is limited to one-way traffic. It should be indicated how many parking stalls will be removed under the proposed changes in each corridor. Bellevue already has a limited number of parking stalls to meet the demand.

Hari Nealakantan, a Newport Hills resident, noted that there is a new bike lane on 119th Avenue SE. Hopefully the money to build it was well spent, but so far there have not been many bike riders using it. Consideration should be given to higher traffic volumes instead of adding up bike lanes just to make the city look better. The time it takes as a pedestrian to cross streets in Bellevue seems to be getting longer. It is just taking longer to get places for both pedestrians and bicyclists. It is curious that some mostly empty parking lots are charging \$20/day. Hopefully the bike plans will take into account the bike volumes, not just the future potential that is not really realistic.

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

5. STAFF REPORTS

Kevin McDonald noted having provided the Commissioners with copies of Council Ordinance 6752, and also having shared it to their city e-mail.

Also provided to the Commissioners was a card with information about the Bellhop circulator service in the Downtown, BelRed and Wilburton. The free electric shuttle service is provided by Visit Bellevue and funded by hotel/motel taxes. A phone app is needed to call for a ride.

The Commissioners were reminded to use their city email addresses for all correspondence related to the Transportation Commission business.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Bike Bellevue

Mobility Planning and Solutions Manager Franz Loewenherz said that Bike Bellevue work builds on many years of past planning, programming and projects aimed at building out a safe and connected bicycle network. The 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan identified multiple bicycle projects and priority bike corridors, and it established some targets. Progress was tracked until 2015. When the Council was offered the option of updating the plan, it was determined that another major planning process was not needed, that the 2009 vision was good, and that what was needed was a method by which to advance the implementation of the plan. The result was the Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Initiative. Subsequently a number of projects were set in motion, including the Downtown demonstration bikeway project and others after the Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion levy passed. The Council approved a commitment to Vision Zero in 2015, and in 2020 the City Manager approved a strategic plan for Vision Zero with a safe system approach. Most recently, the Commission and the Council approved the Mobility Implementation Plan, which lays out a vision for a broader and more holistic approach to evaluating the performance of the transportation system, taking into account the roles of transit, pedestrian and bicycles in providing travel options.

All of that work prompted the City Council in the 2021 CIP process to set aside \$1.5 million, and in the most recent CIP to increase funding to \$4.5 million, for the project that now is branded as Bike Bellevue. The project has learned from past experiences in building out bike infrastructure. It recognizes that a piecemeal approach will not achieve the original targets established in the 2009 plan. Rather, what is required is a network-wide implementation mindset. With the new funding, Council directed staff and the Commission to work together with the community to develop designs and implement rapid build bicycle projects on existing streets in the urban core area for people of all ages and abilities.

When launching the project the Council established eight principles that provide the overall architecture for the draft design concepts guide. Both the project area map and the design concepts guide are in draft form pending a full consultative process. Both will be refined prior to the identified target timeline of June 2024. The current draft project area map signals recognition of the early thinking around the need to remove from further consideration the 102nd Avenue NE corridor that ties into the NE 12th Street project. Bellevue is facing a period of rapid growth and change. The Pinnacle development along that stretch of roadway will make it impossible to establish the early concept outlined for that corridor, so it will be removed from consideration in the document and on the map.

Franz Loewenherz said the document is a holistic approach to considering how Bike Bellevue impacts sustainability, equity and safety in addition to moving people. It includes a number of new approaches while also retaining many traditional approaches of assessment, including measuring PM peak hour congestion using the BKRCast model. The document is the collective work of more than 50 people, both staff and consultants, and many agency staff from Washington State Department of Transportation, King County Metro, Sound Transit, and the city of Redmond. There is full recognition that the conversation is still at the starting point. The final design concepts guide will be different from the draft.

An engagement tool will be launched on September 15. There will be an opportunity to interact with residents at Welcoming Week at Crossroads Mall the weekend of September 16 and 17; materials will be available there in seven different languages. A mailer will be sent out to some 30,000 addresses. Yard signs will be posted in various places. There will be outreach to community groups and others encouraging them to put up posters in common areas to get the word out. At the conclusion of the online engagement five focus groups will be initiated with hard-to-reach populations, and multiple community events will be hosted. There will also be both an in-person open house and a virtual open house. The list will be added to over time. The online engagement platform provides the public the opportunity to consider the design details for each of the 11 corridors, zoom in on all of the attributes, assign comments, like, dislike and so forth. Staff will document all of the feedback received and will develop a response to each comment received through the platform. The staff responses will be shared with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Ting asked if the posts on NextDoor could include a summary showing some of the Bike Bellevue plans as opposed to just providing a link to a website. Franz Loewenherz said typically some general information is provided, though there are space limits. The city's public information officer has worked with staff to make sure the general concepts are captured.

Chris Breiland, consultant with Fehr & Peers, said one of the early spreads in the document is the layout of Bike Bellevue. It highlights the connections to existing bike network given the

purpose of the project to link up existing city investments with some additional future bicycle projects with the rapid implementation network that connects the new light rail stations with key east-west corridors that are currently difficult to traverse by bicycle. The design development process begins with alternatives development. The specific design went through a lot of evaluation that specifically looked at traffic analysis, queuing, different bike design options, and how to integrate transit. Several iterations for nearly all of the corridors were considered and the weaker performing alternatives were removed in seeking to maximizing the level of bike traffic stress gains while minimizing the impact on vehicle performance in the peak hour. Once the alternatives development process was completed, the staff and consultants team began working through draft corridor concepts. The work included actual design, including striping and signals. Once that work was done, another round of evaluation was performed to verify how the Bike Bellevue concepts affected the elements from the Mobility Implementation Plan, and the high-level evaluations related to safety, sustainability and reductions in greenhouse gases emissions.

The draft concepts guide has a series of pages that focus on the benefits and tradeoffs resulting from implementation of Bike Bellevue. The first element talks about prioritizing safety. The data highlights bicyclists as vulnerable road users. Bicyclists are nine times more likely to experience serious or fatality injuries than in general collisions as a whole. The design concepts focus on implementing safety counter measures that are documented to demonstrate benefit to road safety, principally for bicyclists but also for other road users. The data indicates that with the safety counter measures in place along the Bike Bellevue network, there is the potential for a reduction of between four and eight serious and fatal injury collisions over the 20 year planning horizon, which furthers the goals of Vision Zero.

Chris Breiland said the next section in the concepts guide describes bicycle level of traffic stress (LTS). Bicycle LTS varies by volume of traffic on the street, the speed limit, and the type of bike facility treatment. Bicycle LTS is a direct output from the Mobility Implementation Plan and is fundamental in guiding the types of designs considered in the Bike Bellevue improvements. The section notes that about two-thirds of the facilities in the Bike Bellevue corridors are at LTS-4, the type of roadway most bicyclists are not comfortable riding on. With the implementation of Bike Bellevue, all LTS-4 facilities will be eliminated within the network, and 90 percent of the network will meet the Mobility Implementation Plan LTS targets. The projects rely more heavily on buffered or separated bike lanes but other options include sharrows, conventional bike lanes, and separated buffered two-way bike lanes. The modeling shows that implementation of the Bike Bellevue projects will substantially improve the LTS, with more than half of the corridors falling into the LTS 1 or LTS 2 categories. Refinements to the designs can be expected, and the numbers may change going forward.

The next section of the draft concepts guide discusses equitable access. Based on the city's modeling information, the data suggests that people living below the poverty line are considerably more likely to walk or bike to their destinations, and are more likely to use transit. Accessing transit by bicycle is a barrier in many areas of the city. The equity access focused on in the Bike Bellevue analysis is born out of the work of the Commission on the Mobility Implementation Plan and is primarily on lower-income populations. The latest census data on incomes allows for mapping the concentrations of those living below the poverty line relative to the county average. Some parts of Bike Bellevue connect with areas with lower-income populations, particularly on the eastern side of the city. Low-stress bike access will make about 24 percent more jobs accessible. The projects will connect all light rail stations with low-stress facilities. Given the number of schools within or immediately adjacent to the Bike Bellevue area, there would be a low-stress bike access gain of involving 33 percent more students per

school.

The document discusses the issue of sustainability. Currently the total bicycle mode share for all trip purposes stands at 0.8 percent. The forecast for bicycle mode share shows somewhere between 2.6 and 4.3 percent. The relatively wide spread is primarily tied to not having all the details of what influences people's choice to bicycle within the context of the Bike Bellevue project area. It is known that there is a relationship between improved facilities and increased bicycle mode share, but questions remain about specific land use densities, specific land uses people are able to bike to, and the ease with which other bicycle facilities can be accessed. There is no magic wand that can be waived to get most people in Bellevue to travel by bike. The modeling shows that increasing the bicycle mode share will result in reductions in greenhouse gases emissions equivalent to removing between 240 and 890 cars per year.

Chris Breiland said several pages of the draft concepts guide discuss vehicle performance. The goal is to improve the level of traffic stress for bicycles without severely impinging on vehicle performance. The document leverages the two key vehicle performance metrics from the Mobility Implementation Plan, namely the V/C ratio during the PM peak period, and vehicle corridor speeds, also during the PM peak hour. The evaluations were carried out both with and without Bike Bellevue, were calibrated to existing conditions, and were carried through with the forecast of future 2035 conditions with and without Bike Bellevue. The results showed that Bike Bellevue does not lead to any vehicle corridor speed performance target gaps during the PM peak hour. With regard to the V/C ratios, one intersection emerged from the modeling work with a reading below the V/C performance target established for the BelRed area. The PM peak hour vehicle speed along the Bike Bellevue corridors was shown to change by less than one mile per hour in both directions with the Bike Bellevue projects in place.

Turning to roadway capacity utilization, Chris Breiland said the new performance metric comes from a National Academy of Sciences research group focused on transportation issues. The research team looked at alternative ways roadways are used over a longer period of time. The concept looks at how efficiently roadways are used during the non-peak hour periods, and how the peak hour times relate to the rest of the day. The idea of roadway capacity utilization and the demand-to-capacity ratio is described in the documentation. The finding was that about 90 percent of all the traffic in Bellevue runs between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.. Within that timeframe, a little under the roadway capacity is utilized by cars and the rest of the roadway capacity can be thought of as sitting idle. The evaluation efforts showed that with Bike Bellevue the capacity of several of the corridors is reduced, though not all of them. Two roadway corridors were identified as exceeding the roadway capacity for the peak hour period. In the end, the focus is on understanding the tradeoffs between roadway capacity and the capacity being used for improving the bicycle level of traffic stress.

Chris Breiland explained that the bar charts included in the document reflect 2015 counts. The BKRCast model data has also been reviewed, but for the sake of consistency counts from 2015 were used consistently throughout as the baseline condition. Between 2015 and the present, some corridors have seen traffic decreases. Other corridors have remained unchanged, and still others have seen some modest increases. The 2035 numbers in many cases are lower than the 2015 numbers. Over the past ten-plus years there have been generally flat traffic levels in the Bike Bellevue corridors, with some variance by corridor. The models do include growth in land use as well as shifts in travel patterns and behaviors over time.

Commissioner Marciante asked if the roadway capacity utilization bar graph showed volume per hour or per 24 hours. Chris Breiland confirmed the capacity shown is per hour. The chart

shows Corridor 1. The no build capacity is just shy of 3000 vehicles per hour, and under Bike Bellevue the capacity drops to a little over 2000 vehicles per hour.

Senior ITS Engineer Jay Backman clarified that the charts show vehicle capacity. It does not show total roadway users. Accordingly, the chart does not include the capacity that will be gained from Bike Bellevue in terms of the total users going through the corridor.

Commissioner Kurz noted being impressed by all the work done and getting all the information into a single document. The document emphasizes all the right metrics throughout. The roadway capacity utilization argument may not resonate highly, but the fact that vehicle corridor speeds drop by only one mile per hour under Bike Bellevue should resonate with a lot of people.

Commissioner Ting asked if both AM peak and PM peak is looked at in the metrics and the analysis. Jay Backman said both AM peak and PM peak counts are in hand for each corridor. It is standard practice to focus on the PM peak, but that is not to say the AM peak is not also looked at. There are differences in the two peaks. One thing of note is that prior to the pandemic there were two large daily spikes, one in the morning and one in the evening. That has in fact changed post pandemic and the AM peak has leveled out considerably while the PM peak has remained quite strong. The conclusions in the document are based on the PM peak, but they take into account other times of day.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if there is an ongoing analysis of the traffic that might show higher volumes as businesses see a return of workers to their offices. Jay Backman allowed that traffic volume is always a moving target. There is data constantly coming in and the Smart Mobility team has a data portal dashboard that pulls data from as many sources as possible throughout the city for all modes.

Commissioner Magill asked how e-bikes are looked at in the sense that they move a bit faster and may trigger some safety issues, and from the standpoint that their use is growing and may be playing an equity roll. Franz Loewenherz said the marketplace is rapidly evolving. One of the fastest growing segments is e-bikes, outpacing electric cars in sales by quite a bit. With legislation on the books in Washington state providing for rebates, especially for low-income populations, the number of options has been opened up and the playing field has been leveled for many. Other communities that have more robust bike usage are at the place of widening their bike lanes to address the differential in speed, in part by creating passing lanes. The benefit of Bike Bellevue is that it allows for rapid changes by building in resiliency and adaptability. Jay Backman said the engineering team is having active conversations about the issue. The best practices for bike facilities are constantly changing and constantly being updated. It is a big challenge to design facilities that can simultaneously be used by children riding slowly and e-bike riders traveling at 30 miles per hour. The need to remain flexible is paramount in such a changing sphere of need.

Commissioner Magill asked if down the road there will be the opportunity for a cost/benefit analysis. Franz Loewenherz said there are two aspects of the consultative process that were established by the Council at the onset of Bike Bellevue. One involves actively looking for input on the designs. Another component is focused on prioritization and that might be approached in a number of ways. Cost estimates for each corridor have been developed and they are being refined as design tweaks are made and as the community weighs in. As the decision point is approached, staff will work with the Commissioner on the kinds of metrics needed to inform prioritization by the Commission.

Commissioner Ting said it would be useful for staff to present the Commissioners with maps showing the level of degradation, both in terms of corridor speed and V/C ratios. That will help to identify the hotspots. Jay Backman referred to Page 16 of the concepts guide where that information is included.

Commissioner Marciante suggested that the roadway capacity utilization concept has caused a lot of confusion and in fact has a lot of drawbacks. It is also not part of the performance metrics in the Mobility Implementation Plan. It might be better to stick with the performance metrics in the Mobility Implementation Plan. Franz Loewenherz allowed being the one who integrated the concept, adding that it is an evolving state of practice to think beyond the PM peak hour. It was introduced as a “yes/and” metric, but if it is not serving its purpose it can be dispensed with when the next update comes out. By virtue of the feedback received, the public did not grasp that staff had done its homework consistent with all prior practice.

Jay Backman focused on the profiles for each of the 11 corridors, noting that the designs still have details in need of being worked out. Corridor 1, Northup Way, is a fairly large arterial running through the north end of the Spring District. The analysis found the best use of the space would be to reduce the westbound throughput vehicle lanes to one lane from two, reusing the space to have buffered bidirectional bike lanes on either side of the roadway, spanning from 120th Avenue NE to 124th Avenue NE. There are ongoing communications with the SR-520 team that is developing the preliminary design of the new on- and off-ramps at 124th Avenue NE. Most of the rest of Northup Way will continue to have two vehicle lanes eastbound and one westbound, with buffered bike lanes.

Franz Loewenherz added that high-visibility crosswalk markings will be integrated. The same is true throughout the Bike Bellevue areas. Jay Backman stressed that the elements within the buffers for each of the corridors have yet to be finalized. Feedback from the Commission and the public is needed to inform the preferred treatments along the corridors. There are a few developments occurring on Northup Way and staff are in communication with those teams about installing facilities behind the curb that will mesh in a way to create a continuous bicycle experience through the corridor.

Jay Backman noted that NE 20th Street has the same cross section of one lane westbound and two lanes eastbound and directional bicycle facilities. Some new bicycle facilities will connect to some of the link light rail stations. The design continues east to 140th Avenue NE where there is another Bike Bellevue corridor. It will need to be decided in time which corridor should be given priority for buildout. Regardless, the designs will need to work regardless of which corridor is installed first.

Commissioner Magill asked if other alternatives were considered that involved maintaining the existing travel lanes. Jay Backman said a lot of work has been done with SimTraffic and Synchro as well as BKRCast to gain a full picture regarding vehicle delay, V/C ratios at the intersections, the queue lengths at each intersection for a variety of possible scenarios. In the case of Corridor 1, it was determined that the least impact to vehicle performance resulted from leaving one lane westbound and two lanes eastbound.

Jay Backman said Corridor 2, NE 12th Street, used to include the 102nd Avenue NE portion that was removed due to a development that made Bike Bellevue no longer possible on the corridor. The design calls for installing a cycle track on the north side of the corridor and removing one westbound lane. The cycle track will in the future have a connection further

west. A cycle track is bidirectional in a single lane.

Commissioner Ting asked about the new Pinnacle development that precludes the development of Bike Bellevue facilities. Jay Backman said the development ultimately ended up changing the curb line. Additionally, the development is partnering with the city to investigate a roundabout option. The result was there no longer was space for the cycle track concept. There was no funding to look at what a cycle track going through the roundabout would look like.

Commissioner Kurz asked what percentage of the corridors involve taking away a vehicle travel lane. Jay Backman said in some cases it was possible to just narrow lanes to add buffer space for bicyclists. Franz Loewenherz said the Commission will be provided with data showing how many lane miles and parking spaces are affected by the entirety of the proposal.

Jay Backman said the cycle track on NE 12th Street will run along the north side of corridor, meeting up with the existing multipurpose path at 108th Avenue NE.

Corridor 3 starts on NE 12th Street where it then bends into Bel-Red Road. It was concluded that it made more sense to have directional bike lanes in the corridor, one on either side of the roadway. Space can be reallocated from a westbound travel lane for the segment. At 120th Avenue NE there is another CIP project with which there is coordination. The layout of two eastbound lanes and one westbound lane continues through until just before 124th Avenue NE where it was determined it would be more efficient to have two eastbound vehicle travel lanes and one westbound vehicle travel lane along with the directional bike lanes.

Corridor 4 is designed to have two westbound lanes, one eastbound lanes and directional bike lanes. Where the curb-to-curb space narrows it can no longer accommodate two lanes in one direction and one lane in the other direction, so the design transitions to a single lane in each direction and a two-way center turn lane along with a directional bike lane in both directions.

Corridor 5 is the end of the Bel-Red Road corridor and has similar facilities with directional bike lanes and a single vehicle lane in each direction and a two-way turn lane in the center.

Given the limited time, Commissioner Kurz urged staff to focus the attention of the Commission to those corridors that were especially challenging or that merit extra attention.

Jay Backman called attention to Corridor 6, NE 1st Street which becomes NE 2nd Street between 100th Avenue NE and Bellevue Way, and said the corridor has two alternatives, one of which primarily includes sharrows to the east of Bellevue Way. The second alternative removes the westbound travel lane and changes it into a two-directional cycle track. The roadway would become one-way for eastbound vehicles only. The roadway borders Downtown Park and sees a lot of pedestrian use, and it is forecast that the cycle track would have relatively high usage. It must be kept in mind that a new development is coming in at the northwest corner of Bellevue Way and NE 2nd Street that has an access point on NE 2nd Street. The current agreement with the development is for a right-in/right-out access, not a left-in/left-out access. Accordingly, there is a likelihood that the design of the cycle track will need to be changed, at least between Bellevue Way and 103rd Avenue NE. To the east of Bellevue Way, NE 2nd Street becomes a directional facility with bike lanes in both directions on either side of the street and one vehicle lane in each direction along with a two-way turn lane through to 112th Avenue NE where it ties in with other develops that link up with the 114th Avenue NE multipurpose path.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. July 13, 2023

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Magill. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Marciante and the motion carried unanimously.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Kevin McDonald noted that remote participation for the next meeting had to be approved at the prior meeting. One provision of Ordinance 6752 allows for doing away with the need for prior approval at the meeting before remote participation is requested. However, remote participation must still be approved. Commissioners must now notify the Chair and staff of the intent to participate remotely no later than 12:00 o'clock noon of the day prior to a meeting. Should more than three Commissioners request remote participation for a meeting, the staff will decide which three will be approved.

Commissioner Marciante announced plans to be out of town during the October 12 meeting and requested remote participation. Commissioner Ting also requested to be allowed to participate remotely for that same meeting.

11. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

A. Upcoming Agenda Items

Kevin McDonald took a moment to review the Commission's calendar of upcoming meeting dates and agenda items.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Kurz adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.



Secretary to the Transportation Commission

November 9, 2023

Date