

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 25, 2023
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Hybrid Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Stash, Vice Chair Helland, Commissioners Kurz, Magill, Marciante, Rebhuhn

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE: Commissioner Ting

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Paula Stevens, Chris Iverson, Chris Long, Franz Loewenherz, Jay Backman, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Vice Chair Helland who arrived at 6:32 p.m.

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

Councilmember Zahn took a moment to thank all those who had offered comments on the Curb Management Plan and Bike Bellevue, and for the solid work of the Commission. It is exciting to see the Commission's work on the Curb Management Plan wrap up so it can be forwarded to the City Council.

Chair Stash took a moment to remind everyone present that the role of the Chair is to make sure meetings are efficiently and respectfully run. All speakers will be allowed their three minutes to speak, but the minute there are disruptions of any sort that cause the Commission not to be able to carry out its work, the Chair will ask the disrupting person or persons to leave. Persons who do not leave on their own will be escorted out by the Bellevue police.

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 having forwarded to the Commissioners written communications received from Mariya Frost and Nicole Meyers, and one addressed to “The Happy Cows.”

Anna Marie Dooley, a member of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, noted being thrilled by Bike Bellevue and urged the Commission to look at transportation and Bike Bellevue as a public health issue. Increased vehicles on the roads increase carbon and air pollution, and increase heart and lung disease. There has been a huge increase in the number of persons walking and biking being hit by cars. The lack of an active transport network causes terrible socialization and depression in older people, affecting everyone directly or indirectly. As a child in the west of Ireland, people were generally thinner and more fit, and it was because they walked and biked a lot more, far more than they drove. Currently in Bellevue, 30 to 40 percent of people have no option for getting around other than driving, and the huge obesity and diabetes epidemic is a direct result. Bike Bellevue will hopefully change things for the better. Bike Bellevue is not just about biking, it is about active transport mobility lanes. Better active and safe transport is needed all over Bellevue.

Laura Gardner, a resident of Lake Hills since 2017, said Bellevue is inhospitable and un compelling to young people, and that is driving them to leave or keeping them from living in Bellevue. That is largely the effect of Bellevue’s development patterns. It is not healthy for a city to face school closures, understaffed businesses and difficulties in finding lifeguards. The city actually does want to hear from its young people and wants them to engage, but the work is not being done to actually get that to happen. According to the draft community engagement plan for Bike Bellevue, the first group the city reached out to was the Chamber of Commerce. That says the city wanted from the start to have feedback from that group. The information was brought to the Chamber on a platter and in a specific format. If the city wants to hear from young people, it should make an effort to come into the realm of young people. Flyers, websites or a couple of bland tweets are not going to do much. The city should make an actual attempt to communicate what is going on in an approachable and relatable way that will inspire action. The Bike Bellevue project is a fantastic step in the right direction.

Alex Tsimerman began with a Nazi salute and called the Commissioners Nazi Gestapo democratic fascists. The government, together with the democratic mafia, together with Amazon, wants to totally destroy Bellevue because it will bring 30,000 people slaves from the jungle. The goal is to make more money, which is what the Commissioners are all about. The Commissioners are totally controlled by the government and the goal of each is only to make more money. By definition the Commissioners belong to the animal farm because they are all kinds of animals. Bellevue is in a unique situation in that its white people are in the minority. Jewish and Christian people are in the minority. Thirty-five years ago almost all people in Bellevue were White. The change has occurred because people like the Commissioners have acted like the mafia and fascists with the goal of making more money.

Glen Chow, a resident of the Crossroads area, suggested that whenever new bike infrastructure is considered the city should conduct a traffic impact study to learn how it will impact traffic. It is also crucial for the city to question whether the metrics for traffic studies truly serve the greater good of the community. Traffic volumes, travel speeds and intersection delay are all important for traffic, but they say nothing about the safety of the more vulnerable users, and the metrics may not actually lead to prosperity or land value maximization. The city should not put traffic throughput above all else. If throughput is the goal, there are low-cost things the city could do to improve the current infrastructure, including on streets like Bel-Red Road, 120th Avenue NE and 116th Avenue NE could benefit from reducing access to parking lots and

increasing access between the parking lots. Additionally, left turns into businesses should be reduced or eliminated, and business access located too close to intersections should be eliminated. Small-scale temporary interventions should be employed to test and demonstrate ideas for improving public spaces and transportation and to gauge their effectiveness. By using temporary bollards, planters and concrete blocks, the city could create upgraded and safer spaces for cyclists and others. The city's approach to traffic studies must consider the broader good, prioritize the safety of all roadway users, and factor in the potential for modal shift due to infrastructure improvements.

Patty Mann, a long-time resident of Bellevue and a retired firefighter paramedic in the Seattle fire department, noted that each medic unit in Seattle runs an average of ten runs per day. One of the challenges faced in Seattle is getting through the traffic, particularly in areas where travel lanes had been taken away. It is concerning that under the proposed Curb Management Plan some travel lanes will be removed. Strong consideration should be given to requiring traffic impact studies before making any permanent changes. Medic units responding to a call with lights and sirens cannot move at all if the traffic in front of them cannot move or get out of the way. Losing seconds due to roadway congestion results in lives lost. The ability of emergency vehicles to respond to calls in the city should always be taken into account.

Betsi Hummer, a lifelong Bellevue resident, thanked the Commissioners for their public service and noted having ridden bikes all over Bellevue and Seattle. Bellevue now has much more and faster traffic. The suggestion made that NE 8th Street should be turned into a bike lane is ridiculous because of all the hills. Bel-Red Road would make a much better bike route. The painted bike lane markers are the best but many do not feel safe riding in those lanes. In considering Bike Bellevue, attention should be given to retaining the trees that make BelRed a super special place. Even though there is a call for people to get out of their cars and use other modes for getting around, all of the projections show that there will continue to be more and more cars on the roads given that people are dependent on cars. That must be kept in mind.

Brin Lee commented that the staggering growth of office buildings in Downtown Bellevue should prompt questions about how all the new workers will commute to and from their jobs. Currently, Bellevue prioritizes commuting by car above all else, but it simply will not be able to accommodate every new worker driving to and from work. For many, however, commuting by car is their only viable option given that Bellevue is designed for cars, not for transit or bicycling. To tackle the conundrum, Bellevue must prioritize alternatives. Cars are the mode of transportation that make travel times worse for everyone. The abundance of high-speed traffic in Bellevue is a hindrance to the quality of life of those who live in the city. Those who do walk to stores must face long waits at traffic lights because cars come first. Those trying to sleep are often kept awake by the sounds of sports cars and loud trucks bustling down the unrestricted highway-like roadways. The residents of Bellevue live in dread and fear of the vehicles that rule the streets. Downtown Bellevue is the easiest place to make bike friendly due to the proximities of amenities, yet according to Bellevue's own bike map, almost all of the Downtown is a caution area. Bicyclists are warned to stay off Bellevue's main streets, which include most of the destinations, due to the danger of high-speed motor traffic. The city suggests that bikers should ride on the sidewalks, which are already more overburdened, but mixing bikes with pedestrians only creates potential conflicts and negative experiences. The bike map also suggests that bicyclists should stay to the right and three feet away from parked cars, but when moving the same speed as vehicles to stick to the middle of the lane. Such contradictory statements reflect the city's attitudes toward bicyclists. When considering proposed obstacles, such as vehicle traffic studies, it must be asked why only car traffic matters. The throughput of people should be prioritized regardless of mode. When people feel

safe and welcome, there will be a measurable increase in human traffic. In the space taken up by a single car, four bikes can be accommodated, and that is far more efficient. Bike Bellevue is a great starting point, but more is needed. The Downtown will remain dangerous for anyone who is less than an expert rider.

5. STAFF REPORTS

Kevin McDonald reminded the Commissioners that recruitments are under way for the Bellevue Essentials program. Anyone wanting to join must sign up by June 12.

The Commissioners were also reminded that elections for Chair and Vice Chair would occur at the Commission's June 8 meeting.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Curb Management Plan

Senior Transportation Engineer Chris Iverson sought from the Commission two motions at the end of the study session: one to recommend the Curb Management Plan and the aggregated appendix document and advance it to the City Council; and one to approve the transmittal letter to the City Council.

Chris Iverson noted that in line with public feedback and comments made by the Commission on May 11, a few changes had been made to the main plan and to the appendix documents. The modifications included adding acknowledgements; clarifying some statistics and wording; clarifying some near-term priority curb practice concepts; adding language reflect a desire to conduct some type of traffic analysis when making significant curb use changes; clarifying what will be evaluated terms of assessing performance metrics; and minor edits to the curb typology map. In Volume 2 some changes were made for clarity in Appendix A; strategies were added for Practice RG-1 focused on streamlining and digitizing actual curbside regulations; mentions for stakeholders were added for ST-2 and Strategy AC-1; and in Appendix B the language about API standardization was modified.

Chris Iverson noted that additional changes, not reflected in the packet, were made based on feedback received over the last week. The first was focused on the curb practices and identifying individual practices that will require further Council involvement beyond the adoption of the Curb Management Plan. Some of the practices can be done administratively, but some will need more public involvement and Council input, primarily in terms of Land Use Code considerations, and anything regarding specifics for curb pricing strategies.

The second staff recommendation involved tweaks to the added language for traffic analysis when considering curb use changes. New language was added to the plan itself in line with community feedback about being more explicit in regard to the analysis and the desire to make sure anything done to the curbside will reflect the safe systems approach within the Vision Zero strategies.

Vice Chair Helland asked about Strategy DG-3, automated enforcement. Chris Iverson explained that it is a strategy to look at different types of technologies and approaches that might help streamline both revenue collection and enforcement in the future. Should the city

get to the place of having a paid parking program, it might be able to rely on technology to track occupancy and the like in a less resource-intensive way.

On the topic of residential parking zones, Commissioner Ting asked about helping neighborhoods with RPZs that might face an increase in parking violations due to the Curb Management Plan. The specific question asked was if there were a way to help out the neighborhoods without raising their fees. Chris Iverson said there is a strategy to evaluate some type of pricing program for RPZs in conjunction with the advent of paid parking. The idea is to add some type of administrative cover as well as resources for active enforcement. Resident stakeholders have come forward wanting to see enforcement take place even without the program, but the city's resources are too constrained to accommodate them. The best practice from other communities is to have a nominal fee associated with the permit. Given its relationship to a pricing program, it is hoped the Council will weigh in at some point.

Commissioner Ting suggested that to the extent the Curb Management Plan will increase parking violations, it would be reasonable to have enforcement to manage those increased violations come out of the paid parking fees rather than charging RPZ fees. Chris Iverson agreed that could be one strategy, but it is too early to know if there will be an elevated number of violations.

Chair Stash expressed the view that at the time changes are made, the city should look at all options. It is too early to know if there will be additional violations and what the nominal fees might be.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Rebhuhn, Chris Iverson explained that the residential parking zone program allows residents within a Council-defined geography to park on the street. Permits are issued to them to allow that to happen, and currently those permits are free. The enforcement mechanism is complaint based. The Curb Management Plan considers having a fee that covers the cost of administrating those permits and enforcement activities. Commissioner Rebhuhn suggested that if residents had to pay to park in their own neighborhood, they would not be very happy. Chris Iverson said a number of cities that have RPZs charge a nominal fee for the permits to cover the costs of administering the program and enforcement.

Vice Chair Helland said one option would be to have parking fees pay for the enforcement. Chris Iverson said that could be an element of a paid parking program.

Commissioner Ting allowed that RPZ permits should not always be free. If, however, there are increased violations due to the Curb Management Plan, the city should try to mitigate without increasing the RPZ fees. It seems reasonable that violations stemming from the launching of a paid parking program should be used to help mitigate any increase in parking violations in RPZ areas.

Commissioner Kurz agreed with that rationale, but suggested it might be difficult to determine whether the Curb Management Plan caused the increase in violations. If there are issues generated, they should be addressed at that time. Chris Iverson said the issue is one that will require additional Council attention.

Commissioner Magill asked if Commissioner Ting had suggested language to include in the document to address the issue. Commissioner Ting noted having sent Kevin McDonald proposed wording for an amendment to be considered at the appropriate time. The amendment

states that if there are increased violations due to the Curb Management Plan's paid parking program, the city should take steps to mitigate without creating additional fees for the RPZ program. The neighborhoods would feel better if they understood the city has that goal.

Commissioner Marciante expressed concern with use of the word "mitigate." No one wants to have to pay to park in front of their own house, but if every time they come home they find someone else parked in front of their house, they will be upset and they might be willing to consider paying a fee to ensure always having that parking spot available.

Chair Stash suggested that one way to approach it would be to say additional fees for people in RPZ zones could be one of the ways, but not the only way, to mitigate additional violations.

Commissioner Ting said the concern, as articulated by many residents, is that residents would need to start paying for RPZ permits, something that currently is free, to mitigate parking violations through enforcement that result from the Curb Management Plan. Instead of adding or increasing RPZ fees, revenues from paid parking could go to the enforcement of violations in RPZ areas.

Commissioner Marciante expressed discomfort with getting into that much detail in a plan document. Additionally, the document should also not state that there will never be a fee.

Assistant Transportation Department Director Chris Long cautioned that the conversation was getting close to creating a rule within the practice. None of the practices have rules established yet. The establishment of specific rules will be part of the follow-on studies. The bullet that talks about fees could include language calling for giving consideration to the implementation of equitable fees.

Commissioner Ting noted being open to different types of language expressing that it is the goal of the city to try to avoid fees for RPZs should paid parking increase violations in those areas.

Commissioner Marciante agreed that concerns had been expressed by the community about the RPZ program, but there is no intent within the Curb Management Plan to assess fees or not to assess fees. It is too early to express any intent one way or the other.

Commissioner Ting held it would be reasonable to include in the call for an implementation study for a paid parking program to state the goal of trying to avoid increasing RPZ fees in the neighborhoods.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked staff to touch on the point made during oral communications about first responders being able to get through the streets as curb typologies are changed. Chris Iverson said there is traffic study language specific to analysis tied to the performance targets in the Mobility Implementation Plan. While there is nothing specifically tied to emergency vehicle response, it is something that could be considered. Many of the streets in the urban core of the city are designed to accommodate emergency response traffic, often through the use of the center turn lane. That would continue to be the case even if a curbside lane were to be repurposed for something else. Language calling for consulting with EMS when conducting an analysis could be added.

Vice Chair Helland asked how the transportation department works generally with EMS when thinking about any particular project. Chris Long said the neighborhood traffic program is

responsible for putting in speed cushions and speed bumps with the intent of slowing traffic for the safety of a neighborhood. All such actions are reviewed by the fire department to assure response times are maintained. The fire department tracks its response times throughout the city and where they see problems they bring them to the attention of the transportation department.

Commissioner Magill noted the proposed language in the document indicates that a traffic analysis may be done when a change to establish a new use for a curbside lane is proposed and suggested a traffic analysis should simply be done as a matter of practice. Chris Iverson said the language used specifically calls out instances in which a significant portion of a curbside lane is proposed to be changed. The idea is that the city should be allowed to be nimble in making only small changes to the curb. For example, a full traffic analysis may not be necessary in considering only a new load zone requiring 20 to 30 feet of curb space. The “may” language was used intentionally.

Commissioner Ting asked if taking away 20 to 30 feet of a curb lane for one particular use would typically impact the traffic flow. Chris Iverson said it depends on the context of the street. On streets with a continuous multilane roadway, creating a 20- to 30-foot load zone would certainly cause impacts. For a block that for half its length has existing on-street parking and a long right-turn pocket on the other half of the block, taking 20 to 30 feet of the beginning of the right-turn pocket will likely have only minimal impacts on traffic.

Vice Chair Helland asked how far along the thinking is about having property owners pay for parking in front of their establishments. Chris Iverson said the concept would reside in the strategy that speaks to refining the permitting approaches. A retailer or restaurant wanting to use the public right-of-way at the curbside must pay a nominal fee even under current practices. The idea going forward is to make sure the fee structures are equitable.

A motion to approve the Curb Management Plan and the appendix volume with the new staff recommended changes was made by Commissioner Marciante. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Helland.

A motion to amend the motion by revising Volume 2, page A15, by adding an additional bullet reading with the wording included in the email sent to Kevin McDonald. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Magill.

Chair Stash suggested broadening the language to not commit the city to mitigating increases but to consider options to best fund the program if needed.

A motion to amend the amendment to the main motion to state the city should consider taking steps to limit increases to the RPZ permit fees was made by Commissioner Ting.

Kevin McDonald said the Commission could vote on the main motion and condition it on staff including in the transmittal letter the proper language that is the intent of the amendments to the main motion. The Commission would need to approve the transmittal letter with the direction to include the additional language for consideration by the Council.

Commissioner Kurz suggested the Commissioners were not all on the same page in regard to the proposal made by Commissioner Ting. It is certainly understandable that those living in an RPZ that currently do not have to pay for their permits would not want to have new fees in the future, but it is not clear it is the Commission’s place to try to guarantee there will not be a fee

in the future.

Commissioner Magill agreed. What is needed is enough flexibility to allow the staff to study the issue and for residents to chime in at the appropriate time.

Commissioner Ting proposed language reading “consider limiting increases to RPZ permit fees by using other funds, including paid parking fees, to manage parking violations.” The language should be added to Appendix 2, Page A-15, Strategy ST-2.

Commissioner Marciante said the problem is that RPZs are not addressed at all in the section, nor are the potential implications of enforcement. It all seems out of place.

Commissioner Ting disagreed. One of the impacts of paid parking is probably going to be overflow into RPZs, making the issue appropriate to address.

Commissioner Marciante countered that Commissioner Ting’s statement was a value judgement. The fact is no one knows what exactly will happen and it does not make sense to make assumptions about unknown outcomes. The pilot project will seek to inform, following which decisions can be made about actual outcomes. There is already a sentence included that calls for considering implementing a fee associated with RPZ permits to help recover costs for managing the program. The language could be revised along the lines of “consider various sources of funding, including implementing a fee for the RPZ program.”

Chair Stash said all 15 options could be listed, or it could just be left open to allow the study to guide decisions. Picking just one of the 15 options will tend to guide everyone toward that one as the predetermined default.

Commissioner Ting noted being fine with the second bullet as stated. If RPZ permit fees need to be increased because there are greater administration costs, that is simply a cost of living in Bellevue. If a program that generates money is creating additional violations in the RPZ neighborhoods, it seems reasonable that in that particular scenario the funds from paid parking should help mitigate the problems created.

Commissioner Marciante said that is in fact the problem. If there were to be an increased number of violations in an RPZ at the same time a paid parking program is initiated, there would not be a way of knowing the two are related in any way. Conclusions should not be jumped to absent facts. If the concern is that RPZ permit fees will go up, the city should look for ways to assure that will not happen.

A motion to include a separate bullet under the strategies and implementation actions on Page A-15 as proposed by Commissioner Ting was made by Commissioner Magill. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rebhuhn. The motion failed 3-4, with Commissioners Ting, Magill and Rebhuhn voting for, and Chair Stash and Commissioners Marciante, Kurz and Helland voting against.

Turning to the second proposal, Commissioner Ting said it was related to a graph shown to the Commission in February that needs more clarification. As originally written, it sounds like more Bellevue workers take active modes like carpool and public transit than drive personal vehicles, which is not the case. The statistics actually refer to Bellevue workers in poverty compared to all workers in Bellevue where the facts show there is a higher percentage of workers in poverty that commute via carpooling, public transit and walking than drive personal

vehicles. It should be clearly stated what the numbers on the chart represent.

A motion to amend the Curb Management Plan using the proposed text to clarify the statistics was made by Commissioner Ting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Marciante.

Commissioner Ting said the motivation for the proposal was to be precise and clear about what the statistics mean and to avoid misinterpretations.

Chris Iverson stated that based on the statistics as a sheer number of individuals that commute, the statement of Commissioner Ting is correct. The majority of individuals commute via automobile.

Chair Stash voiced support for the proposed motion. Commissioner Marciante concurred and said the clarification was helpful.

The motion to amend carried unanimously.

Returning to the main motion to adopt the Curb Management Plan, as amended, carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the transmittal letter was made by Commissioner Rebhuhn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kurz.

Commissioner Marciante suggested the wording of the letter was a little too enthusiastic. The reference in the first paragraph to transforming the way Bellevue approaches curb management is completely accurate. Much has been learned, much has been documented, and there are good recommendations, but nothing is being transformed. It would be better to say “to inform” the way Bellevue approaches curb management.

A motion to change “transform” to “inform” in the first paragraph of the transmittal letter was made by Commissioner Marciante. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Magill.

Chair Stash suggested it would be better to use the word “advance” in place of “inform.”

Commissioner Marciante withdrew her amendment.

A motion to change “transform” to “advance” in the first paragraph was made by Chair Stash. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Helland and the motion carried unanimously.

Referring to the first sentence of the first paragraph following the second bullet on the second page of the transmittal letter, Commissioner Marciante asked if the direction of the Council was actually to refresh the city’s curb management approaches. Chris Iverson said the Council directed the Commission to develop a Curb Management Plan.

A motion to delete from the first sentence “to refresh the city’s curb management approaches” was made by Commissioner Marciante. The motion was seconded by Chair Stash and the motion carried unanimously.

The motion to approve the transmittal letter, as amended, carried unanimously.

B. Bike Bellevue

Mobility Planning and Solutions Manager Franz Loewenherz noted that during the May 11 discussion there was a recollection on the part of some Commissioners who engaged in the Main Street bike lane implementation work in 2019 about the polarizing nature of repurposing travel lanes and the Commission's role in that context. With regard to Bike Bellevue, the City Council clearly directed the Commission to serve in an advisory role to the transportation director who has the authority to direct staff in the implementation of the program after considering the recommendations of the Commission. In the context of the Commission's advisory role, the Commission was directed by the Council to consider the technical analysis work to be conducted, as well as community input. The decision to repurpose travel lanes on existing streets to achieve bicycle performance targets in the Mobility Implementation Plan rests with the transportation director.

Vice Chair Helland recalled the Commission's discussion was less in regard to who has the authority and more related to whether or not it was a foregone conclusion that decisions to sacrifice travel lanes had already been made. Franz Loewenherz said the intent of the process is to consider the eleven candidate corridors on the map included in the packet, to review the detailed technical analysis and the outreach process, and then to make recommendations to the transportation director. The Council set aside \$4.5 million in the last CIP for the purpose of planning, design and implementation. Implicit in the funding allocation is the notion that something will be implemented following the process. Every line on the map involves a repurposing of travel lanes.

Commissioner Marciante commented that under the Bicycle Rapid Implementation Program the intent was to bring bicycle projects online quickly by effecting minimal changes to existing infrastructure. Travel lanes usually offer the easiest pathway to new bicycle facilities.

Commissioner Ting asked if it could be made clear to Bellevue residents that they need to share their feedback directly with the Council rather than the Commission about Bike Bellevue given the Commission's role. Chair Stash suggested that sentiment could be made part of the public engagement plan.

Commissioner Marciante stressed that the public is always welcome to share feedback with the Commission. The Commission can then pass along those viewpoints. Commissioner Ting said the transportation director will act at the direction of the Council, which means the Council will be the ultimate decision maker, which is why the public should communicate directly with the Council.

Commissioner Rebhuhn observed from the map that some of the green sections do not connect to the existing bicycle network and asked what the plan is for cyclists when they encounter those areas. Franz Loewenherz said the guidance in the CIP is for on-street bicycle facility improvements. For the specific segment referred to, the thinking is that a connection will involve a more robust multipurpose path linking to the Main Street bridge multipurpose path recently implemented on the south side of the street by the Washington State Department of Transportation. That is beyond the scope of the project. Potential solutions for achieving on-street bicycle facilities on the north side are being considered on Main Street on the portion proximate to 116th Avenue.

Commissioner Marciante expressed the understanding that the Bike Bellevue program is not intended to close all gaps or solve all problems, rather it is focused on identifying opportunities where on-street bicycle lanes can be implemented with minimal capital. Franz Loewenherz

agreed, except to note that in aggregate the Bike Bellevue projects exceed \$20 million.

Turning to engagement outcomes, Franz Loewenherz said Attachment 1 lays out sequentially the process of soliciting community input. The two main desired outcomes are feedback on the concept designs, and prioritization of the projects. The Council approved the principles and provided guidance in March. Since then the focus has been on raising project awareness by doorbelling businesses along the corridors and handing out flyers. Presentations have been made to various groups, including the Bellevue Youth Link Board and the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce. Beginning in July, the design engagement process will kick off. The Concept Guide that is currently being developed will be released as a document and shared with the Commission. One way input on the concept designs will be solicited will be via posting the design details sheet by sheet. The public will be able to review them, put in pins and add comments, and the staff will compile the input and review the extent to which they align with the Council principles. Workshops will also be held during the engagement phase. The design refinement phase will follow, with the refinements based on input from the public and the Commission. The rationale for all of the refinements will be documented. An in-person open house is slated to occur on December 6 at City Hall. Mailed notice will be sent to every household in the geography. Notice will also be made via social media and on Engaging Bellevue.

Given that the projects in the package total some \$20 million for which \$4.5 million has been allocated, the city will be looking to prioritize the projects. Staff is also pursuing grant opportunities to make up the difference.

Commissioner Marciante praised the staff for meeting with Bellevue Youth Link and suggested being purposeful about reaching out to high schools and elementary schools about the program, encouraging them to provide input. The city should also seek to directly reach out to the low-income population through its equity partners that might not own or frequently commute via cars; it would be good to gain their input regarding their needs.

Commissioner Kurz suggested there likely are people who are regular bike riders who are not part of any organized groups. Ways should be sought to reach out to them.

Franz Loewenherz said one strategy for reaching cyclists is through companies and work sites. Microsoft, for instance, has a robust work group and internal list to which communications can be circulated. Flyers were distributed on Bike Everywhere Day. With regard to the school district, the city is just concluding the road safety assessment work with them and has a strong relationship with school district leadership to communicate engagement opportunities.

Commissioner Ting asked about reaching out to neighborhood groups to solicit opinions. Franz Loewenherz said staff will be using social media, including NextDoor. Articles have already been posted in *Neighborhood News* and *It's Your City* and there will be more during the project. Concerted effort will be put into reaching out to the neighborhoods. Commissioner Ting suggested posting information on NextDoor rather than just notices about meetings.

Commissioner Magill proposed posting information, possibly in the form of a QR code to scan for more information, along the bike routes. There is nothing like being in the place and seeing signs about what might potentially happen. Franz Loewenherz said that certainly could be done as part of the engagement plan.

Senior ITS Engineer Jay Backman said the ITS group has a dashboard that tracks where

bicyclists are seen the most. Some of that information could be used to seek additional information directly from those using the facilities.

Chair Stash proposed posting information in bike stores and in bakeries. With regard to prioritizing projects, it would make sense to rely on available safety data.

There was agreement among the Commissioners regarding the engagement plan with the suggested additions.

Turning to the Bike Bellevue project timeline, Franz Loewenherz stressed that July 13 will be an important meeting. That is when the Concept Guide will be shared with the Commission. It will be rich with information. There will be study sessions with the Commission in September, October and November, then again in January and February of 2024.

Franz Loewenherz said the Bike Bellevue design Concept Guide will include all the designs and visualizations along with robust multimodal travel demand modeling assessments; an accessibility analysis; level of traffic stress analyses; major development projects considerations; greenhouse gas assessments; and an equity analysis.

Commissioner Marciante asked if there will be any environmental considerations beyond greenhouse gases emissions. Franz Loewenherz said there will be a SEPA review of the entire Bike Bellevue effort. Given that the program will also be part of the city's USDOT grant application, there will also be a NEPA kickoff meeting in the latter part of June so that project readiness can be demonstrated in the federal grant application.

Commissioner Ting allowed that Bike Bellevue builds on the existing Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan and asked if it should be viewed as a new master plan that encompasses the overall direction of biking in Bellevue. Franz Loewenherz said Bike Bellevue is only focused on Downtown, Wilburton and BelRed, and only looks at on-street projects.

Chair Stash asked if there is one place to look for information on all the different activities. Franz Loewenherz said the Mobility Implementation Plan is the go-to document. Kevin McDonald added that the MIP describes the intended LTS network but it does not assign a project description to the network. The Bike Bellevue work seeks to fill in some of the information gaps for how to proceed from the vision of the bicycle system to actual implementation. With respect to ongoing private-sector or public-sector construction projects, there is no separate overlay.

Commissioner Ting asked if there will be guidance or priorities in the plan to help understand which routes should be built out first because they will get used more frequently. Franz Loewenherz said that topic will be picked up going forward. Criteria to inform the process will be brought to the Commission for input, and there will be conversations with the community as well.

Commissioner Kurz suggested that when seeking community support for projects, it might be good to emphasize the LTS analysis and how it is really all about safety. Franz Loewenherz agreed, adding that recent research on crash modification factors speaks to the degree to which implementation of a given safety solution might save lives. On higher speed arterials, separated bike lanes can result in a 50 percent reduction in fatalities. Bike Bellevue aligns with the city's safe system approach to Vision Zero.

Commissioner Magill suggested that part of helping people understand the benefits of the program will be stressing the impacts on the overall traffic system. It should be clear there is no focus on favoring one mode of transportation over another, rather the focus is finding the right balance.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Commissioners Remote Participation for June 8

There was agreement to approve remote participation by Vice Chair Helland and Commissioners Magill and Ting.

A motion to extend the meeting by five minutes was made by Chair Stash. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Marciante and the motion carried unanimously.

11. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Alex Tsimerman began with a Nazi salute and listening to the Commission's BS brings to mind a question of whether the Commissioners are super smart or stupid idiots. The latter is likely the case. The question asked was if it is legal to call the Commissioners Nazi pigs. All the Commission's decisions for the last ten years have been absolutely absurd and are leading to Bellevue's total collapse. By definition the Commissioners are acting like Nazi pigs because they are so stupid. Nothing will get better.

Brin Lee suggested that NE 2nd Street where it intersects 108th Avenue NE is a good place to speak to bikers passing through that area. The segment of 114th Avenue SE that runs by I-405 should not be considered part of the current network because most of it is only a sharrow and is not very safe.

12. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

A. Upcoming Agenda Items

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

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Stash adjourned the meeting at 9:04 p.m.



7/13/23

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date