

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

April 15, 2019
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Chelminiak, Deputy Mayor Robinson, and Councilmembers Lee, Nieuwenhuis, Robertson, Stokes, and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Mayor Chelminiak called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 30 minutes to discuss one quasi-judicial matter.

The meeting resumed at 6:32 p.m., with Mayor Chelminiak presiding.

2. Study Session Items

(a) Transportation Capital Investment Program (CIP) Update

City Manager Brad Miyake recalled that the Council adopted a robust capital program for transportation projects as part of the previous year's budget process.

Ron Kessack, Assistant Director of Transportation, said the Capital Investment Program (CIP) reflects the community's support and need for transportation projects, which represent 40 percent (\$278 million) of the CIP Plan. Of that, \$209 million is provided for discrete and ongoing new build projects, and \$69 million is provided for ongoing maintenance programs.

Mr. Kessack described the Transportation CIP revenue sources, which includes 46 percent from major taxes (e.g., sales, business and occupation, real estate excise tax, and motor vehicle fuel tax), 22 percent from the federal TIFIA (Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act) loan, 20 percent from the neighborhood transportation levy, and the remainder from grants and other resources. Approximately \$4 million in impact fees go directly to transportation projects, and \$26 million is budgeted to pay debt service for the 2013-2015 bonds.

The major projects funded in the Transportation CIP include the SE Newport Way (Somerset Boulevard to 150th Avenue SE), West Lake Sammamish Parkway Phase 2, 120th Avenue NE Stage 4 (Spring Boulevard to Northup Way), Spring Boulevard Zone 4 (130th Avenue NE to 132nd Avenue NE), Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail, West Lake Sammamish Parkway Phase 3, and the Bellevue Way SE HOV lane.

Mr. Kessack said the SE Newport Way project has reached 100 percent design, and staff is working on the property acquisitions needed to build the project. The West Lake Sammamish Parkway Phase 2 project is nearing 100 percent design completion, and right-of-way acquisition is underway. Construction will begin this year with the utilities work.

The Spring Boulevard Zone 4 project was split into two projects, with the eastbound lanes funded through the TIFIA loan and the westbound lanes funded by the City. The Mountains to Sound Greenway has reached 100 percent design and the City recently entered into a trail lease agreement with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The project also widens the off-ramp at Factoria Boulevard.

Mr. Kessack recalled that the Bellevue Way SE HOV lane project reached 30 percent design last year, at which time the project was set aside with the plan to bring it back later in the seven-year CIP Plan to identify additional funding. He said the time provides the opportunity for staff to pursue grants and funding partners. He noted that design work for the West Lake Sammamish Parkway Phase 3 project will begin in 2023.

The Transportation CIP will continue to fund a number of TIFIA loan match projects in the BelRed Corridor. The TIFIA program required the City to provide a 67 percent match to the loan funds. Completed projects include NE 4th Street (116th Avenue NE to 120th Avenue NE), 120th Avenue NE Phases 1 through 3, and Spring Boulevard Zone 1. Mr. Kessack noted that a number of the TIFIA-match projects are joint projects with Sound Transit.

Mr. Kessack said 13 projects were completed through the neighborhood transportation levy by the end of 2018, and an additional 26 projects will be in construction through 2020. He said the City is just starting work on the 150th Avenue SE and SE Newport Way congestion management project. A rockery project will be completed on the other side of the street as well.

Mr. Kessack highlighted a comparison of the original bid amounts versus actual costs for a number of transportation projects. He noted that the Wilburton area sidewalk was the only project that exceeded the 10-percent contingency funding level, and that was due to a higher cost for asphalt. He said steel prices are rising due to tariffs, and the increase in oil prices affects the cost of asphalt. With the high level of construction activity in the area, concrete prices are a concern as well, especially for smaller projects. It can be difficult to find contractors who are willing to do small concrete jobs. Mr. Kessack said the City is combining smaller projects where possible to be able to buy a larger quantity of concrete.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, the liaison to the Transportation Commission, Mr. Kessack said staff feel good if bid amounts fall in the middle of the other bids. He said the City does not

dictate how a contractor should build a project because that typically increases the project cost. Mr. Kessack said staff work hard with contractors to find ways to save money, and incentives for early completion are offered where appropriate.

Councilmember Zahn said she is pleased to see the steady progress on the Mountains to Sound Greenway connection through Bellevue. She recalled that she was on the Transportation Commission when the Bellevue Way SE HOV lane project was discussed. She said staff worked hard in the public meeting to present the options as well as their costs and tradeoffs. Mr. Kessack said staff will bring more details on the HOV lane project back to the Council as the design phase moves forward.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Mr. Kessack said the Council provided approximately \$700,000 in the last budget for continuing the installation of LED street lights. He said he would follow up with more information.

In further response to Ms. Zahn, Mr. Kessack said the City is receiving a good number of competitive bids for jobs. He confirmed that certain projects receiving state and federal dollars have requirements for hiring minority-owned businesses.

Councilmember Robertson commended the City's significant progress on transportation projects through the neighborhood transportation levy and the federal TIFIA loan. She said City staff do an excellent job of managing projects and working with contractors. She looks forward to the completion of the Newport Way project, the next phase of the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project, and the Mountains to Sound Greenway link. For the latter project, she appreciates that it also adds lane capacity on the off-ramp to Richards Road.

Ms. Robertson said she would like to schedule a study session discussion regarding the I-405 Master Plan.

Ms. Robertson noted that the City has initiated a number of bike lane projects. She said she understands that the Transportation Commission recently discussed bike projects. She said the bike lane on Main Street is experiencing reduced traffic throughput at Bellevue Way. When the 108th Avenue NE bike pilot program reaches its scheduled end date of July 31, Councilmember Robertson said she would like an update on bike lanes and their impact on vehicle traffic.

Councilmember Stokes said that many transportation projects are related to Sound Transit's East Link light rail project through Bellevue. He said the neighborhood transportation levy projects are a significant benefit for the community. Noting that he previously served as the chair of the Eastside Transportation Partnership (ETP), Mr. Stokes commended Bellevue's regional leadership in transportation planning and innovation. Mr. Kessack said staff is working to develop the Council's vision for the community. He said the City has been able to implement a bold vision under the Council's direction and support.

Deputy Mayor Robinson thanked staff for doing such a great job with the neighborhood transportation levy funding. She said she likes the signs posted at projects to remind the public of the use of the levy funds. She commended Mr. Kessack and staff on the number of projects that

have been completed below budget. Responding to Deputy Mayor Robinson, Mr. Kessack said he would check with the contractor about the possibility of publishing the schedule for street overlays.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for their hard work. Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Kessack said that many transportation projects require two summer construction seasons to be completed. The Newport Way project is anticipated to be completed within one summer season after the property acquisitions are finalized. However, it might be necessary to defer the final street overlay to the following summer. Mr. Nieuwenhuis requested that future presentations include information regarding the anticipated completion dates for projects.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Mr. Kessack said there will be tree impacts with the Newport Way project. He said the City always plant more trees and vegetation than what was removed. Mr. Kessack said the 124th Avenue, TIFIA-funded projects in the BelRed Corridor will plant street trees and improve the natural drainage practices by adding vegetation.

In further response, Mr. Kessack said that contractors, including smaller companies, like to work with the City because the bid documents are clear and predictable, and the jobs typically provide a good profit. Mr. Nieuwenhuis opined that the City's staff and their ability to work well with contractors play an important role as well. Mr. Kessack said the City always treats contractors fairly and works with many of them on a recurring basis, which builds trust. He noted that the City's inspectors work well with the contractor community as well.

Responding to Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Kessack said the Bellevue Way SE HOV lane project covers the section between the Winters House and the South Bellevue Station/Park and Ride.

Following up on Councilmember Nieuwenhuis's comments, Mr. Chelminiak opined that contractors like working in Bellevue because City staff has strong experience with frequent transportation projects, both large and small.

Mayor Chelminiak noted that approximately 18 miles of bike lanes were completed last year. Mr. Kessack said the City is adding a similar number of miles this year. Mr. Chelminiak said he would like more information regarding the Main Street/Bellevue Way intersection, including the impact of the bike lanes and the intersection's level of service. He suggested that the congestion is related more to the rechannelization of Main Street on the west end. Mr. Chelminiak said he likes the neighborhood transportation levy signs at project sites.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Kessack said that surplus dollars for projects funded through a program are reused within that program (e.g., neighborhood sidewalk program). When savings are realized for a specific capital project, surplus funds are allocated to another specific project.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. Kessack said the design of smaller projects tends to be done in-house. However, larger projects are typically put out for bid, especially if special

expertise is required (e.g., structural engineering, geotechnical engineering). Ms. Zahn said she appreciates staff's work with the community.

In further response to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. Kessack said staff can provide a summary report showing the project list as well as the project costs and schedules. Mayor Chelminiak noted that extensive information on projects is also available on the City's website.

Responding to Councilmember Stokes, Mr. Kessack suggested providing a summary report depicting the dollar amounts saved for projects as well as the disposition of the surplus funds to a program, another project, or the neighborhood transportation levy package.

Mayor Chelminiak said staff sends quarterly CIP updates to the Council.

Noting that he attended the Mountains to Sound Greenway annual breakfast, Mr. Chelminiak expressed strong support for the trail, which extends from Puget Sound to Cle Elum. He is pleased that Bellevue will provide a new connection along the route.

Responding to Councilmember Zahn, Mr. Kessack said the City will conduct outreach to educate the public when the new roundabout intersections, which can carry higher traffic volumes, are built.

At 7:47 p.m., Mayor Chelminiak declared recess to the Regular Session.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC
City Clerk

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