

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

July 8, 2021
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Marciante, Commissioners Beason, Kurz, Rebhuhn, Ting

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Stash

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Andrew Singelakis, Eric Miller, Michael Ingram, Kristi Oosterveen, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Breiland, Ariel Davis, 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 Chair Marciante who presided.

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Stash who was excused.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Candice Boyd, 5500 132nd Avenue NE, spoke representing the Bridle Trails Park Foundation, an organization that was formed in 2003 by Saddle Club members who entered into a 40-year agreement in partnership with the state. The Foundation covers half of the annual net operating costs of Bridle Trails State Park in exchange for the assurance that it will remain open to the public. She noted that both 132nd Avenue NE and 134th Avenue NE impact the park, particularly in light of the fact that park trails cross 132nd Avenue NE. Recently there have been quite a few incidents, including near misses and some injuries. The unique equestrian community is seeing more families with young children who ride horses and cross 132nd Avenue NE. She said there is currently a pedestrian sign marking the crossing, but the Foundation would like to see more signage to caution drivers that horses use the crossing as well as pedestrians. There is a lot of development in Kirkland and Redmond that are also impacting the corridor. The Foundation wants to work with the city in developing short- and long-term solutions and in considering public/non-profit funding as well as grants and matching funds from the community.

Ms. Dana Capella, 5652 132nd Avenue NE, said she serves as a member of the Bridle Trails Community Club advisory board. She said the club represents 13,000 residents in Bridle Trails and noted that she also represents the Overlake Horse Farm. Bridle Trails offers a safe riding

environment for people all over Western Washington. Many trails link to Bridle Trails and cross over 132nd Avenue NE, including the Bridle Crest Trail which links to Redmond, and the Sunshine Trail that links properties down on 140th Avenue NE. In 1991 a horse was hit and killed by a car on 132nd Avenue NE, and in August 2020 there was a hit and run incident at the intersection of NE 60th Street and 132nd Avenue NE, which links Bridle Crest Trail to Bridle Trails. She said in the winter of 2020 two of her friends were injured and dumped onto the road by speeding cars and impatient bikers, none of whom stopped. She said because of the nearly weekly encounters with the 132nd Avenue NE crossing she contacted the city's transportation department and met with staff in early April. The discussion involved speed ropes, radar signs, equestrian activated flashing lights and other facilities to improve awareness of the fact that horses cross the roadway. There are flashing lights in place along the Bridle Crest Trail linking to Redmond. She said she requested that as decisions were made, the equestrian community should be involved, but in May she received notice that new signs had been finalized, all without input from the equestrian community. She said she asked for a copy of the proposal and waited five weeks to receive it. Instead of providing better signage, the proposal actually takes away horse signage at the S curves and replaces them with pedestrian signs. For bike trails there are bike signs; for dog parks there are dog signs; but for situations where horses cross roadways there should be horse signs. The city's multimodal plans are based on providing safe and accessible street environments for all users to improve neighborhood livability and to provide safe access to parks. Compatibility with Kirkland, Redmond and King County signs is also important. Better horse signage and flashing lights are needed to caution traffic to be respectful when horses are crossing.

Mr. Andrew Pardoe, 10915 SE 1st Street, referenced the mobility report and noted that it states that traffic volumes are well under the capacity for all of the city's Mobility Management Areas. The fact is Bellevue is growing fast. Amazon has leased space for 25,000 employees in the city. Facebook has leased 1.6 million square feet of office space, sufficient to house 10,000 employees. Many of the smaller companies in Bellevue are growing as well and adding employees. Once all the new towers are finished and full of people, traffic volumes will increase. It is good news that there are currently no problems with automobile congestion currently, and it is even better news that not everyone wants to drive to work. Many would be happy to get out of their cars should the city make it possible. Fifty thousand more commuters does not necessarily mean 50,000 more cars. Amazon is all in on multimodal commuting and they are offering \$170 per month to employees who bike to work. Amazon also requested a code departure for its tower across from the transit center to allow them to build 36 percent fewer traffic stalls than the minimum. The companies that represent the future of Bellevue are all in on alternatives to car commuting. People also want alternatives. In 2020, two e-bikes were sold for every electric car sold, and e-bikes do not get government subsidies or tax credits. The bad news covered by the staff report is that it is hard to get around the city without a car. Only 25 percent of the pedestrian network meets the city goals, and only about half of the bicycle infrastructure meets the stress targets. Most of the neighborhood transit connections run at an average of 15 miles per hour or less. Bellevue is built for cars. Few walk, and those who chose to ride their bikes take their lives in their own hands. The city needs to do more, just as companies are doing more.

Ms. Jennifer Duncan, 13219 NE 75th Street, Redmond, spoke representing the Lake Washington Saddle Club. She said the Club has been a steward of Bridle Trails State Park and has been involved the equestrian community around Bridle Trails, for over 75 years. The Club actually helped to establish Bridle Trails as a state park. The population growth has increased concerns over equestrian safety around the neighborhood, and 132nd Avenue NE is a prime example of the real need for some improvements. Horses have metal horseshoes which act like

ice skates on asphalt, making crossing a street precarious. Anything can spook a horse that is crossing a road, which can make things dicey. The goal of riders is to get into the park as quickly as possible. There are signs posted announcing the horse crossing, but the latest proposal from the staff will take away some of the horse signs and replace them with pedestrian signs. Federal standards call for using livestock signs wherever livestock cross roadways. The existing equestrian signage should be retained, and ways should be sought to make things even safer. The Bridle Trails Saddle Club is a non-profit, as is the Bridle Trails Park Foundation. Both can receive grants and donations that can be used to help funding safer crossings into the park.

Ms. Jami Wallace, 5211 134th Place NE, emphasized the need for equestrian signage. She said she and her sister have horses and cross the roadway to get to the park almost every day and have often experienced near misses. She noted that there is a car dealership on NE 20th Street that features famous racing cars; buyers often use 132nd Avenue NE for their test drives. She offered the Commissioners the opportunity to experience riding horses in the area to see firsthand what the issues are. Bridle Trails State Park is a unique feature and those who live nearby are very lucky to have it. Families who have lived in the area for years are now introducing their children to horse riding to continue the tradition. The proposed removal of horse signage is dangerous.

Ms. Patricia Allen, 13315 NE 61st Street, Kirkland, said the issues facing 132nd Avenue NE are all about safety. The roadway is very straight and travels through a tunnel of trees and foliage and it is often so dark the automatic headlights in some cars come on. Signs are absolutely needed given that there are no flashing lights or radar signs. The two crossings, which are painted white, are not really seen by drivers until they are on top of them. Many drive at speeds of up to 50 miles per hour. On NE 60th Street, the posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour and at frequent intervals the speed limit is painted on the roadway itself. The same should be considered for 132nd Avenue NE along with a lowering of the speed limit and the installation of flashing lights. Signs are designed to command attention, but they fail in reaching that goal if it is too dark to see them, thus lights are needed. Signs need to be posted so as to give adequate time for a proper response by drivers. People coming into the area from places outside of the United States do not have an equestrian culture and do not know they might encounter horses on the roadway, but if there were a sign they would be alerted. The issue is safety for everyone.

Ms. Michelle Wannamaker, 4045 149th Avenue SE, said she was surprised by the Mobility Implementation Plan existing conditions map of the vehicle corridor travel speeds performance. Two of the corridors showed very different results from those found in the 2019 Eastgate Transportation Study. The study, done by Fehr & Peers along with Concord Engineering, used the same standards and guidelines from the 2017 MMLOS report and the same 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. peak period. The map in the meeting materials is almost all green, but the Eastgate study shows Richards Road and Factoria Boulevard SE in red, and the 148th Avenue SE to 150th Avenue SE is shown in orange. Both corridors are significant, and the differences shown makes one question the validity of all the other vehicle corridor LOS data in the meeting materials. Additionally, staff has taken the liberty of updating the recommended bicycle corridor LTS compared to the map in the MMLOS report. The changes include the addition of bike lanes where none were intended by the Commission, and an increase in the LTS on some lanes. LTS-1 is defined as suitable for most children and adults to feel comfortable and safe riding, and for some of the changes increased bicycle corridors to that level. The Commission recognized that not every bicycle corridor is suitable to be LTS-1. Local residents know their neighborhoods better than the staff do. The Commissioners were

able to bring knowledge to the table that enabled them to identify what was and was not an appropriate LTS for specific corridors, and the Commissioners worked to find a balance for all modes of transportation. Some modes cannot and should not use certain corridors, and some corridor conditions include geographies that prevent them from having the very best LOS. When staff is allowed to make changes and add bike lanes at will, the balance and thoroughness of the dedicated and diverse Transportation Commission is circumvented. She questioned what happened to the notion of having just two east-west and two north-south bicycle corridors in the city.

Mr. Bruce Boyd, 5500 132nd Avenue NE, said he lives across from the park. He told the Commissioners they would not be able to find a more enthusiastic, compassionate and caring group of people than the Bridle Trails community when it comes to working with animals and with school children throughout the year showing them the importance of the environment and parks in general, and how to care for and understand animals. It is unique for any metropolitan area to have a 500-acre horse park where individuals can walk, ride and enjoy. More people than ever before experienced the park during the pandemic. The north and the south ends of the park have roads that include electronic radar signage on NE 60th Street and NE 24th Street. Part of the master plan proposal for 132nd is to utilize the same approach. That will go a long way toward addressing some of the concerns expressed about safety. The community is working with the city's transportation department and it has been informed that putting in that type of signage and other lighted signs along 132nd Avenue NE will cost approximately \$500,000. The ability to help alleviate those costs exists. The desire is to see the project kicked off as soon as possible and completed by the end of the year.

Chair Marciante asked when the appropriate time would be to address some of the concerns raised by the public. Principal Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald noted the Bridle Trails issue was not on the agenda for discussion and added that it is also not on the agenda for any future study session. He said the Commissioners could offer comments during the comments from boards and commissions. He added that he has been in communication with the appropriate staff throughout the day. The statement offered by the project managers, who are staff in the traffic engineering group, was that they have been in contact with Bridle Trails residents and the affiliated horse aficionados on the topic of improving safety and signing in the area of Bridle Trails State Park on both 132nd Avenue NE and 134th Avenue NE. He said a meeting with the residents is slated for Thursday, July 15, to discuss ideas for enhancements. Just what those enhancements could be are open to conversation within the available resources and consistent with practices and standard. There are horse advisory signs posted at both ends of the corridor approaching from the north and south ends and the intent is to retain them.

Commissioner Ting asked if staff could provide the Commission with an update relative to the most appropriate way for the public to interact with the staff and if there had been a communication breakdown. He said the Commission should also be given an update on the findings of the meeting staff will have with the public.

Chair Marciante commented that while the concerns voiced by the Bridle Trails residents are specific to their neighborhood, they are also relevant to the topics consistently discussed by the Commission. She added that she found online a number of options for horse crossings, including rubber pavement to prevent the shod horses from slipping.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

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

Chair Marciante reported that she and Mr. McDonald recently attended a meeting of the East Bellevue Community Council, which has veto approval over land use decisions in its jurisdiction. She said she and Mr. McDonald provided presentations ahead of the Community Council's courtesy hearing regarding the recommended transportation amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. She said a former chair of the Transportation Commission shared a lot of data as part of the courtesy hearing and made some assertions with which she strongly disagreed, such as the Commission conspiring to create more traffic. The statements caused confusion and some of the Community Council members were swayed to believe that the work the Commission is doing with the Mobility Implementation Plan is causing congestion, and that the Commission is choosing targets that will make things much worse. It was distressing to hear those comments given how hard the Commission has been working to understand the conditions the city will be faced with as growth continues. She said she shared with the Community Council some of the concerns and discussions the Commission has had. As the meeting went on, she said the questions asked of her and Mr. McDonald became rhetorical given that they did not seem to be actually seeking an answer. The opportunity to offer additional clarifications was not offered. The Community Council has not had the opportunity to review all the issues with staff like the Commission has. What was clear was that there remains a lot of confusion on the part of the public, and that there are some who are actively seeding that confusion. The majority of the Community Council members voiced support for the multimodal vision, but they were upset by the mistaken belief that the Commission is somehow doing something that will increase congestion.

Commissioner Beason said she would like to see a summary of the specific concerns voiced at the meeting. Chair Marciante said the Community Council meetings have official minutes, and the request was made to transmit the minutes of the meeting to the Commission.

Commissioner Ting suggested it would be useful for the Commission to address the confusion that is out there regarding MMLOS. He said part of the confusion lies in the fact that the Commission has not clearly defined exactly what that is. It would help the public and the Commission to have a data-driven approach outlining what the Commission is trying to do, what assumptions are being made, and the desired plans and outcomes. That would inform a reasoned debate about the pros and cons of different approaches. The existing data is complex and difficult to digest and something like a white paper would be very helpful. Mr. McDonald said all of the information is in hand. He said the Commission would be presented with much of it during the study session and said it will be foundational for moving forward toward establishing performance targets for each mode.

Chair Marciante said what is needed is a simple outline stating what it is the Commission is doing in creating the Mobility Implementation Plan, which is a new plan for which the Commission is responsible. The website is a good place to start, but the struggle lies in finding the right words to explain the concepts. Ultimately the Mobility Implementation Plan should have an executive summary that lays out the concepts very plainly. Mr. McDonald said he would work with the consultant to develop elevator talking points. If it is not ready for the Commission's July 22 meeting, it certainly will be for the first meeting in September.

Commissioner Ting said he would like to see the document formatted in a Q&A format that states the assumptions the Commission is making, outlines the data, and clearly states the result. It will need to have enough meat on it for those who have experience in the field to be able to analyze the data and come up with good conclusions. If what the Commission is doing is not backed up with good data, the data-focused public will not be convinced.

Mr. McDonald said the session with the East Bellevue Community Council lasted two and a half hours. He said Chair Marciante was right to question the data that was presented by former Transportation Commissioner Vic Bishop. The data he presented, while it appeared to be accurate, was in fact a little bit off topic from the work being done by the Commission. He said staff is in the process of preparing a white paper regarding the data, both to rebut Mr. Bishop's remarks and to outline the data needed for the Mobility Implementation Plan. During their comments, the East Bellevue Community Council members implied that the Commission is rushing through the process with rookie commissioners. While several on the Commission are relatively new, everyone is well grounded and in a good place to make informed recommendations. The current Commission is not the first to have dealt with the topic of multimodal level of service. The conversations in fact began, with different Commissioners, in 2013 and 2014 and they have been building on the foundation that has brought the current Commission to the place of recommending policy language for the Comprehensive Plan. It was those recommended policies that were before the East Bellevue Community Council for a courtesy public hearing.

5. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. McDonald reported that the recruitment process to fill the vacant Commission seat is continuing. Interviews with applicants is slated for July 23. The intent is to have a new Commissioner appointed ahead of the Council's August recess and seated at the first meeting in September.

Mr. McDonald said he had not yet been informed as to when the city's board and commissions would start meeting in person again.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Mobility Implementation Plan Existing Conditions

Mr. McDonald noted that with respect to public involvement there has been a lot taking place. The website has been live since the work began. It accumulates information after each Commission meeting. The most recent editions of both *It's Your City* and *Neighborhood News* contained articles on the Mobility Implementation Plan. Staff are working on a fact sheet to provide foundation and background for the Mobility Implementation Plan; the work is anticipated to be complete in mid-July and will be shared with the Commission as soon as it is available. The community questionnaire is being finalized and will go live on July 26. It will remain live for about three weeks to allow for participation. Summary results from the questionnaire will be shared with the Commission at its September 9 study session. The Planning Commission was provided with an update on June 23, and a public hearing is slated for July 28. In addition to meeting with the East Bellevue Community Council, there have been meetings with the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, and the Bellevue Downtown Association.

Consultant Chris Breiland with Fehr & Peers said the work being done by the outreach team has been exemplary. The team came up with the graphics for the layered network. He said for him the Mobility Implementation Plan elevator pitch focuses on how to provide for a balanced transportation system that can accommodate growth and serve the needs of all who live, work, study, recreate or visit Bellevue in ways that meet the city's equity and environmental goals.

Mr. Breiland said the metrics measure what the city is seeking to be influencing. They are drawn from the MMLOS document and have to do with ped/bike comfort, transit speed and corridor travel speed and travel time. The Mobility Implementation Plan attempts to identify investment priorities to achieve the metrics and targets, which vary by mode. The issues clearly are complicated, and there is no one metric for multimodal transportation system quality.

Continuing, Mr. Breiland said the targets for the pedestrian facilities are related to comfort. With regard to sidewalks, the focus is on the amount of space provided for people to walk. In the denser parts of the city, the intent is to provide more space, an approach that is codified in the Land Use Code and reflected in the MMLOS report. The target being includes the frequently of formal pedestrian crossings on an arterial street, and the metrics are also pulled from the MMLOS report. The existing conditions serve as a systematic evaluation of how the city is doing at implementing the metrics and the level of work yet to be done to achieve the targets. With regard to the pedestrian network, about a quarter of the sidewalks on arterial streets within the densest parts of the city meet the performance targets. The data relative to sidewalk width is not fully in hand yet. Roughly 13 percent of the recommended midblock crossings in activity centers have been completed. Overall, the Downtown area has more of a complete sidewalk system than other parts of the city, largely because of new construction.

There are 17 midblock crossings within the commercial/mixed use Performance Management Areas, which is a subset of the citywide total. Mr. Breiland said arterial crossings have only relatively recently been viewed as something important. The notion that pedestrians can simply cross streets at the intersections is a throwback to an auto-centric perspective. From the perspective of pedestrians, it can be quite a distance between signalized intersections. State and federal guidelines relative to midblock crossings has not been fully flushed out, thus the cities have stepped up to make the determinations. There are roughly 118 potential midblock crossings yet to be constructed, though that number is likely to change as engineering studies are completed.

Answering a question asked by Chair Marciante, Mr. Breiland said there are four variations to the sidewalk and buffer width targets. Downtown and BelRed are as prescribed by the Land Use Code. The other commercial/mixed use Performance Management Areas include Factoria, Eastgate, Crossroads, Wilburton/East Main. The residential Performance Management Areas have a combined 12-foot sidewalk and landscape strip as outlined in the city's design manual.

Chair Marciante asked how often the city will monitor and measure progress towards meeting the targets once they are established. Mr. McDonald explained that monitoring for both sidewalks and bicycle facilities happens annually. The information will feed into the update of the Transportation Facilities Plan. Currently, there are lines on the maps for the sidewalks in residential areas, but the data regarding sidewalk width in those areas is lacking, thus it is not possible to calculate performance levels in that regard.

Commissioner Kurz commented on how difficult it is to determine from the map which lines represent the proposed sidewalks. Mr. Breiland referred to the commercial/mixed use PMAs and said the ultimate desire is for all of the streets to be shown in green on the map to indicate

meeting the Performance Target. What is missing is a benchmark for how long that will take to achieve system completeness. The idea is that all arterial streets should meet the sidewalk width targets, though it is known that cannot be made to happen overnight. He clarified that the map does not show proposed projects. The map is focused on where the targets are met under current conditions. The “proposed sidewalk” indicator on the map legend refers to the sidewalks proposed within BelRed that will be installed as new development occurs.

Commissioner Rebhuhn said it was his understanding that in order to meet the performance target for Factoria, the city would have to expand the sidewalk width and add a planter strip. Mr. Breiland said that would need to be done to meet the standard, and that generally would occur with redevelopment. He clarified that the widening would occur on the development side, not the roadway side.

Commissioner Ting said he liked the idea of building more sidewalks but said what was missing for him was the context behind how much time, how many dollars and how much right-of-way would be needed to meet the goals. If it all can be done rather quickly, the goals should be set higher. If it is all aspirational and will require huge amounts of money and various tradeoffs to achieve, that will need to be made clear before fully understanding if the performance metrics make sense. Mr. Breiland said the aspirational element would be compliance of all of the sidewalks along the arterials throughout with the Performance Targets. He said at the Commission’s next meeting staff will present their best estimates for how much frontage improvement is likely to occur by the 2030 horizon, and how the numbers will change. The Mobility Implementation Plan will help to daylight the tradeoffs that would have to be made to achieve system completeness faster.

Commissioner Ting allowed that to some degree the process is iterative. Whether or not the metrics make sense will to some degree be defined by cost, how soon they can be accomplished, and what the tradeoffs are. He said he personally would like to see as a metric, wider sidewalks. If, for example, the metric could be decreased by ten percent and yield a 50 percent cost reduction, it would be a tradeoff worth discussing. What the metrics should be will ultimately be driven by the identified tradeoffs. It will take more data to determine if the plan is a good one.

Chair Marciante said from her perspective gaps in the sidewalk system is one thing and sidewalk width is another. The aspirational element is sidewalk width. Given that under existing conditions there are 20 miles of gaps, without even counting the residential streets, it feels like addressing the gaps should be given priority. For existing sidewalks, the focus should be on whether or not they are accessible and safe and meet the requirements of those using it. An 11-foot sidewalk where the standard is 12 feet is much more acceptable than a two-foot sidewalk where the standard is eight feet. She said she would be interested in filling the gaps be one target and achieving the intended widths as a separate target.

Commissioner Ting said utilization is a critical element. He asked if it would be more important to have a minimally complete network with a slightly lower standard that could be incrementally widened, or to go out and build wider sidewalks in an approach that may be more efficient from a money perspective. In prioritizing projects, completeness should be considered, but that should be balanced against how to get the best utilization to help take the stress off of the other modes. In that vein, one tradeoff might be to focus on closing the gaps rather than on achieving the intended sidewalk width.

Chair Marciante added that simply putting sidewalks on every street will not necessarily

increase utilization. Some sidewalks, regardless of how wide they are, will never be a pedestrian priority. In terms of achieving high utilization, sidewalks will need to connect to destinations like schools and transit.

Chair Marciante asked if the data is in hand that differentiates those streets that have no sidewalks at all, leaving pedestrians no alternative to walking in the street, versus those streets that have sidewalks on only one side. Mr. Breiland said the city has that data. The prioritization exercise will include where high utilization is most likely and where the needs are the highest.

Chair Marciante asked if it would be fair to say at the end of the process all the gaps projects would be included in the Transportation Improvement Program, but only certain gap projects would rise to the level of the Transportation Facilities Plan. Mr. McDonald said the TFP is the place where prioritization decisions are made. The performance targets will help to identify the higher priority locations. The project inventory in the Transportation Improvement Program is carried into the TFP process where the prioritization lens is applied.

Mr. McDonald pointed out that the performance target dimensions for both the Downtown and BelRed sidewalks are set in the Land Use Code. These were adopted by the City Council after a very extensive public involvement process. The Downtown dimensions were adopted in 2019 and the BelRed dimensions in 2008. The Council has directed a look-back at the BelRed code and the intent is to review both the land use and transportation standards and develop a recommendation either to retain them or modify them. He suggested not taking on either of those on at the current time.

Mr. McDonald said that filling the gaps in the sidewalk system is likely yield the biggest bang for the buck. He said meeting the targets is not completely dependent on city money. Many of the new sidewalks in the commercial PMAs are being built by the private sector as conditions of development approval. Where city money comes into the picture are along arterial streets that are not likely to develop in the near future and where the community has expressed an interest in having a facility.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked to what degree all of the current and projected development will change the existing conditions numbers. Mr. Breiland said the staff are working to help provide that answer, hopefully at the July 22 meeting.

Commissioner Kurz said he was not clear on whether the Commission's work includes a way to prioritize where two modes conflict or compete. Mr. Breiland said development of the Mobility Implementation Plan will address that in terms of identifying the tradeoffs. The exercise to determine how much of the system is complete has not been done. The work will help provide answers for how to prioritize between the modes.

Chair Marciante suggested that if the data concerning sidewalk width for the arterials in residential areas is lacking, the Commission should not commit to setting performance metrics. That could mean that there will only be gap targets for non-residential areas. Mr. Breiland said one approach would be to focus on partial gaps, where there are sidewalks on only one side of a street, full gaps, where there are no pedestrian facilities at all, and a facility. He said the city has that data for all arterials citywide but not for local residential streets as this is not in the scope of our work. That would simplify things and would put the focus on the gaps.

Chair Marciante asked if there has been any instance in which the city has determined that an improvement should be made at city expense to an existing sidewalk. Mr. McDonald said he

has been managing the sidewalk program for 20 years and has not spent program resources to improve deficient conditions. The funds all go to filling in gaps. However, the CIP program that focuses on major arterial projects may upgrade deficiencies. When building a new street or renovating/expanding an arterial, the sidewalks will be built to meet the standard. Areas that are deficient in terms of Americans With Disabilities Act access will be upgraded.

Commissioner Rebhuhn voiced support for moving toward a gap performance metric and leaving the performance target separate. He said there is near his home a street that has a big sidewalk gap. The street is very busy but there is no sidewalk, though there is a significant shoulder. He said he also agreed with the comment of Commissioner Ting about spending to fill gaps before spending to bring existing sidewalks up to the performance target.

Chair Marciante said she did not believe the city would ever undertake to build a sidewalk that does not meet the performance target. Mr. McDonald pointed out that there are always exceptions, such as when there are property, environmental or financial constraints. Such decisions, however, are made at the project level, not at the program level.

Commissioner Ting agreed with the city's current focus on prioritizing gaps when looking at the sidewalks budget. He reiterated his desire to see prioritization efforts focused first on filling in gaps in those areas where they will be used the most.

Commissioner Kurz concurred with that and suggested the sidewalks with the highest utilization likely are those that serve schools.

Commissioner Beason agreed that addressing the gaps is critical. The easier and more efficient the city can make it for people to get around, the better.

Turning to existing bicycle conditions, Mr. Breiland said the metric is level of traffic stress, which is defined by the characteristics of a roadway by bicycle facilities. He noted that the city has a citywide evaluation for the bicycle corridors that have been defined through the MMLOS work from 2017. The evaluation sought to determine if facilities meet the level of traffic stress performance targets as defined for each of the corridors. About 53 percent of the system was identified as fully meeting the targets. In some areas there are existing facilities that do not meet the level of traffic stress, representing about 23 percent of the overall system. Twenty-four percent of the planned system lacks bicycle facilities. Specific to the priority bicycle corridors, the determination was made that the Enatai-Northtowne corridor is almost complete with only a small segment missing. Overall, there are 65 miles of bicycle facilities completed in the corridors, which is about 63 percent of the total. He shared with the Commissioners a map showing the planned future conditions.

Commissioner Ting asked what changes were made in terms of the north-south and east-west bicycle corridors. Mr. Breiland said the MMLOS document was based on the best practice and the resources that were available at the time the document was drafted. No corridor-by-corridor review was made of available rights-of-way, or of the likelihood of redevelopment providing additional rights-of-way. The projects currently in the TFP were not available. All of the information was reviewed in terms of what is likely to be built. By way of example, he noted that Lake Washington Boulevard to the west of Downtown was originally identified as an LTS-2 corridor, which would require a buffered bike lane. The ability for the city to purchase the necessary right-of-way and to rebuild all the driveways along the corridor seemed unlikely, so the corridor performance target was changed from LTS-2 to LTS-3. On the other hand, for the 156th Avenue NE between NE 20th Street and the Redmond city limits, Redmond is

currently building a multipurpose path on the east side of the roadway to the Bellevue city limit. Bellevue staff have identified that the bicycle facility could be continued to NE 20th Street, so the change was made to upgrade the facility from LTS-2 to LTS-1. Every bicycle corridor was reviewed in detail and the associated LTS designation for each was revised based on conditions on the ground and current knowledge of the city's plans and those of the regional partners.

Commissioner Ting asked if the corridors are considered in terms of specific usages, such as commuting or recreation. He asked how the determination is made that a network is minimally completed. Mr. McDonald said the rationale is based on the 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan, which was created in conjunction with robust public involvement. With respect to completion of a corridor, the metric involves infrastructure and whether or not it meets the target. The determination is made independent of the number of users and for what purpose. The number of users and the purposes for which people use the facilities depends on such factors as the time of day, the day of the week and the weather.

Commissioner Ting said one of the criticisms regarding the development of bicycle facilities is that their utilization has been low. One clear answer to that is that the network is not complete. He asked what a minimally complete network would look like, something that could be built out in the near future that would be able to demonstrate that a network will be useful for a large number of Bellevue residents and workers. Mr. Breiland said the city of Fort Collins, Colorado, was one of the earliest jurisdictions to try to answer that question. Their definition of minimally complete was having a low-stress facility within a half mile of all residents. Actual utilization, however, is a function of the network that is in place and of the other mode choices that people have. Commissioner Ting suggested it would be a huge win to be able to pick out and prioritize a route that will get solid utilization given all the factors involved and use it to show the public the city is getting a good bang for its buck.

Commissioner Beason agreed with the comment of Commissioner Ting and also said she would like to see the details of the changes that have been made to the plan.

Commissioner Rebhuhn pointed out that when the weather is dry and the sun is out, riding bikes in Bellevue is wonderful. When it is cold, rainy and windy, riding is the last thing most people want to be doing. Those not riding are most likely to be in cars. People do not want to be stuck in traffic with an empty bike lane next to them.

Chair Marciante commented that there are roads connecting everything to everything, but not bike lanes that do the same. Of course, riders can ride on the roads and in that regard, there is a complete bicycle network. As congestion has increased on the roads, the pressure between bike riders and drivers has increased. Bellevue has established priority bicycle corridors and rather than trying to reinvent the wheel, the performance metrics and targets should be in line with what has already been established. The city should seek to build a bicycle network that makes sense and is viable but evaluating the network piece by piece may not make sense.

Chair Marciante asked how the gaps were determined. Mr. Breiland said the gaps are those places where no facility exists where the target is a minimum LTS-3 facility based on the amended MMLOS map. Chair Marciante asked why the primary corridors alone were not used to determine gaps. Mr. Breiland said that could be done, though the TFP still tracks the metric of how many of the identified corridors have been built.

Commissioner Ting suggested it would be useful to have an overlay for the bicycle facilities

map showing those areas that will be problematic to build out for various reasons. Such an overlay would help in identifying tradeoffs in setting the performance targets. Mr. Breiland said the update that produced the existing conditions map did undertake that exercise. A bike LTS designation was removed from 150th Avenue NE and Newport Way because the city just widened the roadway to add turn lanes and added a new rockery up against the property lines, and the determination made was that it would not be feasible to extend what was identified as an LTS-2 facility along that corridor.

Commissioner Ting asked if the planned future conditions map involves impacts to any other mode. Mr. Breiland said that is the intent, though he allowed that there are always exceptions to the rule. As drawn, the map shows facilities that can be brought online without extraordinary costs, property takes or impacts to other modes.

A motion to extend the meeting to 9:15 p.m. was made by Commissioner Beason. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ting and the motion carried unanimously.

As to whether staff and the consultant team were going in the right direction relative to setting targets, Commissioners Beason and Rebhuhn said they concurred with the proposal. Commissioner Ting said it represents a good start with regard to the buildout. Commissioner Kurz said he was not ready to give up on all other roads given the opportunities to do more. Chair Marciante reiterated her desire to see the changes made to the plan and how the targets and existing conditions compare.

Mr. McDonald allowed that the work would focus both on the priority corridors and all planned future bicycle network facilities. There is a clear need to identify the gaps in the priority corridors, but the rest of the network is important in terms of connectivity to the places where people shop, go to school, go to work and recreate.

With regard to transit, Mr. Breiland said the focus is on those things that are under the control of the city, namely bus stop amenities and transit travel speeds. The amenities components include wayfinding, access, lighting, transit information and seating, all of which were identified in the MMLOS document. The focus for the evaluation was the Frequent Transit Network. Only seven percent of the bus stops on the FTN sport all of the amenities. The largest percentage have partial amenities built, but over a third have no amenities at all. He said the transit travel speed map was based on the 2019 fall schedule, which was in place prior to the schedule changes made related to Covid. Only two of the route pairs currently are meeting their 14 mph speed thresholds; most of them do not. The speed threshold came from the Transit Master Plan. The targets may be in need of additional evaluation in terms of actually achievable bus speeds in the future.

Commissioner Ting asked if Bellevue is getting from Metro the right levels of bus service. Good bus stops are certainly desirable but having the right level of bus service is more important. Mr. Breiland said the just what the right level is requires a bit of a judgment call. King County Metro has a fairly rigorous data-driven process for determining how to allocate their services. He allowed that there are some routes in Bellevue that do not meet Metro's service guidelines, but not disproportionately to any other community in the county. In line with its focus on utilization, Commissioner Ting said he wanted to make sure that any facilities built will get used. Mr. Breiland said the Frequent Transit Network routes carry the lion's share of all passengers in the city. There are some less frequent routes for which MMLOS recommends fewer amenities.

Commissioner Kurz said the existing conditions map relative to transit travel speeds must be viewed in light of the bus stops along the routes. He noted that there is no bus that goes directly from Downtown to Factoria; the route in fact goes through Eastgate, which adds a lot of time to the route. It is not surprising that that route is depicted in red on the map, but that is not the city's fault. Mr. Breiland explained that each of the pairs shown on the transit travel times map has a direct bus route. Route 240 is the line between Downtown and Factoria. He agreed that it does not involve a straight shot, and he agreed that even under ideal circumstances it likely would not be possible to get from Factoria to Downtown at much better than ten miles per hour.

Chair Marciante said her sense was that the transit travel speeds measurement could be converted into a total time travel metric. How long it takes for a bus to travel from Factoria to Downtown could be compared to how long the same trip takes by car. Mr. Breiland agreed that could be done and said there are thresholds beyond which transit starts to lose riders and vice versa.

Chair Marciante commented that reliability is also very important when it comes to transit. If riders can rely on it taking 30 minutes to get from work to home, they will be more likely to take the bus. If it sometimes takes 20 minutes and at other times 50 minutes, they will be less likely to take the bus. Mr. Breiland allowed that the data is out there but said it is challenging to calculate it from a replicability standpoint.

Commissioner Beason suggested that reliable transit travel times would be far more useful for the community.

Mr. McDonald said from the beginning the intention has been for the metrics and targets to be monitored and to identify areas where poor performance requires a closer look. There may not be anything that can be done about the convoluted route between Factoria and Downtown, but there may be something that can be done about the segment from Crossroads to the Downtown.

A motion to extend the meeting to 9:30 p.m. was made by Commissioner Beason. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ting and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Beason agreed that in some instances nothing can be done to improve transit travel times. In every instance, the public has the right to be fully informed about their options.

There was agreement to move the discussion on to the Mobility Implementation Plan questionnaire and then come back to a brief discussion of existing conditions for vehicles specific to corridor speeds.

B. Mobility Implementation Plan Questionnaire

Mr. McDonald sought input from the Commissioners on the questions to be included in the questionnaire.

Commissioner Ting noted that the goal is to understand the community's experience with the existing system and their expectations for the future. He said he wanted to see highlighted questions about where the public thinks facilities should be added, and what would need to be done in order to get them to take forms of transportation other than a single occupant vehicle. Mr. McDonald said the question about where the respondents can get by car, by bike, by transit and by walking gets to the notion of where facilities should be added.

Chair Marciante agreed and pointed out that where the public wants to see facilities developed is part of the outreach associated with updated the TIP and TFP.

Mr. McDonald said the questionnaire is intended to give the Commission a solid foundation for making recommendations about performance. With respect to what needs to be done to get people out of their single occupant vehicles, he said he assumed there would be a tie to commute trips and suggested the range of responses could be very wide. He said the draft of the questionnaire includes an open-ended question at the end.

Commissioner Ting agreed that people could provide a number of different answers. The risk is that even if everything they indicate is provided; they still might not get out of their cars. At the end of the day, though, more data might be helpful.

Commissioner Beason suggested asking the simple question of how likely the respondent would be to use an alternative form of transportation, and if so, what would that be. That might turn up information about how many people actually could ride a bike or take the bus.

Chair Marciante suggested having a question that allows the respondent to indicate what mode they use currently and what they would like to use if facilities were in place or barriers were reduced.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked how the questionnaire will be distributed. Mr. McDonald said the questionnaire responses will not be statistically valid. It will go out through all of the different channels the city has available through the Engaging Bellevue platform. The focus will be on getting responses from people who live in Bellevue, work in Bellevue, go to school in Bellevue and visit Bellevue for any reason.

Commissioner Kurz asked if there will be a provision in place to keep people from filling out the questionnaire more than once. Mr. McDonald said he did not know for sure but would seek to find out.

A. Mobility Implementation Plan Existing Conditions (continued)

A motion to extend the meeting to 9:40 p.m. was made by Commissioner Kurz. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beason and the motion carried unanimously.

Referring to the chart showing the existing V/C conditions by Mobility Management Area, Mr. Breiland explained that the current intersection V/C standard was used as a stand-in for the intersection V/C target proposed in the MIP. He said the existing V/C targets for all of the MMAs are met in terms of the average intersection V/C ratios and in terms of the number of intersections that exceed the congestion allowance. It was noted the data was drawn from the 2020 congestion update report.

With regard to corridor travel speed during the evening peak period of 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Mr. Breiland said the speeds were averaged over discreet segments of arterials, such as Bellevue Way from NE 12th Street to Main Street, and NE 12th Street to SR-520. The speeds were averaged across the entire two-hour period on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for the entire month of October. Most of the corridors were deemed to be running at 40 percent of the typical urban travel speed. One roadway operating at only 25 percent of the travel speed was 148th Avenue. The Factoria Boulevard speed between SE 26th Street and SE 38th Street

was somewhat faster than what was determined during the Eastgate study.

Mr. Breiland acknowledged that the map might not tell the story the public is expecting when it comes to travel speed. To that end, he said he took at the data at a more granular level, specifically between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., which is the most congested portion of the peak period and utilized shorter segments. He said the result was the most traffic congestion one might expect on the busiest couple of days of the month. Under that scenario, the patterns are typical of what most people experience. Coal Creek Parkway heading down towards Newport Way is busy; 148th Avenue southbound is busy the entire stretch; and all of the Downtown streets are busy. More refinement is needed to get to a more intuitive measure and target.

Mr. Breiland informed the Commissioners that the 14 original Mobility Management Areas were created in 1993 by city ordinance. They have been adjusted somewhat over time, but they were originally focused on distinct areas with boundaries based on factors such as area-specific mobility targets. The work of consolidating down to seven MMAs, now called Performance Management Areas, is aimed at simplifying and focusing first on the areas of the highest projected growth, which have the most modal options, second on the areas of moderate density that have moderate amounts of transit, and third on the stable residential areas of the city.

In regard to the priority vehicle corridors, Mr. Breiland said all the corridors shown on the map in gray are arterials that have an average daily traffic of over 10,000 trips. Those shown in red are the corridors with more than 20,000 daily trips and serve as regional connectors passing through both residential and commercial areas.

A motion to extend the meeting to 9:45 p.m. was made by Commissioner Ting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beason and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Ting said it was his understanding that the PMAs are area types rather than defined geographies. Mr. Breiland said the PMAs are distinct geographic areas that are categorized by type, and that the proposal on the table is to continue averaging the V/C ratios over the PMAs.

Commissioner Ting said it would be helpful to see a map showing where the proposal is to decrease the traffic standard. He also commented with regard to the corridor-based approach that land use should define the traffic for a particular neighborhood rather than whether or not a corridor connects Downtown to I-90. Finally, he asked if Wejo provides data for all streets, adding that he would like to see a map of all city streets.

Commissioner Kurz said the corridor-based metric is the right approach. He stressed the need to emphasize that the proposal does not seek to lower the standards so much as replace a bad standard, like V/C, with something better.

Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if the data on meeting the V/C standards was pre-Covid. Mr. Breiland said all the data was generated pre-Covid. He added that when the future conditions are forecast, they will not have half the people teleworking.

Chair Marciante said if possible, she would like to see the map updated to include every roadway that has at least 10,000 daily trips, including West Lake Sammamish Parkway and 156th Avenue. Mr. Breiland said the map will be updated.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 10, 2021

Approval of the minutes was deferred to the next Commission meeting.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

A motion to extend the meeting to 9:50 p.m. was made by Commissioner Ting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kurz and the motion carried unanimously.

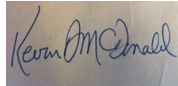
Ms. Michelle Wannamaker, 4045 149th Avenue SE, noted that Mr. McDonald made mention of an internal memo about changes to the bike lanes levels of traffic stress. She said Commissioner Beason asked for a list of the specific bike lanes changes, and suggested that the internal memo should be shared with the Commission and with the public.

12. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

Mr. McDonald said staff would be bringing to the meeting on July 22 the equity index.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Marciante adjourned the meeting at 9:48 p.m.



9/9/2021

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date