

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

October 28, 2021
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Virtual Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Beason, Helland, Kurz, Rebhuhn, Stash, Ting

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Marciante

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Chris Breiland, Fehr & Peers

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Principal Transportation Planner Kevin McDonald noted the receipt of one written communication that he had forwarded to the Commissioners prior to the meeting.

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

Councilmember Robertson said she has been spending a lot of time working as a member of the Regional Transit Committee. The focus is on updating major policy documents relating to how transit is provided, expanded, reduced or restructured in Bellevue, and capital expenditures. She allowed that while she had not been able to attend the Commission meetings for a while, she has been kept abreast of the issues by staff and the chair.

Councilmember Robertson reported that on October 25 the Council had its first study session on multimodal concurrency. Chair Marciante was there to make the presentation along with the chair of the Planning Commission. The Council voiced support for the work and took the advice of the Planning Commission to make a small revision to the language of Policy TR-2. The language of the policy called for reducing congestion, but as revised it focuses on

managing congestion. Staff was directed to bring the full package back to a future Council meeting for action. The Council was very grateful for and supportive of the work done by the Transportation Commission.

Councilmember Robertson informed the Commissioners that the Council would be conducting its mid-biennial budget soon. She said the process will likely be more involved than it usually is given that Covid has triggered constantly changing conditions over the last 18 months.

Councilmember Robertson said a non-transportation issue she has been working on is the siting of a new aquatic center. She said the Council has chosen a location, Airfield Park in Eastgate, and has sent the issue forward to master planning. The project is estimated to cost about \$120 million.

5. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. McDonald said the Open Public Meetings Act training on October 20 was well attended. He said the City Clerk is tracking who has taken the training and will make sure that everyone is up to speed on the training in accord with state law. He reminded the Commissioners of one of the takeaways from the training, specifically that email communications are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act. He urged the Commissioners to use the city-issued email addresses for all communications, and to sequester them and all documents in a separate folder to allow for easy access.

Mr. McDonald said the Council on October 25 approved the recommendations for multimodal concurrency and has moved them forward for adoption on December 13. During his presentation to the Council, Planning Commission Chair Malakoutian stated that the Transportation Commission did an amazing job on the policy recommendations. Councilmember Robertson described the heavy work done by the Commission and the Commission's thoughtful dialog. Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis added his kudos to the Commission, as did Councilmember Stokes. Councilmembers Lee and Zahn commented on the very important work done by the Commission and expressed their gratitude. Mayor Robinson voiced her appreciation for the Commission's holistic look at the transportation system.

6. PUBLIC HEARING – None

7. STUDY SESSION

A. 2022-2033 Transportation Facilities Plan

Senior Transportation Planner Michael Ingram reminded the Commissioners that there are 71 projects on the proposed Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) project list, sixteen of which are already in the Capital Investment Program (CIP). The remaining projects have all been evaluated and prioritized.

Mr. Ingram said a number of projects to improve the pedestrian system are included in the proposed TFP. They include significant improvements in the BelRed area, on 112th Avenue NE to the north of the Downtown, along West Lake Sammamish Parkway, and on SE 34th Street. In addition to those larger projects, there are numerous smaller pedestrian system projects included on the list.

With regard to bicycle improvement projects, Mr. Ingram noted that the modeling indicates

that once the proposed improvements are built out, there will still be gaps in the system. The proposed improvements include the BelRed area, Eastrail and along West Lake Sammamish Parkway. The proposed TFP includes three network projects to create connectivity between origins and destinations. The specific improvements and their alignments remain unknown.

The proposed pedestrian system projects will reduce the total gaps by five miles. On the bicycle side, gaps will be reduced by eight miles.

Turning to transit projects, the standard is that transit trips should take no more than 1.5 times the travel time of vehicles during the peak period. As modeled, the proposed projects will result in more green than there is currently. The modeled improvements include East Link light rail between Downtown and Overlake, routes in and out of Eastgate that are associated with the Bellevue College connection project, and between Downtown and Crossroads as a result of the NE 6th Street extension project. With regard to the latter, he said there continues to be debate as to whether the extension should connect with 116th Avenue NE rather than 120th Avenue NE. If it ends at 116th Avenue NE, there would be some negative impacts on transit mobility.

Mr. Ingram noted that the \$2 million allocation proposed for partnering with transit providers to improvement transit speed and reliability between origin and destination points was not shown on the map given that the funds will be allocated as opportunities present themselves.

With regard to a question asked by Commissioner Helland about TFP-211, Mr. Ingram said currently NE 6th Street terminates in the middle of I-405. The city is interested in extending the connection across to the east side of the freeway, fully spanning the freeway and connecting either with 116th Avenue NE or 120th Avenue NE. The idea would be to be able to access I-405 from either the Wilburton side or the Downtown side. The city previously identified 120th Avenue NE as the preferred eastern terminus, but the recommendation that came out of the Wilburton visioning process was to terminate the extension at 116th Avenue NE. The projected timeline for the project is largely dependent on the Washington State Department of Transportation on the assumption that most of the funding would come from the state.

Commissioner Helland asked about the project scores shown in the TFP project spreadsheet. Mr. Ingram explained that the scores were from the evaluation of roadway/intersection projects against five criteria. The scoring exercise was conducted early in the process to update the TFP. Some adjustments have subsequently been made to the scores for reasons like the opportunity to partner with other organizations, or by virtue of the city having already invested significantly in a project.

Mr. Ingram noted that future vehicular conditions are projected to be a little worse by 2033. However, because 2033 land uses are not yet in hand, the model run included more land use than is actually expected to be on the ground. On the map he shared with the Commissioners, depicted the intersections projected to fall below the V/C performance targets, and green was used to show those intersections that are projected to meet their performance targets. He pointed out that the proposed TFP projects are fairly well aligned with where those intersections projected to fall below their performance targets.

Commissioner Rebhuhn noted that during a previous meeting staff shared with the Commission a project that had been projected to include five lanes, but which was subsequently scaled back. He asked what the thinking was behind not providing more capacity, even if it is not currently needed given that it likely will be needed in the future. Mr. Ingram

said the project in question was 120th Avenue NE from Spring Boulevard to Northup Way. He noted that 120th Avenue NE has been built out in stages from NE 4th Street to NE 8th Street, from NE 12th Street to Spring Boulevard, and the final piece is up to Northup Way. It is five lanes from NE 4th Street to Spring Boulevard and the initial assumption was that that cross section would continue. The question arose, however, about what would happen continuing north beyond Northup Way, and indeed how many vehicles would even want to go all the way to Northup Way. The consultant was asked to carefully consider the actual need and whether or not a full five lanes would be needed. It was determined that the purpose and intent of the project could in fact be accomplished with fewer lanes. Commissioner Rebhuhn asked if it is thought that at some future point the additional capacity will be needed and Mr. Ingram said there will be issues in other places before five lanes is needed leading to Northup Way.

Mr. Ingram said corridor speed is the other element of vehicular performance. He noted that the modeling indicated some yellow corridors in the future where the travel speeds will be below the performance targets, and some corridors that will in fact meet their targets. He added that the proposed TFP projects align to a large extent with where the needs are.

Turning to the issue of project allocation, Mr. Ingram said the proposal is to include additional revenue in the TFP project list and in the TFP itself. The total allocation was revised upward to \$139 million from the previous \$125.7 million by incorporating the eligible funds in the ongoing Neighborhood Sidewalk Program and the Neighborhood Safety and Connectivity Levy. Those funds have not historically been included in the TFP, but with the new Mobility Implementation Plan (MIP) framework and the concurrency system, it makes sense to include all eligible funds in the TFP. The funds are proposed to be allocated to the Congestion Reduction Levy projects, totaling \$6 million; and revenue from the out years beyond the current CIP, totaling \$9.9 million.

Commissioner Kurz asked if any consideration has been given to doing more projects to improve vehicle corridor speeds, like along 148th Avenue, and intersection improvements. Mr. Ingram pointed out that some areas on the map would be yellow if funds were not allocated to them, which means the money is buying some green. There are proposed TFP projects at 148th Avenue NE and NE 8th Street, and at 140th Avenue NE and NE 8th Street, as well as further to the south along 148th Avenue, and still the modeling shows yellow. There is a point of diminishing returns where the benefit for the money spent is reduced. While it is true that a lot of money could be thrown at the problem, but in the end it would only address something that happens for a two-hour period, and more capacity could draw more traffic, compounding the problems. There is also the question of what can really be done. For instance, at 148th Avenue NE and NE 8th Street the proposed project will install left-turn lanes on every leg, which is the absolute limit of what can be done there absent going with grade separation. At 140th Avenue NE and NE 8th Street, the proposed project will install a second through lane southbound that will merge again more to the south, a configuration the public does not like but which makes the numbers better in terms of system intersection performance.

Commissioner Ting asked how to consider non facility-based projects that can help move things toward being green given a limited budget and a limited amount of right-of-way. He asked if there is something outside the traditional TFP project that can be nudged forward to improve situations. Mr. Ingram said one way to relieve pressures on the system and to effectively meet targets without investing additional capital is through demand management. The city does a fair amount in that arena. All large worksites are required to have an employee Commute Trip Reduction program in place, and over time those programs do help to move the needle. Similarly, large buildings have trip reduction targets associated with their initial

development.

Commissioner Helland referred to the placeholder for future congestion reduction projects and asked how that works. Mr. Ingram explained that the levy raises money every year for congestion reduction projects. Most of them are moderate-scale projects. The screening and evaluation process happens on an ongoing basis and typically looks out three or four years. There is no clarity, however, about how to assign the funds in the years five through twelve in the TFP, and that is the reason for the placeholder.

Commissioner Ting asked how many projects currently on the list would have been included in the TFP if the levy funding was not there. Mr. Ingram allowed that some of them for sure would have been included, but not all of them. The levy is a very effective way for the city to holistically look at the needs and the best ways to address them. Commissioner Ting said his assumption was that when the public voted for the levy they anticipated that the resulting funds would be for projects in addition to projects funded through the typical process. Mr. Ingram said it would be fair to say that the levy funds are in fact on top of the normal TFP funds. The \$2 million per year generated by the levy does not buy much by way of on-the-ground improvements, but the funds are used for analysis, initial project development and some design work, along with some low-cost improvements. What the City Council has done in the current CIP is to allocate additional money to actually put the projects on the ground.

Commissioner Helland called attention to TFP-244, the Eastrail corridor, and noted from the description that the city may choose to participate. He asked if the listed \$2.5 million is the proposed level of participation. Mr. Ingram said the Council allocated funding for the project, which is primarily a King County project. The city funds will be used to develop connections to the corridor.

Commissioner Ting asked if there were any projects the staff were unhappy to see fall below the funding line. Mr. Ingram said he was comfortable with the way the project list worked out.

Commissioner Helland asked why the projects below the projected funding line did not make the cut. Mr. Ingram said some of the projects have seen some additional evaluation since the last TFP cycle. With regard to the Bellevue Way HOV lane, he noted that the Council allocated some funding to plan and develop the project. It was determined through the additional analysis that one segment of the project would have the most benefit for the cost, and that segment was advanced into the TFP. Other projects below the line are not strong projects but were considered by virtue of being on the long-range plan list; others have deemed to no longer be relevant.

Commissioner Helland asked how TFP-249, TFP-232 and TFP-251 ended up below the line. Mr. Ingram said all three are ped/bike facilities. In the case of TFP-249, Wilburton/NE 8th Street Station Access Improvements, there is another project in the TFP that identifies fixes to the specific sidewalk needs at that location. TFP-232 and TFP-251 are included in the scope of the bicycle network projects.

Commissioner Ting suggested that where projects are cut, it would be helpful to include a note explaining why. He also suggested it would be helpful for staff to present to the Commission the last three projects on the funded list and the first three projects on the cut list and explain how the recommendations came about. The Commission could then offer feedback and suggestions for possibly swapping them.

Commissioner Ting said he continued to struggle with what the elevator pitch is for the TFP, aside from incrementally trying to reach green for every metric that has been created. While that may be true, the statement does not capture any particular vision behind what the TFP is trying to encompass. The public might benefit from having certain themes, goals or areas of focus within the TFP. A theme for the bike network could be the creation of routes that connects points but avoids hills. For vehicular traffic, the theme could be trying to increase predictability, and for transit the theme could be the city is partnering with other agencies to leverage funds to create a network that will yield travel times much closer to drive-alone times. Mr. Ingram said trying to reach green in all metrics is a good reference point, but it is not really what the TFP is trying to do. What the TFP seeks to do is address the needs and the challenges resulting from the growth that is happening in the city.

Commissioner Stash agreed. With regard to the pedestrian network she said she assumed that gaps identified near schools score higher than gaps not near schools. It would be helpful to explain those kind of metrics.

Commissioner Helland asked why not all of the projects in the placeholder category were scored and why some did not have costs associated with them. Mr. Ingram said there is a system for scoring roadway/intersection projects, but a scoring exercise was not undertaken for ped/bike projects. With regard to project costs, the numbers or lack of numbers in the columns is more of a testament to where the projects are in the development stage.

Commissioner Ting asked if the projects all cost the same to maintain or if some are more expensive to maintain than others. Ms. Oosterveen said lifecycle costs are not included in the TFP. Maintenance costs are determined once projects have been implemented. Costs listed in the TFP are for design, right-of-way and construction. Commissioner Ting said it would be useful to know if there are outliers in terms of lifecycle costs based on project type. Ms. Oosterveen said much depends on the types of infrastructure involved in projects. The maintenance and operations dollars are calculated into the general fund and are not part of the capital fund.

Mr. Ingram sought from the Commission a recommendation to advance the TFP to the next phase, which is to evaluate it in accord with the SEPA requirements.

A motion to approve the preliminary 2022-2023 TFP project list was made by Commissioner Helland. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ting.

Commissioner Helland asked if the Commission will have additional opportunity to move projects around on the list, combine them in any way, or take advantage of new information that comes along later. Mr. Ingram said once the project list is established, it can then be evaluated in more detail through the SEPA work. The analysis considers the future 2033 conditions as well as other areas, such as air quality, noise levels near residential areas, the land use impacts of the proposed projects, and the natural environment. The project list can be changed later, but if changes are made it becomes necessary to redo some of the analysis. Approval of the project list is the time to determine the Commission's comfort levels with the projects on the list. The Commission's recommendation must be approved by the Council before moving on to the SEPA analysis.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Stash asked for comments on the draft transmittal memo.

Commissioner Helland observed that the memo uses the word “we” in describing the work of developing the TFP project recommendations and asked if that meant the Commission or the staff. Mr. Ingram allowed that the staff did the actual number crunching, but the criteria were reviewed and approved by the Commission early in the year. It is fair to interpret the memo to mean that the Commission endorsed and oversaw the work.

Commissioner Ting suggested that if there are themes or focus areas in the TFP, it would be good to call them out in the transmittal memo. Mr. Ingram said the general theme as outlined in the memo is addressing the challenges associated with growth and development, the impacts to the neighborhoods, and building out the ped/bike system. Commissioner Ting asked if any scoring was done based on the new MIP criteria, and if so, how the project scoring was differed. Mr. Ingram said the two systems are separate and clarified that the new MIP criteria were not used in developing the proposed TFP.

The transmittal memo was approved by consensus.

Mr. Ingram noted that the environment analysis is done with each update of the TFP. All growth and development projected to occur during the 12-year period is taken into account in the traffic model. The work also analyzes noise, air quality and the natural environment. The specific SEPA process varies from cycle to cycle depending on a number of factors. Sometimes an entirely new environmental impact statement is needed, while at other times a simple amendment is needed. The approach to be used will be determined prior to the Commission’s meeting in December. The SEPA analysis can take several months. Once the draft is ready, it becomes subject to public comment for 30 days. Changes to the draft based on the public comments are then incorporated.

The recommended TFP as approved by the Commission will be forwarded to the Council for review at their earliest convenience. The Commission Chair typically makes the presentation along with staff.

B. Mobility Implementation Plan – Draft MIP Document

Mr. McDonald said it only made sense to aggregate all of the Commission’s prior work into a document concise enough for the general public yet sufficient to guide the staff in implementing the MIP. He said the work was underway and would be shared with the Commission as soon as it is ready.

Consultant Chris Breiland with Fehr & Peers said once the document is handed over it will contain a lot of content and information. He said his presentation would provide an outline of the primary chapters of the MIP. He said he was not seeking an Commission action or suggestions for changing any of the specific content.

Mr. Breiland said the introduction section describes the evolution of multimodal transportation in Bellevue which has taken place over the last decade or more. The general direction is away from an auto-focused suburban style of transportation investment to a multimodal transportation system. The following chapter focuses on the goals of the MIP, which fundamentally are to forward the city’s multimodal transportation system plans consistent with the requirements of the Growth Management Act, which is to build out a transportation system that supports planned growth, enhances livability, supports equity, and considers access and mobility.

The next chapter moves from the high level to the specifics of the MIP. It describes the layered network and outlines the relationships between land use, the modal planning work done to date, and the development of an integrated system. It includes the network maps and describes them and their elements. That chapter is followed by a chapter that gets into the performance metrics. It defines exactly what is measured to describe the users' experience of each of the modes of the transportation system. A description of the Performance Management Areas is contained in the next chapter. The PMAs represent an evolution of the city's Mobility Management Area concept, which was born in the 1990s and which needs to evolve in order to get to a multimodal system. The seven individual PMAs are fall into one of three categories based on land use.

The chapter focused on the performance targets represents the work the Commission has been spending most of its time lately. The performance targets describe the expectation for the user experience for each mode. They are a blend of what would be desirable to have balanced against a multimodal system where transportation facilities cannot always be ideal for every mode at all times of the day. The chapter indicates that the performance targets exist to identify where there are gaps from a user's perspective; they are not intended to specifically identify projects.

The next chapter relates to project identification and prioritization. It addresses what is measured, where it is being measured, and the performance thresholds which trigger the need to consider investments or policy changes. It allows that the city has limited resources, making it impossible to turn all areas of the city green all at once, and outlines which issues should be focused on first. Identifying gaps is first, followed by using the MIP goals, public input and other strategies to define whether or not a gap should be addressed. If a gap is not going to be addressed, the public should be engaged in explaining why not. And if a gap is to be addressed, improvement and investment concepts must be considered. All of the work sets up the concepts for funding and implementation, which happens primarily through the TFP.

Multimodal concurrency is the focus of the next chapter. After the TFP is settled, concurrency is a key tool for getting projects built. Transportation concurrency is required by the state and the purpose of the chapter is evolve from a unimodal approach, focusing only on vehicle performance, to a multimodal approach. The focus will be on the complete system as defined by through the TFP, and on tracking as projects seek development approvals and the city builds out projects.

The final chapter outlines what can be expected when the MIP is put into practice. The chapter will define when to update the MIP, which could be with each major update of the Comprehensive Plan, or more frequently as circumstances warrant. The chapter will also identify additional metrics and targets to track progress over time in the areas of environmental sustainability, transit ridership, land use accessibility and support for Vision Zero.

Mr. Breiland said the intent is to have the report to the Commission in early November for comment in December. Final review by the Commission and forwarding to the City Council is slated for the first quarter of 2022.

Commissioner Helland asked how the long-term goal of having 100 percent of registered vehicles be electric came about. Mr. Breiland clarified that the MIP performance dashboard is being developed with items to be tracked over time. Three environmental sustainability targets will be highlighted with the targets that came from the city's Environment Sustainability Plan.

The MIP is looking at that target but is not debating it or looking to adopt it per se.

Commissioner Ting suggested it would be good to have a long-term vision of what the transportation system should look like 20 or 30 years out. One of the goals should be to have all funded projects dovetail with the long-term vision. Additionally, there should be an MIP goal that talks about return on investment. As funds are invested in a facility, there should be an indication of how much incremental capacity was generated for the monetary outlay along with an indication of actual usage. Return on investment is important to capture when thinking about scoring projects in the MIP. With regard to the notion of an aggregated user experience, he said having a thousand people reporting one experience and one person reporting another experience is an important ratio to keep in mind. Gaps are important, but trying to capture the overall experience for all users as part of the scoring process is also important. He said he would like to see the non facility-based actions the MIP should take in order to achieve the goals. The MIP is all about building facilities, but there are other things the city must do in order to achieve the goals.

Mr. Breiland said the suggestions were all good to consider. He stressed that the MIP is not necessarily about implementing capital projects, it is really about identifying gaps in the system and then helping to prioritize how to address those gaps. That will not always mean building new facilities; it could also mean looking at other transportation solutions. The MIP is really about giving a clear and transparent vision about where the expectations are not being met as the community grows, and providing a framework about deciding if and when something should be done about identified gaps. Transportation demand management is a tool for addressing identified gaps, and in some cases may be the best tool to use.

Mr. McDonald said the Council established the scope for the MIP a long time ago and directed the Commission and staff to develop a plan that embeds the envisioned transportation system for all modes. As such, the MIP is not a visioning document; the vision has been created via the Transit Master Plan, the Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan and the like. The MIP seeks to address a fundamental issue with respect to the implementation of those plans. It outlines in a transparent way how the city decides which projects to build, which programs to advance and what operational considerations should be studied to help move people around the city.

Commissioner Ting said he would not argue the point but stressed the need to think long-term about where the city wants to end up. It should not be all about incrementally trying to meet the targets. There are some bold things the city could do. He agreed the current definition of the MIP does not include being a long-term master plan reaching out 20 or 30 years. Mr. McDonald said in looking at the performance gaps and identifying project concepts to fill those gaps the Commission will play a fundamental role in making sure the vision is implemented.

Commissioner Helland asked if the long-term vision lives in the Transportation Master Plan. Mr. McDonald said the Council did not direct the Commission to create a Transportation Master Plan. Rather the Council instructed the Commission and staff to take the adopted modal plans and knit them together with each other and with land use and vehicle facilities, and to compress the various layers together to ensure they work well together. The outcome will be a decision-making tool and process for determining which project should be built and where. The TFP is also not a visioning document, it is an implementation plan that assigns dollars to projects that are advanced through a public process and prioritized for funding.

By way of background for Commissioner Helland, Commissioner Ting explained that a couple of years ago the Commission unanimously requested being allowed to develop a

Transportation Master Plan with a long-term vision. The request was moved up the chain and hopefully it will still come about.

Commissioner Stash asked how the Vision Zero goals will be built into the MIP. Mr. Breiland said the city's Vision Zero action plan identifies some sensitive users and land uses, and the high-injury network where the preponderance of serious and fatal crashes occur. The idea is to look at that as part of the MIP to see if projects aimed at enhancing the capacity for any mode can have an ancillary safety benefit. By looking at the Vision Zero components as part of the MIP, it is possible to achieve two goals at once. The MIP will not dictate the advancement of projects merely on the basis of the Vision Zero goals. He clarified that the city has a specific safety program to address safety issues. That program is outside of the TFP. The program does not exist to expand capacity to accommodate growth, rather it exists solely to address safety.

Commissioner Kurz asked what data was used to create the map regarding improving access and mobility. Mr. Breiland said one of the key challenges the Commission will face in looking at how to improve mobility across the city will be conflicting demands. In parts of the city there might sidewalk gaps, crossing gaps, slow corridor speeds, and lack of buildout of the bicycle network. Improving access and mobility is a lens that gives additional land use context to consider. The darker areas on the map are those areas that are more likely to generate more non-auto trips. The areas depicted in white will have recreational walkers and bikers, but there will be far more purpose-driven multimodal trips in the darker areas. The map includes all the schools, parks, community centers and libraries, all land uses that generate the most transit access trips and walk/bike trips. The map gives the Commission information to consider when thinking about things like adding a turn lane to an intersection or building out bicycle facilities.

Returning to the notion of a Transportation Master Plan, Assistant Transportation Director Paula Stevens asked the Commissioners to keep in mind the fact that the transportation recommendations staff makes to the Commission, and the recommendations the Commission makes to the Council, are firmly embedded in and integrated with the overall visioning for the city. That visioning exercise happens through the Comprehensive Plan. For the Commission to seek to do a one-off Transportation Master Plan absent the conversations at the community level with regard to neighborhoods, housing, facilities and growth would be a disservice to the comprehensive planning work. The broader visioning and contextual planning work will be done in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan update, a process that is coming up.

Commissioner Beason asked how feasible it would be to address the issue of return on investment for incrementally providing capacity the aggregate user experience. Mr. McDonald said some of the metrics discussed in regard to the MIP are user quantity based, primarily in regard to the vehicle mode. There are capacity constraints during the peak hour and there is a need to address them. The system for the vehicle mode is essentially complete and the focus has turned the operation of the system with respect to performance targets. The other parts of the MIP, especially the pedestrian and bicycle elements, are less focused on quantity of users and more on system completeness. The performance target gaps that show up on the maps are places where the ped/bike systems are not complete. In no planning document is there a quantity of pedestrians or bicyclists the city is striving to achieve. However, the city is increasingly measuring the number of persons using those types of facilities, especially bicycle facilities via automated counters. Use is not a target in those instances, rather it is an outcome. Return on investment is measured against those outcomes. With respect to the aggregated user experience, there may be some value in looking at project concepts that stem from the performance target gaps and making a determination of how many people might benefit from a project that is developed to fill a particular sidewalk gap. He noted that the SE 34th Street

sidewalk project is perpetually in the TFP because a few people who live nearby and would use it want it. In the big picture, however, given limited transportation funding, the project never makes the CIP. There is some amount of evaluation that occurs in developing project definitions and funding that takes into consideration the aggregated user experience. With respect to safety, Mr. McDonald said high-impact injury network the Vision Zero plan demonstrates includes a few corridors that have more incidents of injury than others. In terms of identifying projects, those few high-impact injury corridors make a big difference and bring a focus to city investments based on values rather than on quantity.

Commissioner Helland asked if there are performance metrics, either quantitative or value based, specified in the MIP. Mr. McDonald said there are performance metrics specified in the MIP for each mode. Some metrics are dimensional, some are experiential, and some are operational. The targets will be periodically reviewed and evaluated with every update of the TFP and more frequently as deemed necessary.

Commissioner Ting said the high-injury network is critical and should be one of the top metrics considered. It is also an example of return on investment. When the city invests in safety, it does so where there are the most injuries. Investments in bicycle facilities should be focused on where most people want to go biking. Part of the scoring calculation should be based on the number of persons who want to use a particular route. He said he was not looking to invest only in vehicular facilities because the incremental return on investment starts to get dire in those cases. However, conscious decisions should be made about what the city should look like in the future and what it will take to get there. Return on investment can be considered for individual modes and across modes, but there is no blanket algorithm and thus it is necessary to be very thoughtful in determining where investments should be made. Mr. Breiland said it is challenging to pinpoint where facilities will be used the most. The maps focused on accommodating growth and improving access and mobility aim to shine a light on that, however. The accommodating growth map is a high-level indicator of where growth is occurring, which are the areas where there will be more people doing things and trying to get to and from more places. The improve access and mobility map, combined with the accommodate growth map, highlight the areas with the highest potential for trips made by non-auto modes. Connecting growth areas with bicycle facilities makes sense, such as Downtown and BelRed, and investing in such projects will likely have a good return on investment. The MIP does not, however, dictate that such facilities should score three times higher than a connection between Southeast Bellevue and Eastgate. The look-back metrics highlighted in the last chapter of the MIP get to the issue of whether or not the needle is being moved by investments. If the needle is not being moved, the question turns to whether the correct investments were made, whether more investments are needed, if the facilities provided are simply not being used and if some other tack should be made. It is all intended to be very transparent.

Commissioner Ting pointed out that the metric with regard to bike lanes is not focused on how many people are using it, rather it is the level of stress experienced by those who are using the facilities. He allowed that more complete networks are needed before they will be widely used, but he stressed the need to think about the why should a facility get built that never gets used, allowing for a better understanding of what type of facility would get used. That is why it will be important to have data about how much a facility is going to be used, and then how much it is used. Those elements of information may be difficult to gather but will become relevant in determining needed projects. Mr. McDonald agreed with the need to build facilities that people will use. He said there are two ways the MIP sets the scene to do exactly that. First is the performance targets, which is just an analysis of where in the system there are gaps between

what exists and the target. There is a four-step process outlined for determining how a gap becomes a project. Public engagement is one of those steps. Just because there is a gap does not mean there is a need for a project; the community input will be key to determining if a project is needed or not.

Commissioner Stash agreed with the need to have a good return on investment, but she stressed that it is built into a lot of the steps and processes.

Commissioner Beason agreed with the importance of focusing the return on investments but stressed the need to be fluid in doing so given that things change over time with the growth of the community.

Commissioner Ting suggested that his vision for the city 20 or 30 years out likely did not differ all that much from that of the staff. He said what he wants to do is get there in a transparent way, adding that he wants to have a story to tell to the public when they ask questions. Short-term pain for long-term gain is okay, especially if over the long term the gain is cost efficient. Currently, much of the story is missing. Some past Commissioners have presented a lot of data that is difficult to refute. Absent having a story to tell, it will look as though the data is being ignored.

Mr. McDonald reiterated what was said by Ms. Stevens that the Comprehensive Plan establishes the vision by integrating everything from housing to land use and transportation. He said a chapter could be carved out in the MIP to articulate the vision that is adopted in the Comprehensive Plan. That might help to create some context for the implantation for which the MIP articulates a methodology.

Commissioner Helland said as an engineer and project manager he has found that what often gets overlooked are the lessons learned. Continually revisiting how things are going relative to particular projects, even if the metrics are not particularly quantifiable, will make sense.

Commissioner Beason said there is the plan and there is the budget and there is the reality. With the ever-changing circumstances in the community, the targets should be kept in mind. Determining the return on investment is a good idea, though that cannot always be done. Setting realistic targets will be of ultimate importance going forward.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 23, 2021

The minutes were approved by consensus.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Michelle Wannamaker, 4045 149th Avenue SE between SE 36th Street and Newport Way, pointed out that the bicycle system map still shows 146th Avenue SE as a gap, yet it is not an arterial roadway.

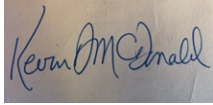
Mr. Breiland said the bicycle network is not only focused on arterial streets. Some arterials are not in fact included in the bicycle network, including 150th Avenue. The practicality of having a low-stress bicycle facility along 150th Avenue was identified as being unlikely given all the constraints. The bicycle network includes local streets where low-stress bicycle facilities can be built with a lot less investment.

12. REVIEW OF COMMISSION CALENDAR

Mr. McDonald took a few minutes to review with the Commission the schedule of upcoming meeting dates and agenda items. He stressed that there will be no Commission meetings during the month of November.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Stash adjourned the meeting at 8:59.



Secretary to the Transportation Commission

12/9/2021

Date