Item No. SS 2(a)
June 2, 2014

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT:
Draft Bellevue Transit Master Plan.

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FISCAL IMPACT:
The capital improvements identified in the Transportation Commission's Draft Transit Master Plan (see Attachment 1) will require additional project-level analyses to establish the fiscal impact of undertaking the full range of projects. These projects will be implemented incrementally and considered for funding with street projects through the City's Capital Investment Program (CIP), coordinated with transit service and facility improvement efforts by King County Metro and Sound Transit, and/or submitted for future grant funding opportunities.

POLICY ISSUES:

Comprehensive Plan:
Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan acknowledges that responding to anticipated growth in travel necessitates a multi-modal transportation solution that offers the public choices about how they travel within, to, and through Bellevue. Comprehensive Plan Policy TR-50 recognizes the need to "Work with transit providers to implement the Bellevue Transit Plan as an attractive travel option for local residents, employees, students, visitors, businesses and other users of regional facilities."

Bellevue Transit Plan:
On June 2, 2003, Council adopted the Bellevue Transit Plan (Resolution No. 6859). The 2003 Plan was a major step forward in articulating what improvements are needed in transit service and capital investments throughout Bellevue and served as an important reference document for collaborations with the City's transit service providers. The service and capital partnerships resulting from this vision have enhanced transit's presence in Bellevue.

Bellevue Transit Master Plan:
On July 9, 2012, Council initiated the Bellevue Transit Master Plan (TMP), an update of the City's 2003 Transit Plan. The TMP is being overseen by the City's Transportation Commission whose work is guided by Council-approved project principles and input from members of the Planning, Arts, and Human Services Commissions and the Parks and Community Services Board and the public. The TMP scope of work comprises three major elements (Service, Capital, and Policy) supported by extensive outreach and technical analysis.

State Environmental Policy Act:
Bellevue completed an environmental review of the proposed Transit Master Plan under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and determined that the proposal is not likely to have

significant adverse impacts on the environment. As a result, a Determination of Non-significance (DNS) was issued on May 8, 2014. This decision was made after reviewing the proposal's potential impacts on several elements of the environment, summarized in this SEPA environmental checklist (see project page http://www.bellevuewa.gov/pdf/Transportation/14-126790-LM_Bellevue_Transit_Master_Plan_DNS.pdf).

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL:

___ Action
_X_ Discussion
_X_ Information

On June 2, 2014 Chair Ernie Simas of the Transportation Commission and staff will present Council with the Commission's Draft Transit Master Plan. No Council action is sought at this time. Council action to adopt the Transit Master Plan, by resolution, is scheduled for July 7, 2014.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

Informed by public input, technical studies, and market analyses, the Draft Transit Master Plan represents the culmination of a planning effort initiated by Council in July 2012. This document includes recommendations for improvements in public transit service to, and within, the City of Bellevue paired with the capital improvements needed to support the recommended Frequent Transit Network. This document consolidates the policy and project recommendations from the Transit Service Vision Report and Transit Capital Vision Report (both posted to the Council Document Library).

What is Bellevue's Transit Service Vision Report?

Council's project principles for the TMP direct staff and the Commission to formulate a transit service vision that considers three distinct funding scenarios (reduced, stable, and growing resources) for three time horizons (2015, 2022, and 2030). On May 20, 2013, the Council approved a set of service-oriented strategies that lead to a vision of "Abundant Access" which means guiding additional transit service to/from Bellevue's major activity centers where transit demand is high and is expected to increase in the future. Consistent with this guidance, the Bellevue Transit Service Vision Report details route-level recommendations for nine funding/ time-horizon scenarios that align with the TMP's vision statement and service-oriented strategies. The contents of this report have informed recent Council communications to King County; a letter was mailed on January 13, 2014, urging the County to maintain the frequency, span, and coverage of three routes in Metro's service reduction proposal.

What is the Frequent Transit Network (FTN)?

The goal of Bellevue's 2030 service vision is a Frequent Transit Network (FTN) that is: "Efficient, useful, attractive service for most people, to most destinations, most of the time, serving maximum ridership." The FTN supports Downtown growth, Bel-Red corridor redevelopment, and Bellevue's other activity centers (Factoria, Eastgate, and Crossroads) with well-connected bus routes that seamlessly interface with East Link light rail. The FTN also focuses capital investments to serve the most riders and provide the highest quality of service to people who travel to/from or within Bellevue.

What is Bellevue's Transit Capital Vision Report?
The Transportation Commission's Transit Capital Vision Report (approved on May 9, 2014) recognizes that, although the City does not operate its own transit service, it has an influence over how well transit services perform along FTN corridors. This includes influencing demand for transit by co-locating appropriate land uses with transit services, connecting pedestrians and bicycles to the transit network, providing convenient, safe, and comfortable transit stops and commuter parking facilities, and maintaining roadways, traffic signals, and other infrastructure that support efficient and reliable operations. Informed by public input, technical studies, and market analyses, the Commission's Transit Capital Vision Report recommends investments that would help the City realize its proposed 2030 Frequent Transit Network, thereby enabling more people to reach more destinations in less time.

What are Transportation Commissioners and staff sharing with Council?
At tonight's meeting the Transportation Commission and staff seek Council feedback on the Draft Transit Master Plan that merges the three major service, capital, and policy elements. The draft plan presents a bold vision supported by practical, achievable strategies in the near term that establish a foundation for longer-term improvements through the 2030 plan horizon year. This will be another opportunity for Council feedback prior to plan adoption.

NEXT STEPS:
After a public hearing held before the Transportation Commission on June 26, 2014, staff will return to Council on July 7, 2014 seeking formal adoption of the Bellevue Transit Master Plan. Upon acceptance, the TMP will inform the region's transit service providers of Bellevue's priorities. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan policies relating to transit will be updated to reflect the Transit Master Plan's "Abundant Access" vision statement and market-driven strategies.

ATTACHMENTS:
Attachment 1 – Draft Bellevue Transit Master Plan (provided under separate cover and also available on the project page http://www.bellevuewa.gov/transit-plan-involvement.htm).

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY:
- Transit Capital Vision Report (May 2014)
- Transit Service Vision Report (October 2013)