CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

January 8, 2015
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Lampe, Commissioners Bishop, Chirls, Larrivee, Simas, Tanaka, Zahn

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Mike Ingram, Kurt Latt, Kristi Oosterveen, Mark Poch, Darek Jarzynski, Eric Miller, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Larrivee who arrived at 7:21 p.m.

3. STAFF REPORTS

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald said a date in February is being sought on which to hold a meeting of all of the boards and commissions that have played a role in developing content for the Comprehensive Plan update. The focus of the meeting will be on the major changes from the 2004 Comprehensive Plan and what will be going forward to the City Council.

Mr. McDonald noted that the Council had approved a $5 million budget for implementation of the projects recommended by the Commission through the Downtown Transportation Plan. The projects will be brought online over the next six years. Some of the projects are already in the pipeline.

Commissioner Simas noted that on 140th Avenue NE near Sammamish High School the city has been working on the crosswalks. He asked at what point when crosswalk improvements are made does the city go all the way and include lights in the pavement. Senior Transportation Engineer Kurt Latt said every crossing is unique depending on traffic volumes and kind of pedestrian activity. Funding also dictates treatment. In the case of the crosswalks to the south of the high school on 140th Avenue NE the upgrades being made are intended to comply with ADA requirements; the budget was not sufficient to include flashing lights.

Senior Transportation Engineer Darek Jarzynski said the crosswalks that were updated were not in compliance with the ADA requirements. The grade was fixed and the width was

increased. The crosswalk closest to the high school has a flashing beacon. The city's approach is to go above and beyond what is required.

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

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Bishop reported that he attended the Washington Policy Center Solutions Summit on January 7. The element on transportation included a talk by state senator Curtis King, chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, who said he believes the legislators will get a transportation package approved during the current session. Senator King added that he has been hearing support for earmarking a portion of the new gas tax for the Transportation Improvement Board to help fund city arterial streets.

Commissioner Bishop noted that earlier in the day he attended the coalition Chamber of Commerce meeting. Commissioner Simas said at that meeting state representative Judith Clibborn said she is hopeful the legislature will be able to pass a transportation package. There seems to be movement on the part of legislators in the direction of doing something with the gas tax, which is seen as the most viable method of raising revenues for transportation projects.

Commissioner Zahn reported that she would be attending the upcoming Transportation Research Board conference in Washington, D.C. She said she hoped to bring back a lot of information.

Commissioner Zahn also reported that she recently returned from a 12-day trip to Hong Kong where she was able to observe firsthand how well-oiled the transportation system in that city is. Nearly all of their sidewalks are designed to accommodate impaired pedestrians. In the main part of the city, people get around by walking and by taking the bus or tram; very few ride bicycles because the congestion level is such that there is little room for bicycles. Outside the city a large number of people commute by bicycle.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Chirls. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Simas and it carried unanimously.

8. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. 116th Avenue NE Proposed Rechannelization

Mr. Ingram reminded the Commissioners that during the upcoming 2015 overlay season the opportunity exists to rechannelize 116th Avenue NE between NE 12th Street and Northup Way by removing one of the two northbound travel lanes and adding bicycle lanes. The issue was first broached with the Commission in September. Information regarding a staff-conducted analysis of the project was shared with the Commission in November, including answers to questions raised by City Councilmembers and by individual Commissioners. In December a public open house event was conducted.

A motion to accept the proposal was made by Commissioner Simas. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bishop.

Mr. Latt noted that the Commission packet included the public comments received to date divided into three sections: emails and letters received prior to the December 11 open house; comments received at the open house; and comments received following the open house. He said the expectation is that comments will continue to be submitted up to the time the project is implemented and even after; all comments will be compiled and tracked. He stated that the city has a program in place that collects daily traffic counts and peak hour turning movement volumes for the surrounding intersections. An annual bicycle count will also be made. There are cameras in the surrounding intersections and the recordings will be studied from time to time to monitor the queuing of traffic. A speed study may be conducted in the vicinity of NE 20th Street; that may be sufficient to paint a good before and after picture.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Chirls, Mr. Latt said the peak hour counts are typically done between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Within that three-hour period, the 60-minute period with the highest volume is considered to be the peak hour. The annual counts are compared to determine trends. Turning movement counts are done at the traffic signal, which relative to the project means 116th Avenue NE at NE 12th Street and and Northup Way. The Northup Way intersection will be under construction soon so collecting data will be a bit off.

Commissioner Zahn suggested the transmittal memo should include a statement indicating that staff will be monitoring the outcomes and an explanation of what the monitoring will include.

Commissioner Simas suggested that data collected within the first year of completing the project would not be of much value given that it takes people that long just to change their behaviors. He added that the possible rezoning of the area could change traffic patterns dramatically. The transmittal memo should include a mechanism by which an evaluation would be triggered should there be any rezone activity to determine if the bike lane should be restored back to a primary vehicle lane.

Mr. Ingram said rezone activities typically include an evaluation of the transportation system to determine the extent to which it can sustain changes the rezone might bring about. The zoning along 116th Avenue NE was changed in 2009 as part of the Bel-Red corridor study to allow for some increased density. By policy, a review is conducted every five years to determine if additional rezone activity is warranted. Private property owners can submit rezone requests on an annual basis, and in fact such a request was made in 2013 for a property along 116th Avenue NE. Neither the staff or the Planning Commission supported the request and it was ultimately denied. There are currently no city plans to rezone any of the area.

Commissioner Simas added that should the Burlington Northern/Sante Fe corridor get developed with a bike path that serves as a wonderful substitute for the proposed bike lane on 116th Avenue NE, consideration should be given to converting the bike lane back to a vehicle lane. It should be clear up front that change in the form of rezones or development of the Burlington Northern/Sante Fe corridor might trigger the need for additional change.

Commissioner Zahn agreed that adding the provisos to the transmittal memo would address some concerns that were voiced by the public.

A motion to approve the transmittal memo, including the suggested edits, was made by Commissioner Chirls. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bishop and it carried

unanimously.

B. 2016-2027 Transportation Facilities Plan

The Commissioners were provided with copies of a document outlining the completion status for the primary bicycle corridors. Mr. Ingram noted that a few adjustments were made to the 2013 version of the same document that had been included in the packet.

Mr. Ingram allowed that none of the five east-west corridors and six north-south corridors priority bicycle corridors are complete. There is policy direction in the pedestrian/bicycle plan and in the Comprehensive Plan to complete two east-west and two north-south corridors by 2019. One segment of the southern portion of the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project has been completed, and the segment to the north of the completed section is funded in the CIP just approved by the Council, though the work will not occur until the last four years of the seven-year plan.

By way of full disclosure, Commissioner Bishop stated that his property fronts West Lake Sammamish Parkway in the section of the corridor to be tackled next.

Mr. Ingram said a street overlay is planned for a portion of Lakemont Boulevard that will include channelizing for five-foot bike lanes.

Commissioner Chirls asked if any of the projected bicycle projects include protected bike lanes. Mr. Ingram said protected bike lanes were not part of the toolkit when the pedestrian/bicycle plan was adopted in 2009. Some of the projects, however, do include separated paths, including the alignment along I-90 that is part of the Mountains To Sound Greenway, a portion of Coal Creek Parkway, and the Burlington Northern/Sante Fe rail corridor.

Mr. Ingram said the new Spring Boulevard will extend from just to the east of 116th Avenue NE to 120th Avenue NE and will go up and over the East Link rail line and the current Burlington Northern/Sante Fe alignment. That segment will include a separated path on the north side that connects to the existing separated path on the bridge that crosses I-405. Further to the east along the Spring Boulevard alignment is the section where the East Link project will rebuild what is currently NE 16th Street and what is currently 136th Avenue NE. The rebuild project will include bike lanes adjacent to the vehicle travel lanes, with a 2-foot buffer along the NE 16th Street segment. There is no funding identified for the middle section of Spring Boulevard.

At one time it was anticipated that the Northup Way project that will get under way in 2015 would extend all the way up NE 24th Street to the trailhead of the SR-520 trail. However, in delving into how to accomplish that, things quickly became very complex because of a retaining wall owned by the state that will be rebuilt when access to SR-520 is added to and from the east. There are currently bike lanes for most but not all of that segment and does not make sense to address it until the state rebuilds the 124th Avenue NE interchange.

Commissioner Bishop noted that a multiuse pathway is planned to run adjacent to the light rail alignment on Bellevue Way. Mr. Ingram said that will be a very nice facility, though due to constraints some portions of it will need to narrow down.

Mr. Ingram said a great deal of work went into deciding which pedestrian/bicycle projects

should be included in the current TFP, which was updated about three years ago. The pedestrian/bicycle projects in the 2009-2021 TFP that were identified as high priority were considered, along with the projects identified in the Eastgate/I-90 plan that had just been adopted, and projects related to East Link. In all there were 33 projects evaluated, 13 of which were deemed important enough to include in the TFP. The projects in the currently adopted TFP align quite well with what staff is proposing for the pedestrian/bicycle implementation initiative.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that the projects in the current TFP total $271.5 million, of which 19 percent is earmarked for pedestrian/bicycle projects. Only about eight percent of all trips are pedestrian/bicycle trips.

Commissioner Simas commented that the 19 percent figure is an interesting number but does not really imply anything. Commissioner Zahn agreed and suggested it should in terms of the relevance of change over a 10- or 20-year period.

Commissioner Bishop suggested the modesplit of how trips are made should be tied to how the city spends its transportation dollars. Commissioner Chirls said he could accept that reasoning, but pointed out that the projects will serve the city well beyond the 12-year time span of the plan. The vision of where Bellevue wants to be in the future should weigh heavily in making funding decisions.

Mr. Ingram said the proposal of the staff is to align the TFP with the pedestrian/bicycle implementation initiative. The projects in the current TFP in fact do just that, therefore no new reassessment is needed. Three of the seven principles guiding the pedestrian/bicycle implementation initiative align with the TFP purpose and scope, namely: "Undertake assessments and predesign analyses to advance projects from concept to final design/implementation;" "Advance implementation of the priority bicycle corridors;" and "Determine where pedestrian/bicycle investments can improve the connectivity of the multimodal transportation system."

Mr. Ingram allowed that projects cost a fair amount of money. The problem is the city has limited funding available. In many cases where the pedestrian/bicycle implementation initiative recognizes the priority of a project, a modest amount of money has been allocated to advance the preliminary design aimed at flushing out the concepts.

Mr. Ingram said quite a lot of work was done several years ago in figuring out which pedestrian/bicycle projects to include in the TFP. The fact is little has changed since. Conducting a new analysis likely would yield pretty much the same list. The logical approach going forward is to focus on aligning the pedestrian/bicycle projects in the TFP with the projects in the pedestrian/bicycle implementation initiative.

There was general consensus on the part of the Commissioners in favor of taking that approach.

Mr. Ingram said a major part of the pedestrian/bicycle implementation initiative emphasis is on building out the priority bicycle corridors. In point of fact, nearly all of the pedestrian/bicycle projects in the current TFP are along the priority bicycle corridors. The two exceptions are Eastgate Way, a project that came out of the Eastgate/I-90 planning process, and Newport Way, which came from the neighborhood and the City Council.

Commissioner Bishop asked if there are any specific pedestrian/bicycle projects aimed at improving access to and from Bellevue College. Mr. Ingram said part of the transit project includes weather protection for people accessing transit along 142nd Avenue SE, and that could be called a pedestrian project. Other than that, there are no new facilities identified for that area.

Mr. Ingram said the specific recommendation of staff was to review the 13 pedestrian/bicycle projects in the current TFP and update their descriptions if warranted; carry the projects forward for consideration in the new TFP process; and defer to the pedestrian/bicycle implementation initiative as the primary process for project advancement without undertaking a separate pedestrian/bicycle candidate project identification and evaluation process.

Commissioner Larrivee called attention to the Bellevue College connection to the park and ride and asked if it is characterized as a pedestrian/bicycle project. Mr. Ingram said it is not listed as a pedestrian/bicycle project specifically. The current TFP only includes the section from the college to the start of the bridge, and whether or not to expand the scope to more closely match what came out of the Eastgate/I-90 planning process will be discussed in conjunction with the roadway/intersection project.

There was consensus among the Commissioners in favor of moving forward with the 13 pedestrian/bicycle projects that are in the current TFP.

Commissioner Chirls pointed out that as previously indicated protected bike lanes were not a part of the tool kit when the current pedestrian/bicycle plan was put together. He asked when adding the factor to the tool kit might be discussed. Mr. Ingram said that would be a good question to ask of Senior transportation planner Franz Loewenherz. Ms. Oosterveen added that in honing down the project descriptions protected bike lanes could be included as an attribute for consideration.

Commissioner Bishop observed that project EW-3, the gap in SE 16th Street, which the Commission has pushed for a long time, was a mystery to the Council during the CIP update. The neighborhood leader stepped up to voice the opinion that the project was not a good idea. Mr. Ingram said according to the proposed approach the project would be carried forward, though it could possibly be scaled back. Ms. Oosterveen added that the project had CIP funds allocated to it to bring the design to 60 percent, in part because of the need to align with the new Puget Sound Energy lines.

With regard to the dollar figures for the projects, Capital Programming Implementation Manager Eric Miller clarified that going forward the past expenditure figures will be shown. Those dollars will not, however, count against what will be available to program for new things in the new three-period being added to the TFP. He noted that the previous CIP had more than $8 million earmarked for West Lake Sammamish Parkway, and the current TFP adds another $8 million or so. Because a similar amount is actually funded in the CIP, the Commission is free to decide whether or not the third phase should be funded with TFP dollars.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Chirls about the $1 million for the Burlington Northern/Sante Fe corridor, Mr. Miller said that is a CIP allocation and thus automatically rolls into the TFP process. If the money is spent in 2015, the ultimate plan for the corridor will be advanced accordingly; if the funds are not spent in 2015, they will roll over into 2016. The funds may well be used to purchase a piece of the corridor from King County.

TFP projects should be considered, along with anything new coming out of the Downtown Transportation Plan, high-priority capital projects in the Bellevue Transit Plan, unfunded projects in the adopted Transportation Improvement Program, proposals made by staff and the public, suggestions made by the Commission, and projects reviewed in the last cycle that did not make the cut.

Commissioner Chirls asked why projects that previously did not make the cut would be considered as candidate projects. Mr. Ingram said there are some very good projects that did not make the list last time around for one reason or another.

Commissioner Zahn asked if there was a need to reduce the source list to reduce the Commission's workload. Commissioner Tanaka argued against staking that approach. He pointed out that staff will do the heavy lifting when it comes to winnowing the projects from the various project lists.

Mr. Ingram noted that the Commission had previously indicated a desire to see some adjustments made to the terminology for the roadway/intersection criteria and offered draft revisions for review.

Commissioner Zahn indicated her general support for the revised wording for the transit criteria but suggested the revised language for the other criteria did not significantly add anything by way of clarity. She suggested, however, that the verb "improve" should not be included.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bishop, Mr. Ingram said he received from Mr. Loewenherz a list of the top transit capital projects. He said he intends to score several of them according to the roadway/intersection criteria to see how well they do. If they do not do well in the scoring, it may be a good idea to have a separate category just for transit projects.

Commissioner Zahn commented that there are non-transit projects that will potentially help further transit. Any project that helps reduce the number of cars on a main street will reduce congestion, and thus improve transit speeds. In that vein, one mode might actually help other mode, such as when bicycles gain a dedicated path out of the way of cars. Mr. Miller pointed out that the Bellevue Way HOV lane project is a priority project in the Transit Master Plan, and it is in the TFP as being fully funded. The project is not, however, technically a transit project.

Commissioner Chirls asked if the indirect consequences resulting from projects are considered in the scoring process. Mr. Ingram said to some extent they are depending on the particular scoring scheme.

Commissioner Larrivee asked how the city's ADA compliance efforts are factored into the scoring process. Mr. Ingram said during the last cycle some ADA weighting was integrated into the non-motorized category.

Commissioner Zahn suggested the non-motorized category description should be revised to make it clear that it includes ADA by referring to being connected and accessible.

Commissioner Larrivee pointed out that the way in which projects are scored will not be affected by changing the wording of the categories. The Commission previously agreed to work with the approved percentages and then have a richer conversation in a retreat setting.

9. OLD BUSINESS - None

10. NEW BUSINESS - None

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - None

13. REVIEW COMMISSION CALENDAR AND AGENDA

The Commission reviewed its calendar and list of upcoming agenda items.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lampe adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Kevin O'M Donald — 2/12/15

Secretary to the Transportation Commission — Date

Scott Lampe

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission — Date