

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES

March 23, 2006  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue Botanical Garden  
Visitor Center

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vice Chair Young, Commissioners Glass, Holler,  
Wendle, Yuen

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Bell, Commissioner Northey

STAFF PRESENT: Franz Loewenherz, Eric Miller, Kristi Oosterveen, Kris  
Liljeblad, Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Vice-Chair Young who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Bell and Commissioner Northey, both of whom were excused.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

A. 2007-2012 Transportation Improvement Program

Commissioner Young opened the public hearing.

Mr. Jim Hunt, 12817 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Kirkland, thanked the Commissioners for their past support of bicycle facilities in Bellevue. He said some feel that bike lanes are expensive and unnecessary, especially those who do not bike themselves or see bicycling as an alternative to automobile travel; those people have trouble appreciating the value of good bicycle facilities. The freeways in Bellevue are congested with traffic; even far away from the freeways the noise can clearly be heard. He urged the Commission to continue its support of local and regional bicycle travel as a transportation option by continuing to build bike lanes in the city.

There were no other persons wishing to address the Commission.

Commissioner Young closed the public hearing.

4. STAFF REPORTS

Senior Planner Franz Loewenherz informed the Commission that a new advisory group on aging is being formed. The group will function within the Parks & Community Services department. Those wanting to participate in the group must be 50 years old or older, and representation from the Transportation Commission is desired.

Mr. Loewenherz said he will be working with the group on mobility options for the elderly.

Mr. Loewenherz noted that responses to questions raised by Commissioners have been drafted and delivered. A response regarding the 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE boardwalk will be sent out soon.

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

6. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Wendle thanked staff for responding to questions raised by the Commission. He said the data regarding quiet pavement technologies was very interesting, particularly the indication that noise reduction is much less where speeds are under 40 miles per hour, which means the technology does not have the desired effect on city streets.

Commissioner Glass said he traveled to Portland on March 10 with other members of the Bel-Red Corridor Study steering committee to observe the light rail system. He said the tour was very informative, adding that he was very impressed with how fast light rail is compared to bus travel.

Commissioner Holler asked how full the light rail cars are. Commissioner Glass said the tour was during the middle of the day so the cars were not jam packed. There were, however, a lot of people using it even then. During the commute hours the system is heavily used.

Commissioner Yuen said he attended a public meeting hosted by the Washington State Department of Transportation regarding I-405 project in Renton. He said there was a very good turnout.

7. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

8. STUDY SESSION

A. 2007-2012 Transportation Improvement Program List Approval

Kristi Oosterveen, CIP Coordinator, noted that under state law cities are required to approve a Transportation Improvement Program project list. The public hearing, which was held earlier in the evening, is also mandated.

Ms. Oosterveen said the project list presented for the public hearing includes the revisions made by the Commission at its previous meeting.

Commissioner Young called attention to Project #22 on the project list, Northup Way corridor improvements, and said it seems the scope of the project includes what was asked for in an email received from a member of the public in terms of gutter, sidewalk and bike lanes where missing from Bellevue Way to NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street. Observing that \$439,000 has been secured for the project, he asked what that will buy given the total project cost of \$13.9 million. Ms. Oosterveen said the \$439,000 was approved two cycles ago in the CIP for a pre-design study of the entire corridor. The project was included in on the 2006-2017 Transportation Facilities Plan project list for early implementation dollars. The project will probably need to go forward in a phased approach, and the pre-design study is intended to scope out the phasing priorities in conjunction with working with the local community; the study, which is slated to start in 2007, will also take into account how the project could be impacted by the Trans-Lake Washington project.

Commissioner Wendle commented that Northup Way serves as a primary east-west link on the north end of the city.

Capital Programming Manager Eric Miller explained that the project cost is high because of the need to acquire rights-of-way, and because there is a stream crossing that will involve some bridging; there is also a need for retaining walls, and there will be surface water management issues to address.

Motion to accept and forward to the City Council the proposed Transportation Improvement Program project list was made by Commissioner Yuen. Second was by Commissioner Wendle and the motion carried unanimously.

#### B. 2007-2013 Capital Investment Program Update Process

Ms. Oosterveen explained that the process to update the Capital Investment Program (CIP) is initiated every two years. She provided the Commission with a handout indicating the currently adopted projects and ongoing programs in the 2005-2011 CIP, and a list of projects that will be coming out of the CIP either because they are under construction, are in final implementation, or have been completed.

Mr. Miller commented that during the update process the Commission and the city as a whole will be afforded the opportunity to reevaluate the projects and programs in the current CIP and

make a determination as to their funding levels. The review is particularly apropos relative to projects that have not yet begun since there may be new projects that should be given a higher priority. During the update process, everything will be on the table for discussion.

Ms. Oosterveen said candidate projects for inclusion in the 2007-2013 CIP include the Commission approved 2006-2017 Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) project list and projects remaining in the current CIP.

Mr. Miller said the City Council is about to hold a retreat at which one likely topic will be the budget process. Staff will let the Commission know if there is any policy framework or direction that will be applicable to the update process.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Wendle, Ms. Oosterveen said data showing the percentage of the overall CIP allocated to transportation projects going back to 1998 is shown in the State of Mobility Report. Mr. Miller added that over the last seven to ten years the allocation to transportation projects has experienced a downward trend as a percentage of the total CIP.

Commissioner Wendle said the trend lines should be considered and brought to the attention of the Council and the community as part of the update process. Mr. Liljeblad said the Commission has communicated with the Council regarding the trend lines. The Council responded by observing that some very large expenditures were attached to Access Downtown and other major projects, and that it is not necessarily fair to decry the downward trend given the commitment to large, one-time projects. He allowed that backing out some of the legacy projects from the overall transportation analysis could yield a more accurate trend line.

Ms. Oosterveen said the budget office has released some very preliminary numbers for the 2007-2008 budget. The anticipation is that for the 2009-2011 timeframe there will be approximately \$15.2 million in available resources after taking into consideration the rest of the expenditures in the current plan. For 2012-2013, the projection is for additional resources totaling \$33.4 million after accounting for ongoing programs. Over the last five CIP cycles, the allocation to the transportation department has averaged 45.9 percent of the total CIP; that trend, if extended out, would mean \$6.9 million in available resources for 2009-2011, and \$15.3 million for 2012-2013.

The Commissioners were reminded that during the last CIP update process the Council made the decision that instead of assigning specific dollar amounts to specific projects there would be only a line item for transportation projects shown as an available resource allocation. Staff has not been given any indication one way or the other as to whether or not the Council will want to go in that same direction with the next CIP. Given direction to the contrary, the Commission should move ahead with the task of prioritizing a project list.

Commissioner Glass asked what dollars are available for the years 2007 and 2008. Mr. Miller

said the available revenues for those years have been programmed to projects.

Mr. Liljeblad said the historical approach of dividing all available revenues by department may not be coming back. He said a shakeup is likely to occur in a way that will identify some different buckets in which to put dollars, namely projects that cross departmental lines. He encouraged the Commission, however, to go through the exercise of prioritizing a transportation projects list given that however the dollars are divvied up there will eventually be a need to match them to priority projects.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Wendle, Mr. Liljeblad said the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) master plan is focused on optimizing signal systems generally, including in the Downtown. He said there were some recommendations made as part of the Downtown Implementation Plan that related to improving arterial traffic flow, and the specific projects have been made part of the ongoing effort. The 30-plus cameras installed at key locations around the city are an important part of the current traffic control system; many of them are focused on the Downtown. The traffic management staff watch the feeds from those cameras very carefully and tweak signals as needed to keep the traffic moving.

Ms. Oosterveen shared with the Commissioners a chart showing the impact of the ongoing maintenance and operation (M&O) costs and the new City Hall on the general CIP revenues. She noted that between 2006 and 2015 M&O costs will show a steady decline. Beginning in 2009 debt service on City Hall will spike and take a very large percentage of the total available dollars, then will begin to fall off after 2010.

With regard to the proposed public involvement process for the CIP update, Ms. Oosterveen said it closely mirrors the approach used for the TFP update in 2005. She said staff anticipates having at least six meetings with the Commission on the topic between March and November 2006. A webpage will be developed which will outline the CIP update process; list all existing and candidate projects and programs, including a clickable candidate project map; include information about the CIP open house; and will include staff contact information.

Commissioner Wendle suggested information about the process should be available at libraries and community centers. Ms. Oosterveen said the information has in the past been available at City Hall, the mini City Halls and the library. Commissioner Wendle said people who are familiar with the city generally know how to go about getting information. Having information available at libraries and community centers may generate additional comments by reaching out to those who may not be wonkish enough to follow the process electronically.

Mr. Loewenherz said there may be other linking opportunities as well, such as having information available at the meetings held in Bellevue hosted by King County Metro focused on outreach for the Central Eastside Transit Study. Commissioner Young said tapping into the various community newsletters would provide a good outreach opportunity as well.

Ms. Oosterveen said a public open house for the CIP update process is typically held in early June. The historical approach has been to post maps and information about the various projects. Staff is on hand to answer direct questions, and comment cards are made available for those who would prefer to submit written comments. The open house is generally held prior to a regular Commission meeting. The event will possibly be listed in the City Council outreach report, in an edition of *It's Your City*, and in the *King County Journal* in late May. A notice could be included in the *Neighborhood News* publication as well.

Commissioner Young proposed including a notice or article in the *Bellevue Reporter*. Ms. Oosterveen said she will investigate that option.

Commissioner Holler said the clickable map option on the city's website is a wonderful idea.

There was consensus to tentatively set the open house for June 8, 2006.

Ms. Oosterveen shared with the Commission an outline of the typical CIP update process timeline. She observed that each of the projects will be recosted as part of the process, including the ongoing programs; that work should be done by the end of April. The Commission traditionally wraps up its work by its first meeting in July. The public involvement process carries through to final adoption of the budget by the Council at its first meeting in December.

C. 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE/SE 11<sup>th</sup> Street Slide Treatment – Memo Only

Commissioner Young said he hopes there will not be any buried utilities that will present a problem for the project. Mr. Miller said staff is considering the utilities implications of the project; there are some water and sewer lines under the road and in the vicinity that will need to be taken into consideration.

9. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Young noted that a request has been made to have someone from the Transportation Commission participate in the Crossroads Center Plan process. He said Commissioner Yuen has volunteered and will be officially appointed by Chair Bell.

Mr. Loewenherz said information about the process will be shared at the joint Transportation Commission/Planning Commission meeting on April 19.

Mr. Liljeblad said the planning process was started in 2005 but was paused for a time after the community did not agree with any of the four alternatives that were developed, each of which included a fairly large amount of new residential development. The process has been restarted and it will be modeled after the successful West Lake Sammamish Parkway process. An informed group of people will be brought together to follow the process over time, each of

whom will be asked to commit to attending a series of meetings aimed at building an informed consent.

#### 10. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Liljeblad said he was present at the March 22 Planning Commission meeting at which the Wilburton/NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street study was discussed. He said the study area incorporates the area bounded by NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Street on the south, I-405 on the west and 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE on the east. The City Council applied a moratorium to the area in the summer of 2005 because of an interest shown in redeveloping one of the auto row properties with more of a General Commercial focus; the moratorium has since been lifted, but there is continued speculation about converting some of the auto-oriented uses to large-format retail.

Mr. Liljeblad said the study will be on the agenda for the April 19 joint Transportation Commission/Planning Commission meeting. One piece of the study involves the potential extension of NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street from 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE under the railroad tracks to 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Staff are currently focusing on the feasibility of the proposal and what it would cost. Because of development pressures, the project may need to go forward sooner rather than later. The city has a very real interest in preserving the opportunity; how that should be done is unclear, but one option is the TFP process. The TFP project list has been adopted, but the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for it has not been completed and no impact fees based on the list have been adopted, thus there may still be opportunity to backtrack, add the project to the list, and include it in the EIS.

Commissioner Young asked how the revenues for large-format retail compare with the revenues for auto retail. Mr. Liljeblad said a lot of people are interested in the answer to that question. Historically, auto sales taxes have been a very important part of the city's revenue stream. To some extent the answer is tied to the type of big box retail, the sales volumes, and the level of improvements put into the property which will increase the property taxes. There is the sense on the part of some that the payback for General Commercial uses get better over time following some short-term drop-offs.

#### 11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

#### 12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

##### A. February 9, 2006

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Glass. Second was by Commissioner Yuen and the motion carried unanimously.

#### 13. REVIEW CALENDAR

A. Commission Calendar and Agenda

The Commission reviewed the items scheduled for discussion in upcoming meetings.

There was general agreement to schedule the Commission retreat for April 27.

B. Public Involvement Calendar

14. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Young adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

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Secretary to the Transportation Commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

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Date