

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 14, 2009
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Northey, Commissioners Glass, Jokinen, Kiel, Larrivee, Simas, Tanaka

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: David Cieri, Goran Sparrman, Paul Krawczyk, Maria Koengeter, Chris Dreaney, Nancy LaCombe, Francine Johnson, Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Chair Northey who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

3. STAFF REPORTS

Department of Transportation Director Goran Sparrman announced that Transportation CIP Construction Manager Dave Cieri would no longer be staffing the Commission. He will pass the baton to CIP Project Manager Paul Krawczyk.

Mr. Cieri said he has enjoyed the experience and learned much from his association with the Commission.

Mr. Sparrman reminded the Commissioners that two years ago the Council directed staff to update the impact fee schedule, and to find a way to simplify it. Staff agreed with the Council that the system was complex and difficult to explain. The Council adopted a simplified process that had a single citywide district and a much simpler calculation method. The role of the Commission going forward will continue to be updating the Transportation Facilities Plan, the projects of which form the basis for the impact fees. The ordinance adopted by the Council sets the fees for the next ten years or so. Effective January 1, 2010, the rate will increase from just over \$400 to \$2000 per trip. Within six years, the fee will increase to \$5000 per trip. Of course, the Council has the authority to change the impact fee schedule at any time. The city is legally limited to how much it can assess in transportation impact fees. A formula is used to calculate the fees. Currently, the legally allowed maximum is \$8300 per trip. The proposed \$5000 limit allows for a substantial buffer.

Commissioner Simas asked if the current \$8300 ceiling is something that changes annually based on some variables. Mr. Sparrman said that is the case. Transportation impact fees can only be charged for projects that add capacity. The list of selected capacity projects in the TFP drives the calculation.

Answering a question asked by Chair Northey, Mr. Sparrman allowed that the city is facing a significant challenge about how to finance the plan. The fee has been increased, but the city is not expecting any real development to occur within the next two or three years. That fact coupled with the general state of the economy is driving a revenue shortfall. Staff will be working over the next three months or so reviewing the current CIP and what is happening to the revenues, and will bring back to the Council a more complete picture and options.

Chair Northey said one of the big issues still unresolved is the notion of how much will be paid for local improvement districts. Some of the assumptions were aggressive. The city has steered clear of LIDs for some time, and as it heads in that direction there may be some pushback from affected property owners. From a policy perspective, the notion of shared responsibility between the business community, development and the citizens could all end up on the back of the citizens.

Mr. Sparrman reported that earlier in the day the Sound Transit board acted on the East Link project. The preferred alignment will cross I-90, utilize the B-3 modified alignment up Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue SE to the Red Lion site, then utilize the at-grade option T-4A with its one-way couplet, and utilize the C-3T tunnel option under 108th Avenue NE between Main Street and NE 12th Street, taking it at least to 15 percent engineering before a decision is made between C-3T and the at-grade alignment. At the last minute the city tried to get the board to agree to the C-2T tunnel option; the board agreed with the questions asked and directed Sound Transit staff to continue doing the technical work necessary to answer the questions. C-3T goes west on Main Street, goes north under 108th Avenue NE all the way to 112th Avenue NE and then goes east over I-4. C-2T goes west on Main Street to 106th Avenue NE before turning north and goes underneath the Galleria, turns right and goes east under the Pedestrian Corridor, under the transit center, surfaces between City Hall and the convention center in a portal, crosses 112th Avenue NE and I-405, then goes north along the BNSF corridor. The Sound Transit board agreed with the recommendation of the city for the alignment through the Bel-Red corridor.

Mr. Sparrman said the Sound Transit board put the spotlight on Bellevue to find ways to close the funding gap between the at-grade and tunnel options. The difference stands at about \$500 million, though that amount likely can be reduced to some degree.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Glass, Mr. Sparrman said all of the alternatives in the current Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be responded to in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. The alternatives that were not advanced will not see additional technical work done on them. The anticipation is that the engineering work will be at 15 percent in late 2009 or early 2010, by which time there will be enough information to make a decision between the tunnel and at-grade options. Sound Transit will then advance the preliminary preferred alignment to 30 percent engineering by late spring 2010. At that point the board will make its final selection from among all of the alignments in the analysis.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Councilmember Lee said he welcomed the opportunity to be appointed to serve as liaison to the Transportation Commission where he began his community involvement with the city almost 20 years ago. He said the Council fully understands the important work done by the Commission. He said following the election of a new Commission chair and vice-chair he will schedule a meeting with them to discuss their priorities. He said his door is always open to Commissioners with issues to discuss.

With regard to the impact fee issue, Councilmember Lee stressed the important role the Commission plays. The recommendation of the Commission for projects on the TFP serves as the foundation upon which the impact fees are built.

Councilmember Lee said Microsoft has come down on the side of a surface route through downtown Bellevue. Their intent is to save money that can be used to extend the line to the Microsoft campus and downtown Redmond. There is still work to be done, and it may ultimately be found that money can be saved while still getting an alignment that will work for everyone.

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Tanaka noted that at the last Commission retreat it was decided to form a subcommittee to develop a list of items the Commission should focus on. He said the subcommittee members were Commissioners Glass, Larrivee and himself. The list that was formulated included finding out what specific role the Commission is to play in the development of impact fees; that issue has been addressed and removed from the list.

The issues related to the East Link project were also on the list. While those issues have been addressed to some degree, many remain unaddressed. The subcommittee members were not intent on seeking to be allowed direct input, but would like to have a better understanding of the potential of the various nodes for enhancing transportation options in the rest of the community. Light rail will have a significant impact on mass transit, but to the extent the Commission can help facilitate the use of the system, there should be tie-ins to the rest of the community.

The subcommittee put on the list the need to have a better connection with the City Council. The Commission has been doing its work but has to some degree not been receiving much feedback from the Council, either bad or good.

Making sure that best management practices for reducing the impacts of transportation projects on surrounding neighborhoods was also put on the list.

The list included developing a better understanding of what the citizens of Bellevue hold as their priorities relative to transportation.

The list also included giving consideration to whether or not the right metrics are being used in measuring concurrency.

Commissioner Glass noted that there are specific plans for specific areas of the city, but some areas have no plans and there does not seem to be an overall master plan. It would be good to know what the goals are for the areas that have not been so heavily studied.

Mr. Sparrman said Councilmember Lee as liaison to the Commission will serve as the primary conduit of information between the Council and the Commission. Staff will support him in that task. He added that the Transportation Facilities Plan is the city's attempt to look at all of the transportation needs in the community for the long term; the projects that end up on the list are largely the result of work by the Commission. The fact that the TFP is financially constrained means the projects must be prioritized. Making the public involvement process more meaningful would be welcomed.

Councilmember Lee noted that while the CIP is a six-year plan, the TFP is a 12-year plan, and many of the transportation and planning studies look out 20 years or more. He allowed that there is always room for improvement in providing the public with annual updates in the form of a state of the union address focused on capital projects and how they coincide with the established priorities.

Mr. Sparrman added that staff is interested in pursuing changes to the way concurrency is measured. There is on the part of many the sentiment that the current approach is not the right approach. He added that there is a lot of work to be done in balancing the work load on the staff side. There is a lot of work to do relative to East Link station area planning given the decision of the Sound Transit board, but there are no new resources.

Chair Northey suggested that if station area planning is seen as a land use issue and therefore assigned to the planning department, the Transportation Commission will be out of the loop. That would be a concern because what is needed is are connections between the land use and the transit, roadway and non-motorized elements. Mr. Sparrman said aggressive steps are being taken toward new ways of conducting business in the city. The close partnerships among city departments that were formulated during the Bel-Red planning process are being institutionalized as the way to conduct business. All departments with legitimate issues involving the transit station areas will be at the table.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Birney Hayden, a resident of the Bridle Trails neighborhood, introduced himself and said he intends to be involved in the process. He noted that there are some big projects in the works that will take a lot of focus in the coming years, notably East Link and the SR-520 bridge rebuild. Relative to East Link, he pointed out that during the Council meetings leading up to their voting on a preferred alignment there was virtually no talk of a surface alternative, but with the vote of the Sound Transit board that may in fact be a reality. That is something that should be looked at in more depth. The Bridle Trails neighborhood is directly impacted by both the SR-520 and East Link projects. The overriding concern for the neighborhood is the Spring District development and the traffic it will generate and cause to pass through the neighborhood; it will also bring congestion to the I-405/SR-520 interchange. Connecting East Link to Redmond will help Microsoft but will also help Bellevue; with the line in place a number of commuters could avoid using their cars to go to and from work. He said as a bike rider he appreciates the first-rate signal sensors in place in Bellevue. Bicycles do not belong on sidewalks with pedestrians.

Chair Northey pointed out that the Commission is specifically barred from addressing regional issues. Any comments from citizens on the East Link project should be addressed to the Council directly.

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda as printed was made by Commissioner Glass. Second was by Commissioner Larrivee and the motion carried unanimously.

8. STUDY SESSION

A. Election of Commission Chair and Vice-Chair

Mr. Cieri explained that the Chair and Vice-Chair elects will take up their duties beginning in June.

Chair Northey opened the floor to nominations for Chair.

Motion to nominate Commissioner Tanaka to serve as Chair was made by Commissioner Simas. Second was by Commissioner Glass.

There were no additional nominations.

The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to nominate Commissioner Simas to serve as Vice-Chair was made by Commissioner Tanaka. Second was by Commissioner Glass.

There were no additional nominations.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. Rapid Ride and Downtown Circulator

Senior Planner Maria Koengeter said in 2001 the city undertook a planning process to evaluate the feasibility of a circulator service operating in the downtown. The Council appointed a citizens advisory committee which developed a route and cost information. Ultimately, the Council decided that the cost was not justifiable at that time given the ridership projections; they concluded, however, that once the downtown employment and residential populations grew, the circulator could be feasible. Subsequent work on the Downtown Implementation Plan and the city's transit plan reaffirmed support for the circulator.

A variety of factors triggered a second look at the downtown circulator: the level of growth since 2001, double-digit increases in transit ridership in the downtown, and the Transit Now initiative of King County Metro in 2006. The city partnered with Metro in a regional competition for the transit service. In 2007 the city reviewed the options for providing a circulator, offering an alternative to drive-alone intra-downtown trips, increasing transit options in the downtown, and expanding the reach of existing transit routes by providing last-mile connections. The city submitted a proposal for a financial partnership to Metro's regional competition, which was accepted and scheduled into the Transit Now partnership program.

The city and King County entered into a formal agreement in December 2008 for a downtown circulator service to start in September 2010 and continue for five years. It will operate on a

two-way U-shaped route on 110th Avenue NE, NE 10th Street, Bellevue Way and Main Street. It will have ten-minute headways and will operate Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and on seven Sundays during the holiday season. The service will be fare free to users and uniquely branded. The estimated ridership is 175,000 per year.

The Council selected the service because it has a number of key attributes attractive to riders, including high frequency operations, an easily identifiable system, an easily understood route, and no charge to riders. The total cost for the circulator service is \$9 million, one-third of which the city will bear for the five years of service. The city will also make additional investments in branding and vehicle wraps, and will pay for the service to be fare free based on actual ridership.

Ms. Koenigter said a key element of the circulator is having a unique brand, including branded vehicles and stops to make the service easy to identify. Four 19-person transit vehicles will be wrapped. The existing downtown wayfinding design template will be built on to connect to other activities going on in the downtown.

The Council is committed to providing the circulator service, though there was some discussion when the contract was approved about utilizing an extension of the planned Rapid Ride route through the downtown in lieu of a stand-alone circulator. The contract language with Metro leaves room to resolve that question. The Rapid Ride extension would have a lower operating cost and could also be branded, have high frequencies, operate on the two-way loop, and have a longer service span. In the fall of 2009, the Council along with Metro will revisit the circulator route options and either confirm the stand-alone service or elect to go with the Rapid Ride extension.

Ms. Koenigter explained that the Transit Now program adopted in 2006 included five Rapid Ride corridors. Each route is an arterial-based bus rapid transit system distinguished by a unique identity, longer hours of operation, higher speeds than traditional bus service, improved boarding for passengers, bus stops placed farther apart, and transit priority measures. The Bellevue-Redmond Rapid Ride route is scheduled to begin operations in 2011. The route will connect the transit center, Crossroads, the Overlake park and ride and the Overlake transit center, then travel north into downtown Redmond.

Planning for the Rapid Ride program began in 2007. The first step was to seek public input on the route, the stop spacing, and the service span. Metro convened an advisory committee, conducted an extensive public survey along the route, and sought input from the cities of Bellevue and Redmond. Average stop spacing along the corridor is planned to be just less than a half mile. The service will have ten-minute headways during peak hours, 15-minute headways all day, and 30-minute headways late nights on weekdays.

Rapid Ride branding and passenger amenities at the stops will distinguish the service from Metro's standard transit service. The branding will include a unique identity, unique shelters and stops, real-time travel information, and expedited fare payments. The shelters will be lit from the inside and include an emphasis on making it easy for people to understand where the route will take them. The hybrid diesel buses will have low-floor accessibility.

In addition to the partnership pursued by the city for the circulator under the Transit Now initiative, the Speed and Reliability Program offers another partnership under which

jurisdictions can make improvements to their signal systems to facilitate making transit travel speedier and more reliable. The cities of Bellevue and Redmond signed an agreement with King County in December 2008 to make some improvements along the Bellevue-Redmond Rapid Ride corridor to make the service travel more quickly. The improvements include coordinating signals, implementing moderate transit-signal priority at select locations, and getting some credit for already planned CIP projects along the corridor. The city of Redmond is making equivalent commitments for their portion of the corridor, and King County will install a number of technology improvements and award the two cities up to 10,000 award hours to be distributed as mutually agreed on.

The service is slated to begin in September 2011.

Commissioner Simas asked if the city is using a matrix to determine the viability of the circulator. He also asked what award hours are. Ms. Koengeter said the staff will return to the Council in the fall to provide information about circulator service parameters and the costs. Information will be presented with regard to the type of Rapid Ride extension that would be feasible and how much it would cost. The Council will make the final decision based on its own discretion. There is no formal matrix being used. Award hours are hours Metro has determined that cities will be able to receive and allocate based on speed and reliability improvements.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Larrivee, Ms. Koengeter said the Rapid Ride route will replace the 230 and 253 routes, and add an additional 18,000 hours to improve the frequency. The parts of those two routes that will not be covered by Rapid Ride Metro will have to look into. The process will involve the public.

Commissioner Larrivee said his worry is that those living outside the core areas will never see any benefit from the transit improvements. He asked what steps will be taken to bridge the gap between the well-used corridors and other areas. Ms. Koengeter said the revenue hours will be redeployed into Rapid Ride, which will not benefit the less-traveled corridors. The Rapid Ride routes selected are all high performing routes with the potential for more growth.

Chair Northey asked if consideration was ever given to having the Transportation Commission comment on the Rapid Ride routes. Ms. Koengeter said the Rapid Ride route process is owned by King County Metro. King County sought members of the public to participate on the advisory panel, and they sent out surveys to people on the corridors. It was their process. Chair Northey suggested that if there is ever a Phase II the Commission should be asked to play a helpful role.

Chair Northey suggested that ten-minute headways will tie up traffic on NE 8th Street, particularly the intersection at 156th Avenue NE. Ms. Koengeter said traffic analysis was conducted to evaluate where transit signal priority could be best implemented. It will only be provided at intersections that have excess capacity. Chair Northey pointed out that the current configuration of NE 8th Street means traffic stops when the buses stop. Ms. Koengeter said there will be a process undertaken when it comes time to permit the stations, and that issue can be raised then.

Commissioner Glass asked if Metro is seeking any feedback from the city regarding the Rapid Ride routes. Ms. Koengeter said the public outreach effort was conducted by Metro in 2007 and they are not currently seeking additional input.

Commissioner Glass said he liked the simplicity of Rapid Ride but questioned why a reader board is necessary if a bus is going to be coming by every ten minutes. Ms. Koengeter said the market research indicates that riders appreciate real-time signs that tell them exactly how long their wait is going to be.

Commissioner Glass suggested that the circulator would be a good addition to the transit picture in Bellevue, but worried that people might choose to use places like Bellevue Square as their parking lot and hopping on the circulator to get to their office building for work. Commissioner Jokinen pointed out that Bellevue Square keeps a very close eye on how long cars are parked in their lot and tows away those that appear to be abusing their privileges.

C. Transportation Development Code Update

Development Review Manager Chris Dreaney commented that since February when the issue was last before the Commission staff has conducted public outreach and received some very good comments. Additional clean-up changes have been made. A public hearing has been scheduled for May 28 and hopefully a recommendation from the Commission to the Council will be made at that time.

Ms. Dreaney agreed to provide the Commissioners with copies of the final draft without the strikeouts shown.

D. Main Street and NE 2nd Street Conceptual Design Update

Project Manager Francine Johnson explained that the project has four distinct elements. The first is the Main Street corridor between Bellevue Way and 116th Avenue NE where the focus is on conceptual streetscape designs and land configuration concepts. The second element is the NE 2nd Street corridor between Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue NE where the focus is also on streetscape concepts. The third element is a linear park located at NE 2nd Place and 110th Avenue NE, and the fourth is a gateway concept at Bellevue Way and Main Street. The Department of Transportation has the lead on the project but it is working closely with Planning and Community Development, Parks, Police, Fire and Utilities to help development the concepts.

Ms. Johnson said there are several initiatives in the south downtown area that overlap, including the Great Streets, Meydenbauer Park, wayfinding, arts walk and Sound Transit East Link projects.

When the project was put together Main Street and NE 2nd Street were put together in an attempt to identify design concepts that would allow the two streets to work together in balancing the transportation needs of the corridor. NE 2nd Street is seen as the vehicle-focus corridor, while Main Street is seen as a more multimodal environment. The four elements of the project are being used collectively to help create an identity for the south downtown neighborhood.

Main Street serves as a major connection to many destinations in Bellevue, both in and out of the downtown. It connects with the downtown and Downtown Park, is part of the Lake to Lake Trail, and connects to the Bellevue Botanical Gardens. The project will be used to help create a smooth transition or buffer between the residential neighborhoods to the south of Main Street

and the downtown core.

Ms. Johnson said a traffic analysis was conducted to help identify the different available options with regard to the traffic demand projected to be on the two corridors. Currently, Main Street is a five-lane corridor, and NE 2nd Street is a three-lane corridor with on-street parking. Two different scenarios were studied, the first of which was converting Main Street to three lanes, and keeping NE 2nd Street at three lanes but without the I-405 interchange. It was found that the projected traffic demand could be accommodated by the scenario, provided Main Street between 106th Avenue NE and Bellevue Way and between 110th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE would need to be four lanes. The second scenario also had three lanes on Main Street, with four lanes at the end blocks, but converted NE 2nd Street to five lanes and included the I-405 interchange.

Ms. Johnson said several general project assumptions were made going into the project. First, work to reconfigure Main Street should occur within the existing right-of-way, which is 62 feet, and the additional 12 feet of sidewalk that would be obtained through the normal development process. Second, NE 2nd Street will have a five-lane cross section when the I-405 interchange is constructed. Third, no zoning changes will be proposed as part of the project.

The Commissioners were shown the animated models for each scenario.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Simas, Capital Project Manager Nancy LaCombe explained that the model assumes that when the NE 2nd Street interchange is constructed it will not necessarily add more cars to the street but rather will pull away the traffic going to NE 8th Street and NE 4th Street.

Ms. Johnson said the conceptual design for Main Street between Bellevue Way and 116th Avenue NE includes lane configuration options, pedestrian, bicycle and landscaping options, and open space opportunities. The full buildout scenarios are all dependent on the redevelopment of Main Street to get the 12-foot sidewalks on each side. That development could take a while to occur, so the plan is to make sure that whatever is there in the interim will work better than what is currently in place.

The main urban design element is a large promenade on the north side of Main Street. Located there it will capture the maximum solar exposure, possibly for outdoor seating but certainly for open air strolling through the corridor. The 18-foot sidewalk and four-foot landscape buffer is coupled with on-street parking and bike lanes in each direction. The design includes three travel lanes, and on the south side a 13-foot section that allows for a landscape buffer and sidewalk.

Commissioner Larrivee asked why consideration is being given to including on-street parking along what will likely be a significant bicycle corridor. Ms. Johnson said the design team members threshed out that question as well before concluding that on-street parking is needed to activate the spaces along the promenade. There is no on-street parking contemplated for the south side of the street. Ms. LaCombe added that on-street parking adds a traffic calming element.

Several photo simulations were shared with the Commissioners.

Ms. Johnson said the second scenario has the same amount of right-of-way but has enhanced

landscaping. In order to accomplish that, the promenade on the north side is expanded by two feet. The scenario includes on-street parking, but narrowed to nine feet from ten feet. The scenario assumes a bike lane where the roadway climbs, but only a sharrows in the downhill portions of the roadway. A vertical curb treatment is included on the south side to accommodate the bicycle facilities.

Chair Northey said in her opinion sharrows do not provide safety for bicyclists. The city should be seeking to provide more safety not less.

Photo simulations for the second scenario were shared with the Commissioners.

Turning to NE 2nd Street, Ms. Johnson noted that previous consideration has been given to the cross section, including the five-lane configuration and open space opportunities. The current project focuses on streetscape design concepts that will soften the cross section and make the corridor enjoyable to walk along. Generous sidewalks are included on both sides of the roadway. One option for the interim would be to use the two outside lanes for parking, which would reduce the cross section to three lanes. That would be accomplished through the use of marked or textured pavement. The full buildout scenario would take the on-street parking and convert it to travel lanes

The interim cross section has the same sidewalk widths. There would be two midblock crossings, one at 105th Avenue NE and one between 108th Avenue NE and 110th Avenue NE; the latter would connect to the linear park.

Ms. Johnson said the thinking with regard to the linear park concept is to construct using the four parcels at NE 2nd Place and 110th Avenue NE acquired when 110th Avenue NE was extended. The ultimate goal would be to acquire additional properties, but just when that could happen is unknown. In order to move forward, the decision was made to phase the project. In the first phase, the focus would be on the four properties under the control of the city. The second phase would include an attempt to acquire the two properties to the east. At full buildout the desire is to have the full strip between 108th Avenue NE and 111th Avenue NE.

Ms. LaCombe explained that the agreement signed by the city and the ATI-Marriott folks indicated that if the city purchases the adjacent properties, they will give up their rights of vacation of the street half that is adjacent to their property. That would mean the entire street could be vacated, allowing for a much larger park.

Answering a question asked by Chair Northey, Ms. LaCombe said the NE 2nd Street project has \$7.4 million allocated to it, of which about \$6.9 million has been earmarked for right-of-way acquisition. Parks can also come to the table with funds for purchasing the parcels.

Ms. Johnson said not all of NE 2nd Place would be taken during the first phase. The thought is that NE 2nd Place would be dead-ended on the east side of 110th Avenue NE. The challenge will be to get the four corners relate to each other so they are treated as a whole park. That can be done by vacating NE 2nd Place and creating a connection between the two parcels, while at the same time creating a raised intersection at 110th Avenue NE.

In the second phase all of NE 2nd Place between 110th Avenue NE and 111th Avenue NE would be vacated. In addition, the two properties to the east would be acquired. There is a significant grade difference that could be utilized by incorporating a water feature.

Chair Northey asked why so much pedestrian activity should be encouraged across 110th Avenue NE if NE 2nd Street is going to become a major access point to I-405. Ms. LaCombe said the idea is to create a linear park connecting everything between 111th Avenue NE and 108th Avenue NE. There is a lot of residential in the area already and more is anticipated.

With regard to the gateway treatment at Main Street and Bellevue Way, Ms. Johnson said it is the first of five downtown gateways to be developed. The opportunity was included in the project because of some development planned at the southwest corner of Bellevue Way and Main Street; the city worked with the developer to incorporate pieces of the gateway into their design. While the five downtown gateways do not need to mirror each other, there should be some unity. Each of the sites has different size restrictions and should be allowed the flexibility to implement something that will reflect the particular site.

A park theme has preliminarily been considered for the Main Street and Bellevue Way gateway. The site is part of the art circuit, the landscaping circuit, and the shopping circuit. It is also quite close to Downtown Park. How it will be interpreted has not yet been decided.

The major parameters decided on for the gateway are integrating artwork onto the signal poles; the use of landscaping; incorporating freestanding pedestrian covers; and using pavement treatments to celebrate the intersections. The thinking is that the gateway column idea should be the unifying form for each of the gateways; that would provide a good opportunity for each gateway to use different materials and angles to reflect their particular identity.

Answering a question asked by Chair Northey, Ms. LaCombe explained that Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne has been a part of the team, so having an artistic treatment or an arts component at the various gateway locations has been considered.

Commissioner Glass commented that the raised intersection at 110th Avenue NE could impede the flow of traffic. He suggested that pedestrians should simply cross the street at a normal crosswalk.

With regard to NE 2nd Street, he suggested that with all the economic pressures the city is facing there may be some cost savings associated with constructing the project in its entirety up front rather than in phases.

Ms. Johnson said an open house event for the project is slated for May 19 at City Hall. Comments received will be brought back to the Commission for review before the Commission makes a final recommendation to the Council.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None
10. NEW BUSINESS – None
11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None
12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. March 12, 2009

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

13. REVIEW CALENDAR

A. Commission Calendar and Agenda

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

B. Public Involvement Calendar

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Northey adjourned the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date