CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

January 10, 2013
7:45 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:	Chair Simas, Commissioners Bishop, Glass, Lampe, Larrivee, Tanaka
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:	Commissioner Jokinen
STAFF PRESENT:	Paul Krawczyk, Kevin McDonald, Mike Mattar, Department of Transportation
OTHERS PRESENT:	None
RECORDING SECRETARY:	Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:08 p.m. by Chair Simas who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. STAFF REPORTS

Senior Project Manager Paul Krawczyk reminded the Commissioners about the January 24 Comprehensive Plan update scoping meeting from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. He also reminded them about the transit forum scheduled for January 31 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and noted that Commissioners are encouraged to attend.

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

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Bishop said she met recently with Judy Clark to review details of the modeling process. He said he gained some insights as a result of the meeting and at the appropriate time would like to pose some clarifying questions.

Chair Simas directed Commissioner Bishop to write down his questions so they can be submitted to Ms. Clark with a request to answer the questions.

Commissioner Bishop reported that he will have the NE 6th Street issues written out for discussion at the next Commission meeting. He said he has been in communication with Bill Eager and Bruce Nurse with Kemper Development; because they have pieces of the information, they should be part of the agenda discussion aimed at determining if there would be value in delving a little deeper into the notion of a NE 6th Street tunnel.

Answering a question asked by Design Division Manager Mike Mattar, Commissioner Bishop said if the tunnel is to be considered, it should be included in the modeling exercise. It will take the modeling staff time and effort to do that work, and before the Commission goes to the Council to present the notion, there should be some estimation of the amount of staff time that would be needed.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jim McIssac, 381 129th Place NE, a member of the Eastside Transportation Association, said he has been tapped to follow the process of the emerging transit plan for downtown Bellevue and the city. He said he has been looking at the models, but the city's BKR model and the Puget Sound Regional Council (PKRC) model. The models show a sixfold increase in transit ridership by 2030, but none of the service plans even begin to address how that will be accomplished. There are some 20 routes serving the downtown, but their frequency and patronage will need to be doubled, then tripled, in order to meet the projected 2030 need.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lampe about funding, Mr. McIssac pointed out that King County Metro is scrambling to maintain what they have going currently, and Sound Transit is putting most of its money into a single light rail line, and in a couple of years will likely seek more funds from the public to extend that line to downtown Redmond. There are no talks about funding either King County Metro or Sound Transit at the levels necessary to meet the 2030 projected need.

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

8. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Downtown Transportation Plan Update

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald quickly reviewed with the Commission the overall measures

of effectiveness for each mode of travel and the sustainability outcomes, along with the specific measures of effectiveness for transit riders. He also quickly reviewed the employment density map, the 2010 and 2030 employment figures, and the current and projected 2030 population maps.

Mr. McDonald said during the outreach efforts the community had things to say with regard to transit coverage. They wanted to ensure that the need for residents and employees to get around town will be addressed with frequent and reliable transit service, and to make sure that the hospital district is connected.

Commissioner Bishop said it was his understanding that the Dynamic modeling has not included the transit routes in the downtown and all of the bus stops. Adding in all of the buses on the various streets around the downtown would have a dramatic effect on the level of service evaluation. Mr. McDonald said issues relating to transit speed and reliability will be part of the discussion in future meetings. The Dynamic modeling work done provides an intersection level of service metric that does not consider throughput constraints caused by buses stopping in the travel lanes to load and unload passengers. Region-wide transit coverage will be discussed in the context of the transit master plan.

Mr. McDonald said the walkshed metrics proposed to be used relative to downtown transit coverage involves a direct 600-foot radius from transit stops with frequent transit service, which is defined as 15-minute-or-better headways for at least 14 hours per day. Typically a much larger radius is used for regional or citywide transit planning purposes. The 600-foot walk distance was selected because of the relatively fine-grained nature of the downtown pedestrian system with its small TAZs. The smaller scale approach will benefit the city when it comes time to discussing with King County Metro where the routes and bus stops should be located.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that the 600-foot radius around a bus stop on NE 10th Street does not quite reach to NE 8th Street because the superblocks are laid out on a 660-foot grid. The TAZ to the south of NE 8th Street is therefore not covered by a stop on NE 10th Street.

Commissioner Glass pointed out that 600-foot circles drawn on a map do not necessarily equate to an actual walk distance of 600 feet. Mr. McDonald agreed and said it would be possible but very time consuming to do a thorough walk distance analysis from each bus stop in the downtown. However, there are all manner of metrics that go into walk distance calculations, particularly in a downtown area where there is a lot of congestion. Walk speeds are variable based on intersection crossing times, topography, midblock crossings and connections through the superblocks. It would be difficult to truly document walk distances given the plenitude of variables.

Mr. McDonald said as of 2010, 86 percent of the population and employees enjoyed service coverage with frequent transit coverage, using the 600-foot radius. The projection is that by

2030 there will be a bump up to 89 percent given the projected levels of services and bus stops. He shared with the Commissioners maps showing the radius overlaps, including the walkshed analysis around the East Link light rail station showing the five-minute and ten-minute walking distances from the station at NE 6th Street and 110th Avenue NE.

The Commissioners were then shown maps of the 2010 frequent transit network delineated by routes 271, 550, and the 250/233 combination. He overlaid the maps with employee and resident numbers shown by TAZ, added icons representing transit attractions like hotels, shopping and museums, and then added the land uses and the 600-foot circles around the various bus stops. The cumulative picture indicated that the hospital district, particularly Children's Hospital, is lacking in frequent transit service, as are the northwest quadrant and some places in the southeast quadrant. There is, however, no accounting for the quality of the walk, and in many cases the walk is not overly great, particularly where it is necessary to cross a major arterial. The same maps showing the assumed 2030 transit network, including East Link, overlaid with the population and employment numbers, were shared with the Commissioners. Mr. McDonald noted that the assumed 2030 network includes some tweaks to existing routes and some additional service hours.

Mr. McDonald said when NE 6th Street is extended across the freeway to 120th Avenue NE, it might make sense to put Rapid Ride on NE 6th Street and avoid the freeway interchange on NE 8th Street. That could improve speed and reliability.

Commissioner Lampe noted that the assessment indicates the degree to which the downtown area is served by frequent transit service but says nothing about the available capacity of the transit system to serve the projected number of riders. Mr. McDonald allowed that the question of capacity has yet to be worked out. He said once the details are known they will be shared with the Commission. He agreed that addressing the capacity issue will be vitally important, adding that the planning process is not constrained by issues such as who will pay for the services.

Mr. McDonald pointed out that there are three or four transit routes focused on 108th Avenue NE between NE 8th Street and NE 10th Street. That approach allows for targeting speed and reliability improvements to the corridor that benefit multiple routes and move people through the downtown much faster. It also relieves some of the pressure on the transit center. The efficient use of 108th Avenue NE allows for removing some buses from the transit center altogether.

Commissioner Bishop asked which is more critical for the transit center, the number of buses and total curb length, or the number of riders and the need for platform space. Mr. McDonald said there is no simultaneous demand for platform space and bus queuing space. When there are a lot of passengers waiting, it is because there are no buses there to board. When the buses do come, they pick up the passengers but then face the fact that there is not enough space to get out of the transit center in an efficient way; more than one light cycle can run before the buses

full of passengers can clear the center, during which time the platforms are empty and the buses are full but not moving. It will be necessary to address these constraint.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Glass, Mr. McDonald said NE 8th Street is served currently by the 271 route, a high-frequency transit route between Issaquah and the University District. It runs on NE 8th Street south to 84th Avenue NE where it accesses SR-520. One option would be to move the route off of NE 8th Street and run it down Bellevue Way to SR-520. The route used 84th Avenue NE to avoid using SR-520 where the congestion was so bad the speed and reliability of the route was compromised, but improvements being made to SR-520 will mean the 271 route will be more efficient running on the freeway.

Mr. McDonald explained that of the 60,000 projected transit trips in 2030, 37,000 are home-based peak time trips. Those are the trips that trigger capacity constraints that will need to be addressed.

Speed and reliability is impacted by a number of factors. There are some practices that could be implemented to improve the overall picture, including transit signal priority, developing the concept of transit priority lanes, and implementing off-board fare payments. The need for sufficient layover space will need to be addressed.

Commissioner Lampe suggested that giving transit priority on 108th Avenue NE could run into the challenge of trying to maintain east-west traffic flows on NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street. Mr. McDonald said bus priority involves actions to keep the buses moving along the streets. Where light rail is concerned, left turns are restricted and signal preemption is implemented to give trains the green light no matter what. With transit signal priority, a green signal will be held just a little bit longer to accommodate an approaching bus, but it will not preempt the overall cycle.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Krawczyk reported that the city has received a grant to address a sidewalk crossing of West Lake Sammamish Parkway near Sunset elementary school. The work will be done after the West Lake Sammamish Parkway roadway improvement project is completed.

Commissioner Bishop said he had heard that the state's project for the second roundabout has been sent out for bids and that construction is set to begin during the summer of 2013. Mr. Krawczyk confirmed that information and noted that the roundabout will be at the off-ramp just north of I-90. The construction work will be done during the nighttime hours.

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jim McIssac, 381 129th Place NE, pointed out that the modeling shows about 50 percent of total trips in 2013 coming from the north and the south in the I-405 corridor. The issue is that no bus routes are shown for I-405. More of a focus needs to be given to spreading services out regionally.

Chair Simas clarified that the Commission is working under the specific parameters set by the City Council, which does not include regional issues.

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 8, 2012

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Glass. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lampe and it carried without dissent; Commissioner Tanaka abstained from voting.

13. REVIEW COMMISSION CALENDAR AND AGENDA

The Commission reviewed the calendar of upcoming items. Mr. Krawczyk urged the Commissioners to attend the transit network design workshop on January 31, which starts at 1:00 p.m.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Simas adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission — 2/14/13 Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission — 2/14/13 Date