CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

May 24, 2012
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:	Commissioners Bishop, Glass, Jokinen, Lampe, Tanaka
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:	Chair Simas, Commissioner Larrivee
STAFF PRESENT:	Paul Krawczyk, Ron Kessack, Michael Ingram, 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 Commissioner Lampe who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. STAFF REPORTS – None

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

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Bishop reported that he attended the short course training session hosted by the Planning Commission on May 23. Those who provided the training were representatives from the state Department of Commerce, an architect, a land use attorney, and a land use planner. The workshop focused on the fundamentals of planning.

Commissioner Lampe said he attended the Sound Transit board meeting held earlier in the day where the discussion included some cost-saving items for the East Link project. By the end of June the decision makers will decide which items under consideration merit further study.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Jessica Powers with Wright Runstad reported that the master development plan for the Spring District in the Bel-Red corridor was recently approved by the City Council. The approval is a key step toward realizing development around the 120th Avenue NE node. With regard to the proposed Transportation Facilities Plan project list, she suggested the Commission should consider full implementation of project 131, NE 15th Street from 116th Avenue NE to 124th Avenue NE. She noted that the segment between 120th Avenue NE and 124th Avenue NE is proposed for full implementation, but the segment from 116th Avenue NE to 120th Avenue NE is not. The multimodal corridor will include a direct connection between downtown Bellevue and 124th Avenue NE and will provide critical mobility relief at NE 8th Street and the I-405 overpass. Additionally, NE 15th Street will provide an important link between the expanding hospital district and Sound Transit's 120th Avenue NE station. Children's Hospital is closer to 120th Avenue NE than the actual hospital station. There is a cost-savings potential associated by constructing NE 15th Street in collaboration with Sound Transit's work. NE 15th Street will go over the light rail line between 116th Avenue NE and 120th Avenue NE, and Sound Transit is expected to be open for service by 2023, and the TFP time period carries through to 2024. Deferring construction of the roadway until after Sound Transit completes its work will likely increase both the cost and complexity of the project.

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

8. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Bel-Red Area Update

Interim Assistant Director Ron Kessack informed the Commission that it has become painfully obvious that the initial funding plans for the Bel-Red projects will not work under the timeframe that was anticipated. He said staff have been tasked with coming up with a plan for the projects that breaks them up into logical segments to be completed over a longer period of time. The projects will be tied where possible to things like East Link construction in order to realize economies of scale and the timing of development.

Mr. Kessack stressed that the segmentation process has not moved very far along, yet already Councilmembers and others are making additional suggestions. He said the Commission is free to make suggestions as well.

Mr. Kessack said the segment of NE 15th Street from 116th Avenue NE to 120th Avenue NE lies in Zone 1 and ties into the north side of the Pine Forest property which is north of NE 12th Street and west of 120th Avenue NE. Under the terms of the memorandum of understanding,

the city has agreed to purchase the old Teledesic site as part of the city's commitment. The Children's Hospital site to the north of NE 12th Street has already been purchased by the city. The proposal is to pursue funding for the segment to take it to the 60 percent design level. The final cross section for the roadway needs to be finalized along with the horizontal and vertical alignments. East Link will run under the roadway, and that is driving the construction costs. The project is set to be pushed out in time, partly because the capacity demand is not being seen. Catalyst projects may in the future change the timing of the $30.5 million project.

Mr. Kessack said the intention is to fund partial construction of the 120th Avenue NE project in the area of the influence of the East Link project. The project is funded for 100 percent design, and coordination with the Sound Transit and station design work.

The Zone 2 section of the NE 15th Street project between 120th Avenue NE and 124th Avenue NE is also proposed to be brought up to the 60 percent design stage. The final roadway cross section needs to be confirmed along with the horizontal and vertical alignments, how it will connect with the transit station, and how it will coordinate with the Wright Runstad project.

Mr. Kessack said the profile of 124th Avenue NE will need to be changed to allow light rail to pass under it. As part of that the intent is to build out the area influenced by Sound Transit to its ultimate design to take advantage of the economies of scale resulting from tying in with the Sound Transit project.

Mr. Kessack said the West Tributary project will include significant improvements in coordination with the parks and utilities departments. The project will be addressed in the out years, however. There will be a multipurpose pathway running through the park area and connecting to the ped-bike system on 124th Avenue NE.

There are differences between how the city and Sound Transit view NE 16th Street, and the options are being evaluated. The proposal is to advance to 30 percent design in the near term in coordination with the East Link project. There will be a transit station at NE 30th Street that will include required frontage improvements.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lampe, Mr. Kessack said there has been no talk about deferring construction of the station. That would not benefit the city in anyway, and everyone is working toward full development of the station.

Mr. Kessack said the city wants to advance the design of the section between NE 16th Street and 136th Avenue NE and make sure there is coordination with the East Link project. One option is to grade separate eastbound from westbound NE 16th Street, with a cul-de-sac on 134th Avenue NE just south of NE 16th Street and continuing 134th Avenue NE to the north of NE 16th Street at some point in the future. The city would like to have 134th Avenue NE carry all the way to Northup Way; the modeling indicates that level of service problems will arise as a result of East Link crossing at grade at the NE 20th Street/136th Avenue NE intersection, by

running 134th Avenue NE to Northup Way that issue can be alleviated.

The Commissioners were informed that Sound Transit will have to do frontage improvements along the west side of 130th Avenue NE where the park and ride will be constructed. The city, however, wants to be involved in determining the horizontal and vertical alignments to facilitate future development.

Mr. Kessack noted that the East Link project figures prominently in all of the roadway projects associated with the Bel-Red corridor. He stressed the need to fund the design work that will keep things coordinated and serve to inform the Sound Transit elements.

The NE 6th Street project ties into the HOV ramp on I-405 and continues on to 120th Avenue NE. The early design work is being coordinated with the Washington State Department of Transportation, though the project will not be advancing for some time. The initial intent of the state was to drop the roadway down to be at grade with 116th Avenue NE, but given the traffic volumes and the adjacent NE 8th Street/116th Avenue NE intersection makes that problematic; the city wants the roadway to match the railroad grade, bridge over 116th Avenue NE, and continue at-grade to 120th Avenue NE.

The NE 4th Street extension project will be divided into two phases, east and west of the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe alignment. The city is continuing to work with Best Buy on a variety of options. Discussions are ongoing with Best Buy, the Port of Seattle, King County, Sound Transit and Puget Sound Energy. The construction dates estimate for Phase 1 is 2013, and for Phase 2 it is 2014.

Mr. Kessack said Stage 1 of the 120th Avenue NE is ready to go and is funded. The only remaining property issue regards the property near the bus barn and negotiations are under way in that case. Utility relocation work is anticipated to start in 2012, with the project going to ad later in the fall and construction beginning in late 2012 or early in 2013. Stage 2 of the project continues across NE 8th Street and connects to NE 12th Street. A signalized intersection will be created and the old diagonal section of Bel-Red Road will go away. The project includes some substantial right-of-way costs given the number of properties that will be impacted.

Commissioner Lampe suggested the Commission could benefit from taking a field trip to the Bel-Red corridor to physically see the projects planned for the area. Mr. Krawczyk said a tour of the area could easily be arranged.

B. Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) Update

Senior Transportation Planner Michael Ingram reminded the Commissioners that once a recommendation has been made to the Council regarding the recommended TFP project list, the environmental review phase will begin before final adoption by the Council in early 2013.

Mr. Ingram said the analysis for the 44 staff-recommended projects above the funding line showed 81 percent of the total funding going for roadway-intersection improvements and 19 percent earmarked for ped-bike projects. He noted that while some projects clearly fall into one category or the other, others have components of each; the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project is a good example of the latter. Staff roughly calculated the roadway-intersection and ped-bike element costs for each project in determining the allocation percentages.

With regard to revenues, Capital Programming Implementation Manager Eric Miller said the projection has been increased by $10 million, all of which is associated with grant projections. He noted that the committed revenues associated with the adopted 2011-2017 CIP includes the ongoing programs that are not typically talked about in terms of the TFP, and that the constrained revenue figures represented the cost of the ongoing programs beyond the current CIP period but within the next TFP time period. He added that the growth projections handed down by the Department of Planning and Community Development may be need to be adjusted over time, and if that happens project timelines could change as well.

Commissioner Jokinen asked if the three-percent-per-year property tax increase that was once under discussion by the Council is still on the horizon. Mr. Miller said that issue is one for the Council to hammer out. He said the percentage increases have not been assumed in the revenue projections.

Commissioner Jokinen noted that both the county and the City Council are considering a $20 license tab fee, the revenues of which would be dedicated to the CIP. Mr. Miller said the approach is tied to the formation of a transportation benefit district, either by the city or the county, a step not yet taken by either entity. There are also other revenue enhancing approaches that could be taken, including increases in sales taxes.

Commissioner Bishop advocated in favor of reviewing the projects below the funding line to determine if any of them should be moved above the line. He acknowledged that any projects moved up would have to be balanced by moving projects down.

Commissioner Jokinen pointed out that during the last CIP update the Commission focused on balancing projects inside and outside the downtown area, which led to the 145th Avenue NE project getting done. Mr. Miller briefly reviewed the Budget One process as it relates to the CIP and noted that a large part of the TFP is consistent with what has been submitted on the capital investment side.

Commissioner Bishop noted that of the top 44 projects, 12 are in the Bel-Red corridor, seven are in the downtown, and 25 are scattered around the city liberally. He added that with the downtown serving as the city's dominant focus, the fact that only seven projects are aimed at that area does not check out well. The Bellevue Downtown Association came before the Commission at a recent meeting asking that the NE 2nd Street project be included above the

line, if only as a placeholder. Certainly the city should be in a position within 12 years to plan for the project. He proposed including $200,000 in the TFP for project 63, the NE 2nd Street interchange project.

Commissioner Glass asked how the projects below the line are prioritized. Mr. Miller said where projects fell during the prioritization process is less important than where they are relative to the funding line; those that are above the line are in and those below the line are out. The recommendation of the Commission does not have to be predicated on how the projects were prioritized.

Commissioner Tanaka allowed that the Commission has in the past had discussions about balancing projects inside the downtown against those outside the downtown. He commented, however, that it is the perfect time for the city to put its marker down relative to the Bel-Red corridor. By getting in first, Sound Transit will have to design its projects around what the city wants instead of the other way around. It would be shortsighted of the Commission to move down any of the Bel-Red projects.

Mr. Miller pointed out that several of the projects located outside the geographic scope of the downtown will have definite positive benefits for the flow of traffic within the downtown.

Commissioner Lampe asked if there is any particular significance for projects that fall below the funding line when it comes time to updating the TFP. Mr. Miller said the TFP is updated at regular intervals and as things change projects that were dropped in pervious cycles can be picked up, and projects above the funding line can be dropped below. The NE 2nd Street interchange project is a good example. Staff in their consultations with WSDOT do not feel the project will realistically happen within the 2024 time period; that position could change in the next couple of years.

Commissioner Bishop reiterated his call for placeholder dollars for the NE 2nd Street interchange project. He noted that a new crossing of I-405 has been created nearly every decade since the 1960s, and the NE 2nd Street crossing is the last one. Mr. Miller agreed it would not be a problem to toss in $200,000 or so for the project given that the 44 projects are within one million dollars on the over side. There will be a lot more learned over the course of the year as the Council discusses additional funding sources, so it is not necessary to be on the dime in terms of the preliminary project prioritization.

Commissioner Glass pointed out that while there are a lot of projects on the list that will benefit the downtown, many of them are earmarked as placeholders rather than for implementation. If the desire is to put a bigger priority on downtown projects, dollars will need to be allocated. Mr. Miller noted that the downtown plan update is an ongoing process in which the Commission is very much involved. That plan will evolve over the next year before it gets adopted as a subarea plan of the Comprehensive Plan. It likely will change priorities just as East Link has and like some other planning processes have.

Commissioner Bishop called attention to the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project and noted that the $15.1 million shown for it is the sum of the old CIP number and the proposed $7.1 million for the next phase. He said it was his understanding that much of the old CIP allocation had already been spent during the current budget cycle and asked if it made sense to carry the old full amount forward. Mr. Miller said there are a number of projects in that same situation, but that does not eat away at the unconstrained revenue available to program to new TFP projects.

Mr. Miller reminded the Commissioners that the recommendation to be forwarded to the Council initially will not be to adopt the TFP but rather in regard to the preliminary project list. The list, along with the feedback from the Council, will be subjected to an environmental analysis. The CIP process also needs to evolve given the revenue discussions involved with that process. The TFP will not be a final plan until early in 2013.

Commissioner Lampe urged the Commissioners to review the projects on the list and come to the next meeting ready to provide input on what the preliminary project list should include both above and below the funding line.

Commissioner Glass asked if the preliminary project list will be presented to the Council and the public in a ranked format. Mr. Miller said that will be up to the Commission. He noted that the list from staff reflected the staff ranking. The projects below the funding line are not unimportant and that is why they are shown on the list, and many of them may be implemented by private development over time. Commissioner Glass said he would not have put the projects in the priority order shown. If there is significance to the rank order, the projects should ultimately be constructed in that order. Mr. Miller stressed that a number of factors went into determining the rank order, including funds already spent.

Commissioner Jokinen said the approach the last time around worked very well once things got to the CIP portion. The Commission advocated strongly for West Lake Sammamish Parkway and for 145th Avenue NE. The projects in the Bel-Red corridor and the downtown will get built because so much has been invested in those areas, but the Council needs to hear from the Commission about other projects that are important.

Mr. Ingram noted that a couple of projects on the Lake Hills Connector above the funding line, projects 31 and 32, have no dollars recommended for them. Both projects scored well and there was some sentiment among the staff that the projects are worth doing. There are a number of ped-bike corridor projects recommended for initial scoping and cost estimating, but the reality is that only a limited number of them can be undertaken. He proposed scaling back some of those and sticking with the projects that are higher on the list, such as the 140th Avenue NE extension to the north of NE 8th Street, the 112th Avenue NE and 108th Avenue NE improvements to the north of the downtown, and the Coal Creek Parkway path and the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway.

Commissioner Bishop agreed that projects 31 and 32 should be moved below the assumed funding line.

Commissioner Tanaka pointed out that there is no other east-west bicycle corridor in that part of the city until north of I-90.

Commissioner Jokinen agreed with the staff that the Commission should be advocating in favor of projects that are already funded and are partially completed. He said because nothing has been spent on projects 31 and 32 they could easily be moved down.

There was agreement to move projects 31 and 32 below the funding line, and to move the NE 2nd Street project above the line with minimal funding.

Mr. Ingram shared with the Commission an outline for the transmittal memo to the Council and asked for comments. Commissioner Glass suggested the Bel-Red and Wilburton areas should be placed at the top of the list given that most of the dollars are to be spent in there. He also suggested that there should be some discussion included regarding the fact that a number of the projects have only design or placeholder dollars associated with them, and that if additional resources were available more could be done.

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 Commissioners reviewed its calendar and agenda of upcoming study items.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Lampe adjourned the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission — Date: 9/13

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission — Date: 9/13/12