

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES

March 13, 2008  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vice Chair Northey, Commissioners Tanaka, Van Valkenburgh, Wendle

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Glass

STAFF PRESENT: David Cieri, Kevin McDonald, Jen Benn, Kate Johnson, Stephanie Parkins, Drew Redman, Kristi Oosterveen, Eric Miller, Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. by Vice Chair Northey who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Wendle, who arrived at 7:50 p.m., and Commissioner Glass, who was excused.

3. STAFF REPORTS

Transportation CIP Construction Manager Dave Cieri provided the Commissioners with copies of the CIP quarterly update for the quarter ending December 2007.

Mr. Cieri informed the Commissioners that the 145<sup>th</sup> Place SE project options were presented to the City Council on March 10. Commissioner Tanaka presented the recommendation of the Commission. The Council gave staff direction to go with the option recommended by the Commission.

Mr. Cieri explained that the Commission by-laws call for electing the Chair and Vice-chair the last meeting in May. The position of Chair is currently vacant due to the resignation of Al Yuen. One of the options open to the Commission is to proceed with Vice-chair Northey acting as Chair until May. If that approach is taken, the Commission should designate a Commissioner to serve as Chair should Commissioner Northey not be present for a meeting.

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

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS – None

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Martha Wiley, 204 110<sup>th</sup> Place SE, said she works at HDR Engineering on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. She said the nearly 300 employees of the firm were recently interviewed regarding their thoughts about pedestrian facilities in the downtown core. The comments received were folded into a memo and forwarded to Senior Transportation Planner Franz Loewenherz. She stressed that the information represents only the personal opinions of the HDR Engineering employees who responded to the survey, not the firm itself. Enforcement was highlighted as a missing critical element to an overwhelming number of respondents. The city should consider ways to increase enforcement of existing laws and regulations to protect pedestrians. Citations should be issued to drivers who do not stop for pedestrians in crosswalks; to those who stop their vehicles in crosswalks and block pedestrian access; to those who roll through right-turns on red; and drivers who actually hit pedestrians. Pedestrians should be considered in setting signal timing; they need enough time to cross the street and should not be made to wait for more than two minutes for a pedestrian phase. The city should develop a map showing the locations of all off-street pedestrian paths, such as the brick pathway behind the US Bank building on the corner of 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Because of Bellevue's superblock grid, pedestrian crossings at the midblock point are needed.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh said she would support including in the ped-bike plan policy language that puts emphasis on the importance of enforcement.

It was agreed to discuss the issue under New Business.

Mr. David Markley with Transportation Solutions, Incorporated, 8250 165<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Redmond, said he is serving as a member of the Wright Runstad Spring District team. He voiced support for the recommendations of the Bel-Red steering committee and the staff to modify the level of service standard for the corridor from 0.90 to 0.95. The change is consistent with the implementation of the land use plan for the Bel-Red area, particularly with respect to the higher density activity nodes. The change will permit the subarea to be the logical linkage between Overlake, Microsoft, and the downtown employment centers, and is consistent with the proposed reconfiguration of the Bel-Red MMA that is under consideration. The new LOS standard will provide the certainty for the significant new development that will be necessary to create the higher density in the activity nodes. Both directly and indirectly, the change will reduce the financial burden of the city in terms of providing for transportation improvements and allow the overall land use vision to be realized.

## 7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda as printed was made by Commissioner Tanaka. Second was by Commissioner Van Valkenburgh and the motion carried unanimously.

## 8. STUDY SESSION

### A. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program and GTEC Update

Grants Coordinator Jen Benn took a moment to report that a student at the University of Washington has been hired by the city to work on developing a downtown pedestrian walking map.

Ms. Benn explained that transportation demand management involves a toolkit of strategies, education, promotion incentives, and the provision of non-motorized amenities that are aimed

at encouraging people to stop making drive-alone trips, particularly commute trips. Under the main heading lie a variety of programs that target different audiences and that have different focuses.

The Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Act is one tool in the TDM kit. The state-mandated Act deals with employers having 100 or more employees at a single site who commute during the morning peak hours. The transportation management association called TransManage, which operates as part of the Bellevue Downtown Association, partners with the city in carrying out the TDM work. Also in the downtown is the Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC), a program that is focused mainly on employers with less than 100 employees. The Transportation Management Program, another tool in the kit, deals with development; the codified program is focused on mitigating the impact of trips created by new development, both downtown and citywide.

The city recognizes the importance of having partners as a means of being successful. Accordingly, the city partners with the market development arm of King County Metro, and with TransManage of the Bellevue Downtown Association.

It takes money to make it all happen. The City Council allocates about \$80,000 per year in the CIP. Those funds are used to fund city activities and the activities TransManage does on behalf of the city. Funds are also received annually from a state CTR grant; the city uses some of the roughly \$100,000 for its programs and activities, but most of it goes to a contract for CTR services with Metro. A Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant that comes through King County also flows to the city annually; those funds are used largely for downtown activities and the FlexPass program.

Continuing, Ms. Benn explained that the Comprehensive Plan contains specific targets for the non drive-alone share. She said the current targets are based on achievements for 2005. A modeshare study done in 2005 showed that the targets were in fact exceeded in the Bel-Red and Factoria areas, but were not met in the other three areas. For the downtown, the target was a non drive-alone rate of 40 percent, but the actual result was 29 percent. Many factors are at play, but the city continues to work on improving the achievement rates.

On March 10 the City Council adopted two new TDM plans, the CTR update and the GTEC plan. Those items, combined with a future focus, are what the city is hoping to leverage and produce the synergy that will create the ability to achieve the targets.

Transportation Outreach Coordinator Stephanie Parkins explained that the Commute Trip Reduction Efficiency Act of 2006 took the original CTR program and focused it more on congested corridors in urban growth areas that have delays of 100 hours or more. The original focus was on the ten most populated counties, but is now only on the corridors, making the program more efficient, more effective, and more targeted. The new approach also increases the level of planning coordination between jurisdictions and government agencies that are part of the CTR program, and establishes tools and incentives for local jurisdictions to develop GTEC programs.

The city's CTR program began in 1993 and affected employers with 100 or more employees traveling during the peak morning period. The program required those employers to make a good faith effort to reduce drive-alone trips to their sites by 35 percent, with that amount graduated over a 12-year period. Three of the large employers in Bellevue have met the 35 percent goal, while another 17 have met most of the graduated goals; 20 sites have met none of

the goals, and 21 new sites in the area have only baseline data or are currently measuring their drive-alone rates. The large employer sites located in the downtown are doing a much better job of meeting the goals, primarily because the downtown has good transit service and is an urban hub, but also because there are more large employer sites outside the downtown than inside.

The new CTR act holds the city accountable to meet goals as well, which are a ten percent drive-alone reduction and a 13 percent vehicle miles traveled reduction by 2011. Employers must also work toward a ten percent drive-alone rate reduction for their worksites, and a 13 percent reduction in the number of vehicle miles traveled during the same time period. If the employers meet their goals, the city will meet its goals.

Ms. Parkins said part of the city's good faith effort in meeting its goals is the CTR plan. The planning process was carried out as a grassroots effort. Insight from employers and city staff was utilized in developing policy direction, recommendations regarding service and facilities, and outreach programs. Much of the Comprehensive Plan supports the CTR principles, but there is a need to coordinate future development of Comprehensive Plan policies aimed at fulfilling the goals of the CTR law. For services and facilities, what is working best for the CTR sites is help in advocating for additional transit or other non-motorized enhancements they need. Their outreach efforts are carried out through marketing programs, newsletters, special events, employer recognition, incentive programs, highlighting alternative modes, and education.

On the planning side, the estimate is that implementation will cost \$825,000. The available funding is estimated at \$546,000, leaving a gap of \$279,500. One challenge being faced is the fact that the state has frozen funding levels of the CTR fund at its 2006 level while being asked to meet more aggressive goals. In 2006 there were 55 CTR sites in the city and approximately \$110,000 to use for trip reduction activities, or \$2016 per site. There are now 61 sites leaving only \$1760 per site for trip reduction activities. More sites are forecasted to enter the area.

The plan for making up the funding shortfall entails working with CTR leaders and advocating before the legislature for additional appropriations to the CTR program for the next biennium.

Transportation Planner Kate Johnson informed the Commission that in the early 2000s there were a variety of citywide activities related to TDM. In 2001, the One Less Car website was created as a one-stop shop for travel information for various commute modes. In later years the city began marketing short-term incentive programs. In 2005, the city worked to strengthen the transportation management association operating in the downtown and formed a partnership with TransManage of the BDA and Metro. Last year was a big planning year in which the CTR plan was updated and the GTEC plan was formulated. Concurrent with those activities, the city's TDM brand was updated along with the website. The new brand is titled Choose Your Way Bellevue.

The focus of GTEC is on the downtown alone. The state requirement to reduce the number of non drive-alone trips by ten percent translates to a total of 5000 daily trips. The GTEC drive-alone target rate is 63.9 percent, whereas the Comprehensive Plan goal is 60 percent. Based on current trends, it does not appear to be feasible to achieve the 60 percent goal by 2011; the GTEC trend is in line with achieving both the Comp Plan goal by 2014 and the Downtown Implementation Plan assumption of 49 percent drive-alone by 2020.

Ms. Johnson said only seven GTEC plans statewide were funded, and Bellevue was one. The

city received \$300,000 for the current biennium running through mid-2009.

The GTEC programs are focused on peak-hour trips, though the state allows addressing non-peak hour populations. There is an emphasis on carpooling and vanpooling; that approach is being taken because the number of available transit seats during the timeframe of the plan is estimated to be around 2300, far short of the 5000 daily drive-alone trips that must be reduced to meet the state goal.

There are three basic components to the GTEC plan: plans and policies, basic transportation infrastructure, and marketing and incentives.

Ms. Johnson said the funded part of the GTEC program is divided into four categories of programs. There is a range of activities for employers and property managers that will be undertaken. A branded portfolio of offerings for employers called Commute Advantage has been developed. As new programs are brought online they will be added to the portfolio. There are also a multitude of programs for individuals available under the Choose Your Way Bellevue brand. Administrative activities, including management of the transportation management program review, falls under the umbrella of GTEC. A small-scale parking inventory is under way currently, and some employer focus groups to help guide the work will be conducted soon.

Most expenditures have been for employer- and individual-based marketing and incentives, and tool development programs. The total budget of \$892,000 includes the \$300,000 GTEC grant plus multiple pots of money being leveraged as local match.

During 2008 a baseline survey will be conducted of downtown employees. It will be done as part of the citywide mode share survey. In 2009 an additional mode share survey will be conducted as required by the state for all GTEC locations. In addition, projects are being evaluated and benchmark metrics are being provided to the state as the programs progress.

Ms. Benn allowed that for a long time transportation demand management has been a pot of activity off to the side. However, for Bellevue to be successful in managing the transportation system into the future, TDM programs must be integrated into the toolkit. There are a lot of issues facing the downtown, such as mobility and the circulator, and TDM will be an important part of making those work. For light rail to be successful once it is built, TDM is the type of program that will help to influence behaviors. TDM is integral to the greening of the community and environmental stewardship.

It is known that at a minimum about \$15,000 per year is needed to make up the difference in the base CTR program and to keep the per-site funding constant. Advancing TDM citywide will require at least one additional staff person, probably beginning in 2010 after the strategic plan is in place. There will also need to be funding to support the transportation management associations as they appear, and to move pilot activities from the downtown to other areas of the city.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh suggested that parking management strategies will need to be part of the toolkit if the goals are going to be met. Ms. Benn explained that parking management has been and continues to be a sensitive issue in the city. Staff are in the process of conducting a high-level and detailed analysis of parking in the downtown. Ms. Johnson said she has done some research and interviews and has found out that parking generally is tight in the downtown. The primary issue is with flexibility; most people who need a parking slot just

for a day may or may not have free park days provided by their employer and may have to pay. The data to date supports the need for parking management.

Commissioner Northey agreed with the need to ratchet up the approach to changing people's behavior for driving. Such efforts are vitally important. Things may have gone as far as they can go with voluntary programs. When the legislature is approached regarding CTR changes, the City Council should be asked to support potential changes that will include tax incentives for businesses that allow flexible schedules and the like. There should also be a concerted effort to work with kids in the schools to educate them about the need to reduce the number of trips.

#### B. Transportation Management Program for Developments

Ms. Benn said the transportation management program in the city code has limped along for a variety of reasons. Associate Transportation Planner Drew Redman was brought on board to conduct a hardcore assessment of where things stand, what can be done in the short term, and what should be done for the future.

Mr. Redman said the authority for TMPs lies under the SEPA and addresses the impacts of development on the transportation system. Each TMP is site-specific and focused on reducing drive-alone commutes. The list of requirements may include posting information on an employees bulletin board, such as transit schedules, ridesharing brochures, providing an on-site transportation coordinator, offering preferential parking for carpools and vanpools, and offering financial incentives. The requirements continue for the life of the building.

Implementation kicks off with development review who looks at the square footage and land use of a particular development and determine whether or not it meets the requirements for a TMP. If the requirements are met, there must be an agreement signed and filed with the city clerk and the county. Six months after the issuance of a temporary occupancy permit for a building in the downtown, an action plan must be filed, and one year after occupancy there must be a modeshare survey and report, which is repeated every two years thereafter. Non-downtown areas are not required to submit an action plan and do not have to do the survey, but they must file a report one year after occupancy and every two years thereafter.

Mr. Redman said about half of the GTEC objective of reducing 5000 trips by 2011 will be met by transit options; the balance will need to be addressed by programs such as TMPs.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh asked how many of the downtown employers that are meeting their goals are in buildings with a TMP. Mr. Redman said he did not know the exact number.

TMPs were first instituted in the downtown in 1980. There were about ten plans in place in 1987 when the first code was adopted for areas outside of the downtown. The code was revised in 1995 to include more specific requirements in addition to the previous requirements for downtown sites. By 2007 there were 33 TMP buildings in the city, about half of which were in the downtown. The number has increased dramatically in the last two years.

Mr. Redman said the degree to which each TMP building is performing can be determined by the number of fulfilled requirements divided by the total number of requirements. The average overall performance is at about 47 percent, but is about 59 percent for the downtown sites only. For the sites that have membership in the TMA with TransManage, the average performance

jumps to 75 percent.

The question is, are the programs working well enough. Monitoring and enforcement has been problematic given the lack of historical priority; the last review of the program was in 1987. Questions on the table are how to boost the performance of the TMPs that are not doing very well, how to incorporate TMPs earlier in the development process, how to include other land uses, and how to track changes in ownership.

Noting that TMPs are SEPA conditions, Commissioner Van Valkenburgh asked if buildings not in compliance can be subject to a notice of violation. Mr. Redman said they can be depending on the year they started a TMP.

Mr. Redman said Redmond, Kirkland and Seattle all have TMPs, as do several communities in California, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and two counties in Virginia. A review of those programs has yielded a list of best practices options

Instead of looking at the size of buildings and the land uses, one option would be to look at the number of trips generated. The approach is more straightforward, is easier for the property owner, and conforms to the city's concurrency test.

Another option would be to require the action plan earlier in the development process so the specific requirements will be known early on and TDM will not be an afterthought.

There is a need to coordinate requirements between departments. It is always in the best interest of the city to have a single message to developers.

Another option would be to require TMA membership where applicable. There is much stronger leverage for both the city and the property owner.

Another practice is to require bike racks, showers and lockers. Most other municipalities do have those requirements; Bellevue is behind in that respect.

Performance goals are currently set at ten-year increments. Having a two-year increment would allow for more frequent and specific evaluation.

Some jurisdictions allow credits toward meeting established goals to buildings that are located close to transit or are involved in a TMA membership. Other jurisdictions diminish or increase goals as they are met or not met.

One best practice used by some jurisdictions is a requirement to record both the agreement and the implementation plan.

Commissioner Wendle arrived and a quorum was reached.

Another best practice is to require notification to the city where a change in ownership occurs. That allows for keeping contact information updated and offers the city the opportunity to make the new owners aware of what they are required to do.

Mr. Redman said taking a no action approach would still require additional staff time because of the number of TMPs that have come on recently. Another approach would be to establish a sustainable development incentive, something the city is currently looking into. Another

alternative would be to look at minimum parking requirements and allowing car share vehicles to take the place of two stalls, reducing design and construction costs for the developers. Other alternatives could include reducing the transportation impact fee, and requiring TMA membership.

Commissioner Wendle expressed an interest in parking as a control mechanism, particularly increasing the cost of parking rather than discounting parking, then using the additional revenue to purchase transit passes or serve as incentives. He asked if the city has a tax on parking or any way to make commuters feel the bite for choosing to drive alone. Mr. Redman said he is not aware of any such tax.

Commissioner Northey asked if the Council is seeking an update of the program. Ms. Benn said the process under way is aimed at getting baseline information. There is always a concern when existing code is not being applied or followed up. Over the next year staff will be reviewing the recommendations, figuring out the impacts of alternatives, and beginning internal conversations. The Council has not put forward a direct mandate to review the overall program.

Noting that the buildings with the highest compliance rates are those that participate in a TMA, Commissioner Van Valkenburgh suggested there should be some option that builds on that synergy. Ms. Benn said it was learned during the downtown TMA study that the communities with close partnerships between the jurisdiction and the TMA have a much higher rate of compliance. High levels of engagement are essential to overall success.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh noted that in areas where there have been TMA requirements for several years there may be buildings that are operating under old requirements. In such cases new buildings might be asked to compensate for the difference in some way, possibly by including shared end-of-trip facilities like bike racks and showers.

Commissioner Northey agreed with the need to get more paid parking in the downtown as a disincentive to drive-alone trips. The issue should be ready for unveiling when the Council starts discussing the sustainable development initiative. Credits for impact fees in exchange for performance would be good idea as well, and the issue of impact fees will be on the table in the coming months.

With regard to the parking fee issue, Commissioner Tanaka asked if the approach would include the city requiring a minimum charge. Mr. Redman said many of the downtown offices are required to charge for parking as part of their lease agreement; the fees must be higher than the cost of a two-zone bus pass.

Commissioner Wendle suggested the city should seek to develop a program that addresses the downtown as a whole rather than only a few buildings, and some of those with requirements that are outdated. The landscape is changing and there may be an opportunity to look in different directions.

#### C. 2008 Plan Updates: TFP, CIP and TIP

Capital Programming Coordinator Kristi Oosterveen explained that the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP), Capital Investment Program (CIP), and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are all set to be updated during 2008.

Ms. Oosterveen explained that everything begins with the Comprehensive Plan in which all community goals and policies are housed. The Transportation Commission does not have a formal role to play relative to the Comprehensive Plan, though the Commission does provide input to the Planning Commission. A complete Comprehensive Plan update is undertaken every seven years, and annual amendments are made as needed.

The Commission does have a role in developing the long-range facility plans; Commissioners serve on various CACs, and often the Commission acts as a CAC, which is the case for the current ped-bike plan update. Input and information is provided to the City Council and other affected parties as needed. The Commission also makes recommendations to the Council regarding the long-range plans.

The TFP is the 12-year intermediate plan that is updated every two years. The update process for that document began in September 2007 when the Commission was informed about the public involvement process and the project weighting and scoring approach to be utilized. The role of the Commission is to provide input and direction to staff regarding the prioritizing of projects, the criteria, and on the project identifications. The Commission will also take input from the public and provide a recommendation to the City Council. The current TFP covers the years 2006-2017 and was adopted by the City Council in December 2006.

Ms. Oosterveen called the attention of the Commissioners to Attachment 1 of the desk packet and briefly reviewed with them the timeline for the 2009-2020 TFP Update. She noted that under Title VI an equity analysis must be completed, and the Commission will see them on each of the timelines.

The city is laying plans to conduct a major open house event to showcase all planned projects and initiatives from various departments. Being able to piggyback the TFP open house to the larger event should be advantageous in terms of getting input on the projects.

Commissioner Northey asked why the TFP and the CIP are being updated in the same calendar year. Ms. Oosterveen said in the past the TFP project list has been used as the stepping stone for the CIP. The work to update the TFP began in 2007 but is running behind, thus the work to update the TFP and the CIP will be more intertwined than in past years.

Capital Programming Implementation Manager Eric Miller said the work to update the TFP is awaiting information from the ped-bike plan update as well as the Bel-Red subarea plan process. Had the TFP update continued on schedule, projects from those two studies would not have been included, and it would have been two years before they could be folded in.

Commissioner Northey stressed the importance of maintaining the integrity of the TFP. It would make capital planning less effective to be looking only at six-year horizons. If possible, the TFP should be done before the CIP. It may not be necessary to program all of the Bel-Red and ped-bike projects into the CIP; it may be more appropriate to put projects in the TFP. Doing the two documents at the same time may put more pressure on the Commission to put the projects into the next funded cycle. Mr. Miller pointed out that the planned approach would involve two different funding lines. The TFP is financially constrained; the CIP is where the money is and is where the highest priorities should lie. While it will be more work, to a large degree the work will involve killing two birds with one stone.

Commissioner Wendle said he would like to see the Title VI methodology given that many of the projects may be focused on areas that are not residential. It may not be immediately

apparent that projects focused on job centers will benefit the entire population. Ms. Oosterveen noted that the TIP process undertaken in 2007 was the first time the city began enacting some of the Title VI exercises. The Commission will be kept informed regarding the requirements as the process moves forward.

Ms. Oosterveen said the role of the Commission in developing the CIP is just as important as for the TFP. The Commission provides input and direction to staff on the projects, ranking criteria, and project identification. The Commission also solicits and considers public input, and provides a recommendation to the City Council. The CIP is updated every two years.

Staff will be bringing to the Commission updates regarding the ongoing programs and will be going through a re-costing exercise for all projects. The TFP project list will serve as the candidate project list for the CIP update. Scoping and cost estimating for potential new projects will also be done. Consideration is being given to include an introduction to the TFP at the umbrella open house, though it may be advisable to conduct a second open house for the shorter-list CIP as well in June.

Ms. Oosterveen explained that the TIP picks up projects from the long-range facility plans, the TFP and the CIP. The role of the Commission in developing the TIP is to provide input and information regarding the project list, to receive and consider public input, and to forward a recommendation to the City Council. The TIP is updated annually.

The TIP is not financially constrained and to some degree serves as a project catch-all, including unfunded projects and projects from current design studies. The updated TIP list will be brought to the Commission on March 27. Ms. Oosterveen outlined the study schedule which must wrap up by the end of June.

Ms. Oosterveen allowed that with so many plans to be updated the process will be intensive.

Commissioner Wendle voiced his support for conducting a single, overarching public hearing for each of the plan updates. He asked if an EIS will be done for the TFP or if the update will be handled by an addendum. Mr. Miller said a final decision on that question has not yet been made. He said it is likely there will need to be more than an addendum.

Commissioner Northey suggested that there are philosophical issues about what the TIP should be. It can be anything from a repository for only those projects the city has already put money into, to any and all projects. The problem with the latter approach is that it can mean unfunded projects can bump funded projects as projects on the TIP receive grant dollars. The Commission should have a discussion about the purpose of the TIP.

#### D. Bel-Red Corridor Project Review

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald shared with the Commissioners a matrix listing the proposed arterial projects for the Bel-Red subarea. It was agreed that both Northup Way projects should be included in the Bel-Red subarea plan.

With regard to the 120 Avenue NE project, Mr. McDonald explained that the modeling shows a need for five lanes north and south through the entire corridor. The Commission agreed it should be included in the subarea plan.

After receiving an update regarding the 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE project, Commissioner Northey

suggested the city may be going too far with regard to bike lanes between the BNSF corridor, 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. It is very expensive to build bike lanes and they may not be needed on all three corridors. Noting that they should not be removed from the BNSF corridor, she asked staff which of the other two roadways could do without them. Mr. McDonald said he would elect to remove them from 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The fact that 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE has a direct connection to the SR-520 bike trail at the north end makes it the best candidate.

Commissioner Wendle asked if the area has sufficient demand projected to warrant having redundant systems. Mr. McDonald said the bicycle facilities on any of the north/south roadways will provide for both local and citywide service. For the area of Bel-Red in question, the primary land use focus will be on office/employment rather than residential. The node at 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE will have more of a residential emphasis. He noted that whatever recommendation the Commission makes relative to bike facilities in Bel-Red will need to be coordinated with the ped-bike plan update.

The Commission agreed to support the project including 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE in the Subarea Plan with 5 lanes and no bike lanes.

The Commission concurred with the recommendation of staff to include the 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE project in the Bel-Red subarea plan.

Mr. McDonald explained that the cross section for the proposed NE 15<sup>th</sup> Street/NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street corridor is 197 feet wide. As envisioned, the layout from south to north would have a sidewalk, street trees, on-street parking, two lanes of eastbound traffic, a station platform, two train tracks, a station platform, a line of trees, two lanes of westbound traffic, trees, a 16-foot pedestrian/bicycle mixed use multipurpose path, an area of landscaping, a frontage road, more landscaping, and a sidewalk. The park block concept is no longer being considered, primarily because it would add 100 feet to the cross section. Better outdoor recreation opportunities and better community park facilities can be achieved if not located between travel lanes.

Commissioner Wendle commented that the proposed cross section for NE 15<sup>th</sup> Street/NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street seems very large. He added that the proposal has changed a great deal from what the Bel-Red steering committee recommended.

Commissioner Northey agreed and asked why it should be necessary to accommodate 30,000 vehicles per day on a light rail corridor. Commissioner Tanaka pointed out the roadway will serve as the main east/west corridor through Bel-Red. Commissioner Northey agreed with the need for a transit corridor but suggested that both Northup Way and Bel-Red Road will be available for travel by vehicles.

Mr. McDonald said 30,000 vehicles per day would be the maximum. The corridor would serve the area with the most intensive office development. The modeling shows that more to the east the traffic volumes taper down to about 20,000 vehicles per day, then out on 136<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE the volumes drop to about 15,000. NE 15<sup>th</sup> Street/NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street will serve internal trips as well as through trips. The modeling indicates that a five-lane cross section will be needed.

Commissioner Tanaka suggested that the city will really only have one chance to do it right. Choosing to create a three-lane configuration first and then 20 years later having to rethink that position will be far more of a problem.

Mr. McDonald said part of the roadway will be recommended as a Phase I project, probably from 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to the west; that would accommodate development on the Wright Runstad site. Future phases would involve the sections to the east. It will be very important to have the project in the subarea plan so that as new development comes online on the needed right-of-way can be protected.

Commissioner Wendle agreed that the corridor will be needed, but held back on recommending a five-lane cross section. It could be that the amount of land use being proposed is just too intense to have a normal transportation corridor serve it.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh asked what the cross section would look like if the analysis were done with an LOS standard of 0.95 instead of 0.90. Mr. McDonald said he would not want to speculate on that given that the modeling was done using 0.90. He allowed that the higher level of service standard could change the configuration for various intersections, in some cases eliminating the need for double left-turn lanes.

Commissioner Northey suggested the Commission should not be afraid to recommend something other than what the modeling suggests and what the staff are recommending. She agreed that the proposed cross section is huge and will cost a fortune to construct.

Commissioner Tanaka said he did not have the expertise to question the accuracy of the model or the advice of staff. He said he was willing to take some of the assumptions about development as a given in making a recommendation. The Bel-Red steering committee handed down a vision for what they would like to see happen in the corridor, and that included the concept of nodal development. The Transportation Commission has been asked to comment on the transportation projects, but is not in a position to question the proposed land use patterns.

Commissioner Northey agreed but pointed out the Commission is free to comment on the findings of the modeling. The modeling returns data about how to get cars through intersections efficiently, but that may not be the kind of transportation service the Commission sees as important for the corridor. The modeling drives roadway configurations, but if it is not asking the right questions, or if the city is not asking the right questions of the model, then the roadway configurations that result will be skewed. It is the responsibility of the Commission to make sure the questions get answered appropriately, and that may mean questioning the transportation assumptions.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Van Valkenburgh, Mr. McDonald said the cross section studied in the EIS was much wider. The proposal reduced the footprint width by 100 feet and envisions putting the greenspaces where they will be more useful. The roadway still has a green linear component with lines of street trees.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh agreed with the need to preserve all the right-of-way that will be needed, but at the same time careful consideration should be given to the ramifications of having such an expensive project.

Commissioner Wendle said he was much more comfortable with the non-node configuration. He said it would be far less daunting for pedestrians to cross. Mr. McDonald allowed that the proposed five-lane configuration may not be as daunting as one might think given that it is broken up with islands and medians that provide refuge for pedestrians.

Mr. McDonald agreed to take the issue back to staff and the consultants and come back for additional discussion.

Mr. McDonald outlined for the Commission the 136<sup>th</sup> Place NE project, noting that because of the light rail configuration it will not be possible to have a continuous center turn lane. The proposal is for a three-lane cross section with two lanes southbound tying into the two westbound lanes on NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street, and one lane northbound. The bike lanes on the roadway would connect the major ped-bike facility on NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street with those on NE 120<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Commission agreed to include the project in the subarea plan.

Mr. McDonald explained the proposed configuration for the 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE project, noting that it has been diminished from the FEIS which called for five lanes all the way north.

There was agreement to include the project in the subarea plan.

Mr. McDonald said staff is still analyzing the NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street extension and “Hospital Connection” projects to see which if either makes sense to include. More analysis will be in hand, along with a staff recommendation, for the April 10 meeting.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh commented that while the new NE 15<sup>th</sup> Street/NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street will serve the purpose of anchoring a new neighborhood and providing certain amenities, the proposed NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street extension will offer little more than more pavement to handle more general purpose traffic.

Commissioner Tanaka asked what the extension is intended to fix. Mr. McDonald said the new land uses in Bel-Red will generate more traffic, so more capacity is needed to handle it. There are also existing congestion issues the extension would accommodate. He allowed that the project would enhance east and west mobility for automobile traffic.

Commissioner Wendle said the problems in the 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE/NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street area are being fanned by Bel-Red, Wilburton and downtown growth. The project begs the question of what else can be done in the area; either of the proposed projects will end up penalizing one area in order to benefit another, and neither offers a long-term solution.

Mr. McDonald informed the Commission that on April 10 staff will bring to the Commission a recommendation to revise the boundaries of MMA-4 and MMM-12 to better mesh with the subarea boundaries.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS

The Commission asked staff to provide the Commission in the next month or so with a status report on what can be done to improve pedestrian access in the downtown.

Commissioner Wendle asked staff to schedule a discussion of parking pricing and what the city can do in that arena.

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Todd Woosley with Hal Woosley Properties voiced support for the additional modeling work that has been done on the transportation system in Bel-Red showing that the right cross section for NE 15<sup>th</sup> Street/NE 16<sup>th</sup> Street is five lanes. He said the city should act to get ahead of the game by identifying, acquiring or preserving all of the right-of-way that will be needed. The additional analysis regarding NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street appears to bear out the original concerns and comments that the extension project would be very expensive and not worth the cost. He reiterated his support of an LOS standard of 0.90 for the corridor rather than the proposed 0.095. The Transportation Commission should reserve the right to reconsider the mode of high-capacity transit to be employed in the corridor. Three years ago it appeared it would be light rail, but even if Proposition 1 had passed it would have been 20 years before light rail came to the corridor. Sound Transit is considering a transit only ballot measure that would at best extent light rail only as far as Overlake Hospital. For at least the next 20 years the corridor will be served by rubber tired transit service, and the city needs to plan accordingly.

Mr. Bruce Nurse with Kemper Development Company noted the interest of the company in the deliberations of the Commission concerning the transportation infrastructure in Bel-Red. He said the specific interest is in having adequate transportation facilities to avoid having the area become a choke point for traffic coming to and from the northeast sector to the downtown. He agreed with the comments made by the previous speaker regarding light rail and transit. He supported having LOS 0.90 in Bel-Red.

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 24, 2008

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

13. REVIEW CALENDAR

A. Commission Calendar and Agenda

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

B. Public Involvement Calendar

14. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Northey adjourned the meeting at 10:01 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary to the Transportation Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date