

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

April 14, 2011
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Glass, Lampe, Larrivee, Simas

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Tanaka, Commissioners Northey, Jokinen

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Krawczyk, Eric Miller, Rick Logwood, 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 Commissioner Simas who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Tanaka and Commissioners Northey and Jokinen, all of whom were excused.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

A. 2012-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Commissioner Simas declared the public hearing open.

Capital Programming Implementation Manager Eric Miller commented that by state law the city is required to update the TIP annually. A public hearing must be held, and the City Council has designated the Transportation Commission as the body to conduct the public hearing. The Commission is then charged with forwarding a recommendation to the Council for action.

There were no members of the public wishing to speak during the public hearing.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Larrivee. Second was by Commissioner Glass and the motion carried unanimously.

4. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Miller reported that the Council on March 7 acted to form the Wilburton connections local improvement district (LID). They put a cap of 50 percent on the amount of special benefit identified in the appraisal analysis, which equated to approximately \$6.8 million. That amount was short of the \$10.2 million line item in the CIP adopted in December 2010 by the Council. Council adoption of the LID triggered the start of a 30-day protest period. The protest period expired on April 6, prior to which a sufficient number of protests were filed to dissolve the LID formation. On April 18 the Council will be informed that the CIP budget for the project has a \$10.2 million shortfall, along with another \$3.3 million shortfall that represents the unsecured status of a federal Surface Transportation Program grant that was included in the project budget. Staff will address with the Council on April 18 all options regarding the project; the options include rescoping the project, reprogramming other CIP resources, starting a new LID process, and generating new revenues.

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

6. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

7. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

Mr. Bernie Hayden, 2622 134th Avenue NE, informed the Commission that the Planning Commission recently proposed to the Council allowing detached accessory dwelling units citywide. The proposal will essentially double the density in residential areas by doubling the number of households allowed. It would be appropriate for the Transportation Commission to look into what impact such a density increase would have on the transportation infrastructure.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

9. STUDY SESSION

A. 2012-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Miller said the Council is tentatively scheduled to act on the annual TIP update in mid-May. He reminded the Commissioners that the TIP projects are drawn from the city's long-range facility plans adopted within Comprehensive Plan, the current 12-year Transportation Facilities Plan, and regional projects in which the city may choose to participate financially. The TIP document must be submitted to the Puget Sound Regional Council for consideration

in their regional Transportation Improvement Program, and to the state for consideration in the state Transportation Improvement Program.

The 99 projects in the proposed TIP are broken into four sections. Section I includes projects that are adopted in the current Capital Investment Program. Section II includes unfunded projects from the Transportation Facilities Plan. The projects in Section III are local unfunded projects that were identified through current or recent alternative analyses and planning studies. Section IV includes regional or outside agency-led projects in which the city may choose to participate financially.

The Council is tentatively scheduled to act on the TIP on May 16.

Commissioner Lampe called attention to number 15, the NE 15th/NE 16th Street project, and noted that the total project cost had risen to \$90 million from the \$83 million indicated previously. Mr. Miller explained that all of the projects in the adopted CIP section of the TIP were updated to reflect the latest cost estimates. The 2012-2017 program includes only \$4 million in secured funding for the project.

Commissioner Glass commented that there are a number of bike lane projects that do not appear on the TIP project list. He highlighted the project at the south end of 108th Avenue SE. Mr. Miller said that project is anticipated to be substantially complete during 2011. Commissioner Glass asked about the project on SE 16th Street and was told it did not make the funding line. Mr. Miller points out, however, that the project is included on the list as number 30, in the TFP section.

Commissioner Glass asked if there was a catch-all project for ped/bike projects that did not quite make the funding cut. Mr. Miller said project 82 serves that function. The relatively modest \$10 million is on top of the funded ped/bike improvements listed in the CIP.

Commissioner Simas referred to the mobility initiatives and asked about their timelines given the economic situation and the protests against forming the LID. Mr. Miller said that topic may be broached by the Council on April 18, though they are not likely to get into the specifics of reprogramming the CIP. They will be looking at the city's needs from a capital standpoint and weighing them against the projected resources.

Commissioner Simas said he approved of the TIP as a whole, especially the way it focuses on maintaining and improving what already exists along with highlighted new projects. A prime question, however, is how fast projects will need to move forward to meet the demand, or if the economic slowdown has reduced the immediacy for some of the projects. Mr. Miller reminded the Commission that the TIP is not a financially constrained program; by and large the projects on the list represent what the city would do if money were no object.

Commissioner Larrivee noted that the Commission had previously talked about including

funding for education and awareness programs. He asked how that gets built into different projects. Mr. Miller education could be one element of programs such as the Major Safety Improvements Program and the Pedestrian Access Improvements Program. Commissioner Larrivee stressed the need to maintain flexibility so programs can be adapted as needed.

Motion to recommend adoption of the 2012-2017 Transportation Improvement Program as presented was made by Commissioner Glass. Second was by Commissioner Larrivee and the motion carried unanimously.

B. NE 15th/NE 16th Multimodal Corridor Update

Capital Projects Manager Rick Logwood reminded the Commissioners that the NE 15th/NE 16th Street project flowed from the Bel-Red subarea plan and the Mobility Infrastructure Initiative. He said the design process has included coordination with a number of key stakeholders, including Wright Runstad, Sound Transit and others. Detailed traffic analysis resulted in a reduction in the number of lanes to the east of 124th Avenue NE to a single lane in each direction.

Mr. Logwood said the policy direction and guiding principles are intended to create a sense of place and an overall balance. In accord with the One City model, a number of departments are involved in the visioning work. The corridor elements include the roadway and light rail alignments, fire department standards, non-motorized facilities, landscaping and green space. On-street parking options are considered for two specific zones to serve a variety of functions, including separating traffic from the sidewalks, preserving capacity for future turn or travel lanes should they become necessary. The roadway speed limit will be 25 miles per hour. The block lengths typically will be 300 feet. Driveway access will be from the local side streets only to avoid conflicts. In the Spring District, on-street parking will be limited to the north side only, which is adjacent to the plaza and oriented toward the light rail station. In the 130th station area, on-street parking will only be developed between 132nd Avenue NE and 134th Avenue NE, which is a downscope from what was previously adopted. The time limit for the on-street parking typically is two hours, though there are exceptions for loading/unloading zones and quick pick-up areas.

The bicycle facilities will be designed to connect to regional and sub-regional systems as well as local and internal systems. The facilities will be designed to be safe and attractive to a wide range of users. Continuity and connectivity of system types will be an important factor. The ped/bike plan includes a recommendation for a non-motorized multipurpose pathway the continuous length of the corridor. Implementation of the system may occur in phases, particularly to the east of 130th Avenue NE.

The fire department required a 20-foot minimum width for the roadway (single travel lane),

which will be maximized by incorporating the travel lane and the bike lane. On-street parking does not satisfy the Fire Department safety requirement. The recommendation for the multipurpose pathway is to locate it between 112th Avenue NE and 130th Avenue NE. The section between 112th Avenue NE and 116th Avenue NE is currently under construction. The switch to bike lanes will be made at the 130th station. The proposal is to continue from NE 20th Street along the light rail alignment to 140th Avenue NE where it will connect with other facilities.

Mr. Logwood said the adopted land use plan includes a development capacity that extends well beyond what the Spring District proposal currently shows. The developer has the option of acquiring additional properties and developing them with office and residential uses. In the 130th station area, the land use pattern is residential and commercial, though to the north of NE 16th Street the emphasis is on retail uses, with residential on the south side of the street.

Additions to the internal street pattern are needed to complete the grid and improve access and circulation to businesses within the area.

There are five different zones reflecting the topography of the area, as well as planned development along the corridor. In Zone 1, 116th Avenue NE to 120th Avenue NE, the light rail transportation facilities will be located under the bridged roadway, and the multipurpose pathway is on the north side of the roadway. It was yet to be determined how the system will connect to the medical district. There were two alternatives evaluated for Zone 2. Alternative A included a 14-foot-wide multipurpose pathway on NE 16th Street, and Alternative B had 7.5-foot-wide buffer bike lanes and additional landscaping. Alternative A would provide a continuous east-west multipurpose pathway between 112th Avenue NE and 130th Avenue NE that would link to the regional trail system along the SR-520 corridor and the potential Burlington Northern/Santa Fe trail. Alternative B would require the overall footprint to be 13 feet wider. The early analysis indicates the eight-foot landscape strips under Alternative A could treat a substantial amount of the roadway runoff and provide detention, thus reducing the costs associated with more traditional types of treatment. The recommendation of staff to the Council was in favor of Alternative A, the alternative around which the stakeholders are also coalesced.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Glass, Mr. Logwood said there is currently a steep embankment where 120th Avenue NE climbs to the Safeway site. The embankment will be removed and used to build up the profile of 120th Avenue NE all the way from NE 12th Street to about NE 16th Street. The elevation will be raised to permit the light rail line to come through underneath the 120th Avenue NE roadway. That will result in NE 15th being a relative flat section from 120th Avenue NE to 124th Avenue NE.

Turning to Zone 3, the West Tributary area, Mr. Logwood said the roadway in the area narrows to one lane in each direction. The two lanes split to allow for the center running light rail alignment. The westbound sidewalk is designed to cross the rails at grade at 90 degrees via a

signalized intersection, whereas the westbound travel lane is not. Another option would be to have the westbound travel lane thread underneath the light rail alignment then reconnect with the eastbound roadway elevation. Under that scenario, the non-motorized multipurpose pathway would have an at-grade crossing of both travel lanes to the south of the rail alignment. Also noted is that the potential undercrossing of the westbound lanes will substantially bisect the open-space/park property purchased by the city.

Commissioner Glass asked if the multipurpose path could be moved closer to the West Tributary and pass underneath the roadway in a tunnel to avoid a crossing conflict. Mr. Logwood said that would achieve only six to seven feet of headroom, which would not be good for cyclists. Additionally, tunnels offer less personal safety; the desire is to have the system be as open and visible as possible. Commissioner Lampe suggested the tradeoff to avoid the conflict may be worth it.

Mr. Logwood noted that Zone 4 takes in the area between 130th Avenue NE and 136th Place NE. The light rail station is sited between 130th Avenue NE and 132nd Avenue NE, and at the intersection with 130th Avenue NE the multipurpose pathway changes into bike lanes on each side of the roadway, which has one lane in each direction. The required minimum 20-foot space is achieved through the roadway and bike lane. Landscaping is included adjacent to the station and between the bike lane and the sidewalk. Conflicts are reduced by allowing driveway access from side streets only. The roadway will be designed to handle the required axel loading because the route will serve as a truck route. Consideration is being given to the use of pervious pavement outside of the area to better capture roadway runoff, reducing costs for drainage vaults.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Larrivee, Mr. Logwood said the channelization flows from the completed traffic analysis for the corridor. The analysis looked beyond just how the traffic itself will move to how it will move with the light rail operation and phasing. As the westbound train moves through, all north-south movements will be stopped, and the westbound and eastbound vehicles will move with the train. No left-turns will be allowed at the NE 16th Street/130th Avenue NE intersection. For through riding cyclists, vehicles turning right could be in conflict. Consideration is being given to continuing a pavement pattern and design through the intersection with additional signing to alert drivers that the bike route is continuous.

Mr. Logwood noted that left-turn movements will be allowed at the intersection of NE 16th Street/132nd Avenue NE along with through and through/right-turn movements. Bike lane striping and treatment may be carried through the intersection.

The enhancements for the area east of 132nd Avenue NE include opening the existing stream channel for Goff Creek where it is presently piped. That will add additional green space behind the sidewalk and could include some activities in the 50-buffer area. On-street parking gets added to both the north and south sides of the roadway to the east of 132nd Avenue NE to

serve the residential and commercial uses.

Part of the work that is under way includes planning for the local streets and the green street components. Those elements could possibly be mixed in with on-street parking.

Commissioner Glass observed that the width of the travel lane along the NE 16th Street corridor varies and he asked why. Mr. Logwood said the width in the Spring District is 11 feet; vehicles can operate well within that dimension, and the overall cross section is narrowed while meeting the minimum requirements of the fire department. The lane widths in the other sections vary but are wider than 11 feet. The narrowest cross section is east of 134th Avenue NE, with 13 feet wide travel lanes.

Mr. Logwood said the landscape buffering LRT guide way terminates just west of the existing NE 16th Street intersection. Along 136th Place NE, which serves commercial uses, the existing driveway access points will be retained, though they will be right-turn restricted. Some form of pedestrian crossing near NE 18th Street is yet to be determined. The roadway will have a traditional bike lane running alongside the travel lane.

The Commissioners were informed that the cost estimate for the segment between 116th Avenue NE and 124th Avenue NE is \$74 million, and the estimate for the segment between 124th Avenue NE and NE 20th Street is \$99.9 million, for a total of \$173.9 million. Those estimates are lower than the original estimates. In the Spring District, providing for on-street parking will cost on the order of \$330,000; providing on-street parking between 132nd Avenue NE and 134th Avenue NE will cost on the order of \$588,000. The per-stall cost works out to about \$15,000.

Commissioner Glass asked if drainage costs could be reduced by eliminating the on-street parking. Mr. Logwood allowed that there would be less surface runoff and a resulting lower drainage cost.

Commissioner Lampe suggested that if the downtown merchants were asked to comment, they would indicate that the lack of parking is a constraint for them. He said his inclination would be to maximize the number of on-street stalls, both for the business practicality and because it is far less expensive to construct than structured parking. He agreed, however, that wherever on-street parking is provided, the overall roadway width will have to be greater. Overall, however, the benefits would more than offset the additional width.

Commissioner Larrivee commented that on-street parking tends to activate the street, which is a good thing. On-street parking should not, however, be the only available parking.

Commissioner Glass indicated his support for including the on-street parking option.

Commissioner Larrivee indicated his support for the proposed five-foot bike lanes and the

additional buffer width between the travel lane and the adjacent on-street parking. The other Commissioners concurred.

Commissioner Glass said he favored the landscaping but wondered aloud if all the landscaping shown along the roadways would tend to camouflage the adjacent businesses to some degree.

With regard to the proposal for the roadway and light rail crossing of the West Tributary, Commissioner Glass said he would support creating either a short underpass or a tunnel, foregoing safety and openness for the short distance needed to get underneath the light rail alignment. That would obviate the need for either bicyclists or motorists to stop.

Commissioner Simas pointed out that the West Tributary crossing is not the only place along the route where cars are going to have to stop for the train. He said if it were the only one he would be more inclined to think of ways to avoid the conflict. The fact is that stops will become a part of the culture of having a light rail system.

Commissioner Glass pointed out that if the recommendation is to go with an undercrossing, a short tunnel for non-motorized access in the north-south direction would avoid the need to cross at grade. With the alternative alignment, the westbound lanes of traffic would have to come to a stop.

Mr. Logwood clarified that the westbound bridge undercrossing alignment would make it impossible for 128th Avenue NE to go through as an undercrossing. The question for the Commissioners is whether the tradeoffs are worthwhile. The westbound roadway at-grade crossing option preserves the use of 128th Avenue NE as an internal roadway serving residential to the north and office to the south.

Commissioner Simas said in a perfect world he would prefer to see the non-motorized facility not have to cross the light rail line at grade, and would want to preserve the option for 128th Avenue NE to serve the internal area via an undercrossing. He asked how often trains are expected to make the West Tributary crossing; he was told by Mr. Logwood that by the planning horizon year there will be a train going by every three minutes.

Commissioner Lampe said he would advocate minimizing the number of conflicts, but said he also recognized that cost issues are involved. He agreed that it would be preferable to have the non-motorized facility cross under the light rail alignment.

Mr. Logwood commented that seasoned cyclists traveling westbound through the corridor would have to stop momentarily when crossing the light rail line, but they could then continue westbound with the travel lane. Cyclists will also have the opportunity to use the multipurpose pathway, which totally avoids the at-grade crossing conflict except for the at-grade crossing of 128th Avenue NE. From the standpoint of access and circulation, there is significant benefit to having 128th Avenue NE go through.

Commissioner Glass agreed having 128th Avenue NE go through would be beneficial and allowed that the at-grade crossing of the light rail line would likely only be used by seasoned commuter cyclists. He said he could support the at-grade alternative.

Commissioner Lampe agreed that there would be advantages to having 128th Avenue NE continue through. He said if the undercrossing alternative is selected, his preference would be to have the non-motorized path crossing under the roadway in a tunnel close to the West Tributary.

Commissioner Larrivee noted his support for the at-grade crossing alternative.

Commissioner Simas suggested the roadside path will be minimally used by pedestrians; most pedestrians will elect to use the multipurpose path, as will most cyclists, save for the hardcore bikers who will be able to deal with having to stop for the train. The benefit of having 128th Avenue NE go through far outweighs the crossing conflict.

Commissioner Glass voiced support for Alternative A in Zone 2. He said he liked the idea of having the bike lanes go around the light rail station but said he would prefer to see the outside east-west lanes a foot or two wider to improve safety.

Commissioner Larrivee said he also was attracted to Alternative A but said he would like more consideration given to allowing more bicycles generally throughout the area. Cyclists obviously will want to access the light rail station, but some will also want to visit businesses and residential areas and their movements should be facilitated through the addition of somewhat wider travel lanes.

Motion to endorse on-street parking, the bicycle proposal for the Spring District with the caveats highlighted, the West Tributary at-grade crossing alternative, and the consideration for bicyclists in Zone 2 was made by Commissioner Larrivee. Second was by Commissioner Glass and the motion carried unanimously.

10. OLD BUSINESS – None

11. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Glass said he would support having staff pursue putting together a ped-bike safety education program. He said the effort could be bolstered and most effective if done in concert with neighboring jurisdictions.

Commissioner Larrivee said a good first step would be to receive a briefing of the lower-cost safety enhancements that are being contemplated. Commissioner Lampe added that it would be helpful to know statistically where most of the accidents are occurring and what is causing

them; that information would help in determining the most effective safety features.

12. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Bernie Hayden, 2622 134th Avenue NE, commented that at the first open house on the NE 15th Street/NE 16th Street project the roadway cross section was 197 feet. The reduction to a maximum of 153 feet indicates that a lot of good work has been done. He said he did not favor Alternative A in Zone 2 because of the number of light rail tracks that will need to be crossed in the space of four blocks going east and west. The north side is clearly gearing up to be the most active side so it would seem like asymmetrical sidewalks, with the south side narrowed, would make sense.

13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

14. REVIEW COMMISSION CALENDAR AND AGENDA

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

15. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Simas adjourned the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date