

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES

May 8, 2008  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: David Cieri, Kevin O'Neill, Kristi Oosterveen, Eric Miller, Jen Benn, Dave Berg, Nancy LaCombe, Judy Clark, Maria Koengeter, Department of Transportation, Mike Kattermann, Department of Planning and Community Development

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Vice Chair Northey who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present

3. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Transportation Improvement Program

Capital Programming Coordinator Kristi Oosterveen explained that a public hearing is mandated for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). She pointed out that one modification to the plan was made, specifically to TIP Ref. #29, the Transit Now/Downtown Circulator project, in order to be consistent with Council direction. The change added language about the city choosing to participate financially in the acquisition of circulator vehicles, especially ones that are low emission, and included funding in the unsecured area for the vehicles.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh said it was her understanding that the partnership with Metro was that Metro would be providing the capital, which is the buses, and that the city would pay a third of the cost of the service. She asked why the city should include in the TIP a line item for purchasing vehicles. Grants Coordinator Jen Benn explained that the Council requested the

use of low emission and hybrid vehicles, but Metro said to go in that direction will require external funding.

Ms. Oosterveen briefly reviewed the outline of the TIP document and the projects contained in each section. She explained that the TIP is a list of projects the city would build if money were no object; the TFP differs in that it is financially constrained.

Commissioner Northey opened the public hearing.

There were no public comments.

Commissioner Northey closed the public hearing.

#### 4. STAFF REPORTS

Transportation CIP Construction Manager Dave Cieri reviewed the desk packet materials.

Mr. Cieri noted that at the April 24 Commission meeting there was some question as to whether or not the action taken by the Commission regarding the 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE walkway/bikeway project was by motion. He said the action was in fact by motion. Accordingly, to bring the issue once again to the table would require a motion to reconsider made by someone who voted in favor of the original motion.

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

#### 6. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Glass reported that the Light Rail Best Practices Committee met on May 6 and reviewed the draft final report.

#### 7. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Christie Hammond, 128 109<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, spoke on behalf of the Surrey Downs East Link Committee, a committee formed by the board of the local homeowners association for the purpose of educating and informing the neighborhood on issues of transit and the specific light rail proposals. She thanked the Transportation Commission members who are serving on the Light Rail Best Practices Committee for their long hours of dedication.

Mr. Todd Woosley with Hal Woosley Properties, 12001 NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street, noted that TIP project 26 was previously removed from the Bel-Red plan by the Transportation Commission. The project involves the extension of NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street east of 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The project should also be removed from the TIP. He said the transportation investments needed in the Bel-Red corridor are extensive and will need to be borne by property owners as well as the city as a whole. What is needed is a broad-based funding source for many of the initial investments in the corridor. For the property owners who do not intend to immediately redevelopment their

properties, formation of a local improvement district would represent a devaluation of the properties. Commercial properties are valued on their net operating incomes; if there is a local improvement district formed, while a previous one for the old Bel-Red Road is still being paid off, the additional cost will be subtracted from the income stream for the properties, thus lowering the actual assessed value. He spoke in opposition to using a local improvement district as a funding source.

## 8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to revise the agenda by moving Item 11 ahead of Item 8, and to approve the revised agenda was made by Commissioner Tanaka. Second was by Commissioner Van Valkenburgh and the motion carried unanimously.

## 11. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Northey introduced Ernie Simas, the person who has been appointed to fill the Commission seat to be vacated at the end of May when the term for Commissioner Wendle expires. She noted that as of June there will be three new members and suggested scheduling a three- or four-hour workshop to review the objectives of the Commission.

Commissioner Glass agreed that the idea is a good one but pointed out that the Commission's agendas are pretty full well into the summer months.

There was agreement to investigate a date on which to schedule the workshop.

Commissioner Northey encouraged the Commissioners to keep notes regarding each presentation, specifically whether or not all necessary information was shared, if the presentation was in a format that facilitated understanding, and any other comments that could be shared with staff in an effort to use the Commission's time most effectively.

## 9. STUDY SESSION

### A. 2009 – 2014 Transportation Improvement Program

Ms. Oosterveen said the TIP is slated to go before the Council for approval on June 2.

Ms. Oosterveen explained that the NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street extension project east of 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is included in the language for the Early Implementation of the Bel-Red Corridor Plan in the TIP because it is also currently in the CIP language. When the next CIP update occurs, the project verbiage will more than likely be removed.

Commissioner Northey asked if Commission could act to remove the project language from the list, and Ms. Oosterveen said that could be done since there is no rule that says the language of the TIP must mirror the CIP.

Motion to amend the TIP to delete the NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street extension project language and to add the

NE 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Street project outlined in the Bel-Red subarea project list was made by Commissioner Glass. Second was by Commissioner Kiel.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh asked if the Commission has received any information regarding the NE 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Street project. Commissioner Glass noted that the project was on the list of Bel-Red projects approved by the Commission at a previous meeting.

Implementation Planning Manager Eric Miller suggested that the NE 11<sup>th</sup> project could be folded into the description of TIP Ref. #26, the Early Implementation of the Bel-Red Corridor Plan project, because the language is loosely drafted. Commissioner Glass agreed that that would make the most sense and with the concurrence of Commissioner Kiel revised the motion accordingly.

Commissioner Northey proposed including an asterisk to clarify that the NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street extension portion of the project will not go forward.

Commissioner Northey indicated she would be voting against approving the TIP. She said her main concern was that including many of the blue items could undermine the Commission's prioritization process if grant dollars flow in for projects that have been deemed to have a lower priority.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Glass called attention to the letter received from David Plummer that talked about deleting some projects and adding some projects. He said he was most interested in the proposal to add the installation of a signal at the intersection of 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Ms. Oosterveen said Mr. Plummer has proposed the signal project on numerous occasions. She said the intersection in question is very close to where he lives but does not meet signal warrants.

Commissioner Larrivee suggested that adding a signal as requested would exacerbate the traffic flow at the signalized intersections to the north and south.

Commissioner Northey said she would like to have more information from staff.

Commissioner Glass noted that Mr. Plummer also requested a turnout space on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Commissioner Kiel said the area in question is by the neighborhood between NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Bel-Red Road. She said there are a couple of turnouts near churches.

Commissioner Glass said his reading of the letter from Mr. Plummer led him to believe he was asking for a merge space so traffic can more easily get onto 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Commissioner Kiel said the site is close to the intersection with NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street where there are always backups during peak hours.

Commissioner Northey said she would like more information from staff.

Motion to amend TIP #29 to reflect the language in the staff memo was made by

Commissioner Larrivee. Second was by Commissioner Glass and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve the TIP as amended was made by Commissioner Glass. Second was by Commissioner Tanaka and the motion carried 6-1, with Commissioner Northey voting no.

#### B. Downtown Projects Update

For the benefit of the new Commissioners, Deputy Director Dave Berg introduced Project Manager Nancy LaCombe, noting that over the years she has been given some of the most difficult assignments. He said the traditional way of managing individual projects tends to ignore how various projects interact with each other. The fact that there is a lot going on in the downtown area seemed to call for someone to oversee them all to deliver them in a cohesive way. Ms. LaCombe has been selected to serve as downtown projects program coordinator. Her role is work with all of the individual project managers to make sure there is consistency, that everyone is talking to each other, and that all of the various projects will work together as they are brought online.

Ms. LaCombe briefly described how growth in the downtown is bringing with it demand for new projects. She noted that the projections show increases in the number of peak hour auto trips, even though a 44 percent transit modeshare is projected. With an increase in the number of evening peak hour auto trips, travel speeds will decrease; the current average vehicle speed is close to ten miles per hour, but by 2030 the projection is the average will be closer to four miles per hour.

Ms. LaCombe said the fact is there is limited space in the downtown for dealing with auto mobility. In order to meet the transportation needs of the area, city will need to take a multimodal approach.

The Bellevue mobility initiative has several key components: downtown operations, which is focused on managing traffic using the signal system; transportation and the transit plan, which is focused on the transportation system and ways to improve transit services in the downtown; concurrency; neighborhood protection for the surrounding neighborhoods; and capital needs projects.

Ms. LaCombe said there are currently several regional projects that will affect the downtown in one way or another; they include the I-405 south Bellevue project; the NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street overpass project; the East Link transit project; and the I-405/SR-520 braided ramps project. Local projects include the widening of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street between 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is awaiting environmental review by the federal government; the 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE between NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street lane and sidewalk improvements project; the 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE/108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE one-way couplet, which has been put on hold; the downtown wayfinding project; public art throughout the downtown; the downtown circulator; parks improvements, including the Meydenbauer Bay improvements, a connection between Downtown Park and Meydenbauer Bay park, Ashwood Park, and the NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Park. There are also some civic services that have been planned for the downtown, though they have

not actually earmarked for any particular locations; they include a downtown fire and EMS station, a potential municipal court, and a community center.

With regard to the NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street Pedestrian Corridor, Ms. LaCombe said staff are continuing to review potential interim improvements. There has also been some discussion about updating the vision for the corridor, pursuing public and private opportunities to activate the space, and installing new kiosks.

The idea behind the NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street project is to change from the current configuration to a five-lane roadway section with an ultimate half diamond connection with I-405. The challenge is how to gain the desired result without just paving everything between the buildings. Several different concepts were developed. When the 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE extension was done some remnant parcels were left over, so the city still owns the four corners, and the Downtown Implementation Plan identifies the area for some sort of linear park. The owner of the parcel on which there is to be a Marriot hotel developed came to the city and expressed an interest in partnering with the city to construct some of the park improvements in exchange for being allowed to use some of the underground space for parking. Through the negotiations with the hotel folks, it was determined that they would give up their rights to the vacation of NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Place if the city would build a park extending from NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Place all the way over to the edge of the hotel; in other words, if the city were to purchase the parcels in between NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Place and vacate the street, the city would gain ownership of the entire parcel.

Ms. LaCombe said some serious consideration has been given to Main Street. A developer has come forward to talk about developing a parcel at Main Street and Bellevue Way. Because that location is considered a gateway, the property owner will have to set aside some space for a gateway treatment. The developer has expressed an interest in working with the city, though the city would like to be able to design some of the improvements so it will look like a public space and a public gateway as opposed to something attached to a particular development.

Main Street has been studied numerous times to determine what the cross section should be. The city packaged together Main Street, NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, the gateway, and some park concepts, put out an RFP, and has selected three firms to interview. Pending Council approval, the work should begin in July. Some renderings have been done to show what adding some of the Great Streets components would look like.

Ms. LaCombe said the Downtown Implementation Plan identifies 40 different locations for potential midblock locations. A multidisciplinary team was put together to analyze and review locations, and nine were selected to look at in greater detail. The benefit for pedestrians is better crossing ability, but the challenge is that signalized crossings would impact traffic flow during the evening peak time.

Staff had a good handle on where the pedestrian crossings were occurring. Interns were sent out to observe and count. Some accident data was reviewed. The understanding was that there should be no on-street pedestrian crossings on the auto-biased streets, which are NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and Bellevue Way. Staff considered adjacencies to avoid putting a midblock crossing in where there is no entry to a building or anything to draw pedestrians to the other

side of the street.

Ms. LaCombe reviewed the data collected for each of the nine selected potential midblock crossings.

Commissioner Wendle observed that it is difficult to project the future demand is going to be for pedestrians, and also the potential for accidents, especially where there are unofficial alleys that do not line up. It is difficult enough for pedestrians to cross at marked intersections, but it could be even more difficult at midblock locations as traffic and pedestrian use gets heavier.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh suggested that better incentives and clearer direction are needed to get developers to help construct the Pedestrian Corridor.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Wendle, Ms. LaCombe said the interns went out on a couple of different days and conducted counts between the hours of 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. The noon hour has the highest pedestrian traffic.

Ms. LaCombe said the team looking at midblock crossings spent a lot of time talking about how to make signalized pedestrian crossings function. Most of the signals in the downtown area have a 140-second cycle. Pedestrians are generally unwilling to push a button and then wait more than two minutes to cross. On the other hand, if the pedestrian crossing signal were to activate immediately upon the button being pushed, the auto traffic would be heavily impacted. The midpoint would be a half cycle, so the longest a pedestrian would have to wait would be about a minute.

Ms. LaCombe said the conclusion reached after doing some modeling was that putting in a midblock signal in locations that do not have a significant amount of evening traffic will not make a huge difference in the total delay, though it would impact average speed to some degree. A signalized crossing on Bellevue Way, however, would double the delay and drop average travel speeds nearly in half.

The recommendation of the team is to modify the two existing signals, the one near the library and the one near the QFC, to install two new non-signalized crossings along 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and to further discuss options for Bellevue Way.

Commissioner Glass said the idea of relocating the QFC driveway is a good one. He noted that drivers who come out from there look down the street toward NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and see a green light driver faster to hit the intersection while the light is green.

Commissioner Wendle complimented the staff on taking a comprehensive approach to looking at the downtown. He said as the downtown continues to develop there will be more and more pedestrians; making the city more walkable will be the right way to go and will encourage more people to walk.

Ms. LaCombe said the study has included taking a look at bike lanes through the downtown. The ped-bike plan update process generated a lot of input from the public regarding where

facilities should be located, and a couple of different options have been given more serious attention. 114<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is the primary corridor for the Lake Washington Loop; the route does not currently have a lot of traffic, and it could use some improvements. The challenge is that the route passes under NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street and dumps out onto 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE where there is a right-turn pocket nearing NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The thinking is that the route should be brought up along the side of the structure where there is a wide path. That way bicycles could get into the mix of vehicles at NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street. The challenge is crossing NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street, NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and ultimately NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

A route along 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE has also been looked at. The street is quiet and could accommodate shared bike lanes. To complete the perimeter of the downtown, bicycle facilities would be needed on NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Main Street, with a bike lane on the south side and a separated path on the north side of NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street, and with an opposite configuration on Main Street.

Commissioner Northey asked about bicycles using the Pedestrian Corridor. Ms. LaCombe said the east/west connections through the downtown are envisioned to be Main Street, the Pedestrian Corridor and NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The crossing at NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street likely will have separate structures for pedestrians and bicyclists, separated from the HOV access to the freeway. Bicyclists currently come to the Pedestrian Corridor on a bus, or come to the Pedestrian Corridor wanting to catch a bus. They are not allowed to ride on the roadway where the buses travel, or in the center area where the people stand. The idea is to have the bicycles use the outer sides of the corridor.

Commissioner Wendle asked if some of the existing park on NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street would need to be used for the trail. Ms. LaCombe said some of the park land would need to be used, but the facility would be located close to the roadway, utilizing some of the existing sidewalk area.

Commissioner Northey suggested that putting bicycles on 114<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE bringing them up to NE 6<sup>th</sup>, crossing NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street should be a fatal flaw. Ms. LaCombe said that is part of the existing Lake Washington Loop. Commissioner Northey said that would be creating a safety issue. Ms. LaCombe said it is still under consideration.

Ms. LaCombe said the original thinking was that there was too much going on along 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to include bicycle facilities, so the focus turned to 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. However, the connection either north or south of the downtown is actually at 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The team looked at options involving both roadways. While 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE offers good opportunities, it also incorporates needed on-street parking. The fact is 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is already multimodal; it has the Pedestrian Corridor, it accommodates cars, and buses use the corridor. One option would be to reduce the five-lane section to four and put in bike lanes from Main to NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street and from NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street to NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Between NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, the patterns would need to be changed so the people entering it would understand that they are truly entering a multimodal area; that could be done by pavement treatments or through signage or art.

The recommendation is to move forward with studying Main Street and NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street, and NE

100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and to continue discussing what could happen along 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE given all that is going on there.

Commissioner Wendle said he would love to see bike lanes run to the heart of the downtown.

Commissioner Northey pointed out that 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE is one of the possible routes for light rail.

Commissioner Glass indicated his support for pursuing doing something along 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE despite all the issues that area presents. NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street is supposed to be the major bike route for getting over I-405, so riders aren't forced to cross NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 10<sup>th</sup> Street. It is difficult to get to southwest Bellevue to northwest Bellevue without going through that area. Ms. LaCombe added that depending on where they start, bike riders must climb uphill to get to 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Turning to a discussion of the Great Streets initiative, Ms. LaCombe said it is focused on five different roadway corridors in the downtown: NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Bellevue Way, 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Each roadway is given a specific theme. The idea behind the initiative is to improve and enhance the existing pedestrian environment in the downtown, and to act as a springboard for needed code and standard changes in the downtown. The initiative is predicated on the principle of advancing the design vision from the Downtown Implementation Plan. The initiative took a look at modifications to the sidewalk and landscape guidelines, review the concept of the thematic elements outlined in the Downtown Implementation Plan, consider how to integrate art, and to identify implementation strategies.

Ms. LaCombe said the idea behind NE 8th Street is to move cars. To make it a better pedestrian place, continuous plantings on both sides of the street could be put in the existing median. Landscaping could be used to separate vehicles from pedestrians. There are gateway opportunities on either end of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and also on 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. There is also a good opportunity passing 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to put in more green space with wider sidewalks, and the intersections at Bellevue Way and NE 8th Street could be celebrated with pavement or sidewalk treatments. There are existing pedestrian bridges on Bellevue Way and NE 8th Street with the potential for more.

There are also opportunities on NE 8th Street to add additional medians at 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and near the entrance to Bellevue Square. The idea is to bolster the notion of a city in a park with more green along the roadway edges and medians. Additional significant trees could be added to the corners where the sequoia tree is, and at 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Ms. LaCombe said NE 4th Street is also intended to move cars but includes opportunity for additional planting and the installation of green median islands in places to break up the expanse. The grade difference along NE 4th Street could also lend itself to a terraced segment.

Bellevue Way is built out for the most part, and Kemper Development has done a good job of giving it a pedestrian look and feel. To enhance the feel of a shopping street the plantings lighter and airier to allow visual access to storefronts. There are opportunities for gateway

treatments on either end and for celebrated intersections. There is also opportunity to use a part of Bellevue Way to continue the art walk segment that comes down the Pedestrian Corridor, moves along Bellevue Way and then enters Downtown Park.

For 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, dubbed the entertainment street, there is a wider sidewalk section proposed to activate the space, especially near the Pedestrian Corridor. The sidewalk could be activated with street vendors and other kinds of outdoor activities.

Having different pavement features at NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street along 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, along with bike lanes, will give that roadway a different look and feel. The art walk also crosses the roadway at NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

Ms. LaCombe said the Great Streets initiative yielded an update to the street tree plan for the downtown specific to the thematic streets.

There are several different circuits proposed throughout the downtown as part of the Great Streets initiative. The art walk circuit travels from city hall along the Pedestrian Corridor to Bellevue Way and into Downtown Park. Eventually it will run all the way down to Meydenbauer. The water circuit includes locations where water features could be created. The landscaping typology uses plants and earthworks to express the idea of a city in a park. The water features would include drinking fountains, rainwater paths, and even simulated water using lighting or paving. Along the entertainment street there would be a playful use of lights with more human interaction.

For the most part, the core area of the downtown should have 12-foot sidewalks with a four-foot tree well or landscape strip. The team has proposed extending that all the way through to Main Street and NE 12th Street, and to add NE 2nd Street to the mix.

The shoebox luminary lighting standard in use in the downtown will continue to be the standard, though along NE 8th Street and NE 4th Street there would need to be both street lighting and pedestrian-scale lighting. Along the entertainment street of 106<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, the lighting will occur in different ways. Main Street has its own system of lights, as does the Pedestrian Corridor and Ashwood.

The next steps will be to address maintenance challenges and determinations. It is always great to put in more landscaping, but someone must maintain it over time. In most areas, sidewalks and landscaping strips are maintained by the city, though Kemper Development maintains the area along Bellevue Way. Maintaining street furniture and art could add significantly to the overall maintenance budget.

Additional next steps include code revisions, refining the toolkit of options, coordinating with developers for implementation, and implementing the CIP. The medians in several different locations could be upgraded with interim treatments, and there could be some interim gateway greening treatments along with miscellaneous sidewalk improvements. For 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, some of the improvements could be done that are required to put in the bike lanes, the midblock crossings, and some of the celebrated intersection areas between Main Street and NE

12th Street.

The downtown presents a number of opportunities besides the Great Streets initiative, including opening Downtown Park and making it more visible, activating the Pedestrian Corridor, and the work to complete the connection between Downtown Park and Meydenbauer Bay.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh asked what typology will be used to make 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE transit friendly. Ms. LaCombe said the discussion has been to integrate stops into the building features rather than making them standalone.

Commissioner Tanaka asked if the city has the necessary right-of-way to allow for wider sidewalks. Ms. LaCombe said the city generally requires a 16-foot sidewalk width for downtown streets. In some areas development does not give up right-of-way for sidewalks but gives the city an easement instead. No significant right-of-way acquisitions are anticipated, though some will be necessary in certain areas.

Commissioner Tanaka asked if having islands located in the center of NE 4th Street will impact traffic flow in any way. Ms. LaCombe said the islands would be put in locations where left turns are restricted into and out of particular businesses. The overall flow of traffic in the corridor would not be affected.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Glass, Ms. LaCombe said the 16 feet of right-of-way required of developers for sidewalks remains under the ownership of the property owner. Commissioner Glass suggested that the property owners should maintain their own sidewalks under a set of specific standards. Ms. LaCombe said while that sounds wonderful, in reality deterioration occurs because no one takes care of it. The Pedestrian Corridor is a prime example given that the adjacent property owners are supposed to be maintaining it.

Commissioner Northey said one of the things that could be done better is wayfinding for transit. That, of course, would mean knowing where the routes are going to go. In downtown Portland it is very easy to find a kiosk with information about where the buses run and when they will be there.

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### C. Concurrency Model Platform Update

Modeling and forecasting group manager Judy Clark said the horizon year for concurrency modeling is always six years out and the modeling work is updated annually. She explained that the travel demand model first looks at land use to determine how many trips there will be. The modeling takes into account where the trips begin and end to determine travel patterns. The model also takes into account mode choice, which is a reflection of how each trips are made.

The growth management concurrency tool as interpreted by the Traffic Standards Code looks

at 104 signalized intersections throughout the city in 14 different Mobility Management Areas (MMA) to determine the levels of service and volume to capacity ratios for the two-hour evening peak time. The data is used to gauge intersection congestion.

One of the MMAs has no signalized intersections, so there is no report for that area. Staff are currently considering changes to the boundaries of the MMAs, most notably MMA-4 to have it better reflect the Bel-Red corridor.

Ms. Clark said base-year modeling work for the Eastside area is done jointly with Kirkland and Redmond; all three jurisdictions contribute data and revenue toward supporting the model. The annual exercise to update the concurrency report for Bellevue begins as soon as the joint modeling work is completed.

Each update is based on the previous year-end data. From there the model looks forward six years. All permitted development is added to the current land use picture. In the first pass, the existing roadway system is analyzed using the updated land use information. On the second pass, all of the projects funded in the six-year CIP are added to the first pass data. The levels of service are measured against the established standards. The model is then used throughout the year for project level analysis for every development project that gets proposed that will have more than 20 peak hour trips; if a project does not contribute to exceeding the current concurrency standard, it is issued a certificate of concurrency. Currently, the worst performing intersection in the city is NE 8th Street and 1112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE.

Each MMA has an appropriate level of service standard according to district type. The standard for the downtown area is 0.95, and neighborhoods like Northeast Bellevue have a standard of 0.80. There is a standard that indicates the number of intersections within an MMA that are allowed to exceed the level of service standard. The model shows those that do and indicates which will in the horizon year; for the current model run, seven intersections will exceed the standard without the funded CIP projects, but only five will with the funded CIP projects. All of the MMAs meet their standards, and all of the MMAs have some reserve capacity. The CIP projects will improve system performance.

Congestion and mobility will continue to be a concern over the long term, but even with all of the approved growth in the downtown there is reserve capacity under the adopted standard. The reserve capacity allows the city to accept and review additional development projects. Nine new projects came in at the end of 2007.

Commissioner Wendle asked how the city treats intersections that run afoul of traffic that is not internal to the city. Ms. Clark said many of them are addressed through BROTS. The model also incorporates Redmond and Kirkland traffic data along with Bellevue data so everything can be analyzed together. That makes it easier to attribute traffic growth to specific jurisdictions. The findings are fodder for policy discussion.

Commissioner Northey said it seems counterintuitive that there is reserve capacity in the downtown. Ms. Clark said the 0.95 standard in the downtown allows for much higher levels of congestion. The area currently has a V/C ratio in the 70-percent range. Citywide, the one-hour

p.m. peak volumes have dropped by one percent, though there has been a slight increase in the two-hour p.m. peak volumes. In some of the loop data, some of the highest volumes are occurring after 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Northey asked if the Commission should be concerned about the four percent available capacity in Newcastle. Ms. Clark said that figure derives from the fact that the MMA has few signalized intersections. There were some issues with the intersection of Coal Creek Parkway and Forest Drive, but improvements made there have proved beneficial. With additional housing in the area, however, the intersection of Coal Creek Parkway and 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE is vulnerable.

Commissioner Glass said the thing that has always frustrated him about concurrency is the an MMA can meet its standard even though it contains some very bad intersections, and because the standard is met, nothing has to be done about the bad intersections.

Commissioner Wendle noted that there are a string of intersections on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue in east Bellevue that perform very poorly, for which there are no planned improvements. One must wonder what redevelopment of the Bel-Red corridor will do outlying neighborhoods that will have to deal with extra traffic traveling through. He suggested that it will be particularly frustrating for those who live along those routes and who will have to deal daily with trying to get in and out of their homes.

Kevin O'Neill reported that the City Council was briefed on May 5 about the update to the BROTS agreement. He noted that in December both the Redmond and Bellevue city councils adopted a framework agreement to drive the next BROTS, and that agreement specifically states that east Bellevue will need to be studied from 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue to West Lake Sammamish and I-90. Accordingly, that will be part of the next BROTS update, and it will take into consideration the planned Bel-Red and Overlake land use growth. That being said, the neighborhoods in the study area will not support widening the main roads, so the solution set will need to include transit, non-motorized components, and a host of other strategies. The study will not contemplate land use changes in the residential areas of east Bellevue, with the possible exception of the Eastgate subarea.

#### D. Light Rail Best Practices Draft Report

Chair Northey asked staff for an opinion as to whether the Commission should speak as a Commission to the report. Senior Planner Maria Koengeter said staff was not seeking any formal Commission comments, but added that the group is free to speak as a Commission if it decides to do so. She said all of the boards and commissions are being encouraged to communicate through their representatives, which for the Transportation Commission is Chair Northey and Commissioners Larrivee and Glass.

Ms. Koengeter said the draft light rail best practices report was released a couple of weeks ago. By way of background she explained that Sound Transit is currently conducting an environmental review for the East Link project which would extend light rail from Seattle to downtown Bellevue, through the Bel-Red corridor to Overlake and on to Redmond. In

preparation for Bellevue taking a position on a preferred alignment, the City Council initiated the Light Rail Best Practices project to help inform the decision. The Committee was charged with reviewing the experiences of other cities and national best practices for integrating light rail, to engage the community in the research, and to develop best practices for Bellevue along with policy and other action recommendations for the Council to consider.

For purposes of the project, a best practice was defined as a technique, method, process or activity that will be more effective at delivering a desired outcome for light rail in Bellevue.

The Committee process included identifying topic areas and developing research questions based on public comment; reviewing national research findings; touring case study systems in San Diego, San Jose, Portland, and the Central Link system being built by Sound Transit; and considering public input provided through multiple open house events and directly during committee meetings.

The bulk of the draft report focuses on the light rail best practices catalog. It summarizes the Committee's findings in each of the nine topic areas and includes an action plan for implementing the practices. The actions fall into five categories: 1) Comprehensive Plan policies; 2) codes and standards; 3) other city policies and procedures, which could include revisions to Council interest statements or interlocal agreements; 4) city capital investments; and 5) expectations of Sound Transit.

Ms. Koengeter said there are five principle findings and conclusions that overlap within the nine topic areas of the report: 1) connect somewhere to somewhere; 2) light rail can complement, not diminish, the character and quality of Bellevue; 3) anticipate impacts and advocate for exceptional mitigation; 4) alignment profiles should consider the unique qualities of each part of the community; and 5) early and ongoing public involvement is essential for success in Bellevue.

The notion of connecting somewhere to somewhere highlights the fact that light rail should be about the places it serves. Alignments and stations should directly and conveniently serve the places where people live, work and play. Most cities that have light rail have constructed it along existing rail right-of-way and then filled in the development around it. Bellevue is unique in that it has an established land use vision for the three areas through which the East Link system will travel. The closest example found was the Green Line in San Diego which connects Old Town and travels along the San Diego River to Santee; the line crosses the river multiple times to serve housing developments, shopping malls, stadiums and San Diego State University. The transit authority had the choice of serving the edge of the university campus with a less expensive elevated design, or to serve the heart of the campus via a tunnel; they chose the latter because it would better connect somewhere to somewhere and ultimately increase ridership.

Some of the best practices from the report that advance the notion of connecting somewhere to somewhere include establishing a clear vision and confirming community goals for the light rail system. In the downtown and the Bel-Red areas where light rail will be a critical element toward achieving the land use vision, ensuring that development will happen around light rail

will help to enhance the character of the place by integrating it into the existing environment.

The finding that light rail can be built and operated in a way that complements and does not diminish the character and quality of Bellevue resulted from the finding of the Committee that light rail can be made to fit in multiple already developed environments with hard work and proactive action on the part of the city. Key elements include the provision of access from surrounding areas to the stations; using quality finishes and thoughtful designs; incorporating complementary capital improvements; and designing the system to be both safe and secure.

The Committee toured the Goose Hollow neighborhood which is adjacent to downtown Portland. A local resident told the committee that community engagement was key, and that access to the line from the community was vitally important. It was also noted that the quality finishes incorporated into the station design gave the community a sense of pride and ownership. The committee also toured Alum Rock, which is part of the San Jose system. There they found the use of landscape and art helped integrate the station and line into the community. Along that same line, however, the committee saw examples of what not to do, including the incorporation of walls with low-quality materials and the lack of a coherent look.

The best practices identified by the Committee included designing stations to be an extension of local communities; using the investment of light rail as a foundation for other community enhancements, such as sidewalks or undergrounding utilities; providing connections to stations that are safe, secure and convenient; employing design techniques that will prevent crime; and fostering a sense of ownership by users and neighbors.

Senior Planner Mike Kattermann said any large capital construction project brings with it disruptions and inconveniences. The good news is that the best practices process has given the city a much better understanding of what to expect and how to deal with things.

Commissioner Wendle observed that construction of the TriMet system in Portland has resulted in harm to a lot of existing businesses, many of which have had to move or close, especially small businesses. Chair Northey said one approach they have taken with that project has been to stagger the construction by working in small block sections. There has also been a great deal of outreach.

Ms. Koenigter said one of the reasons they decided to add transit and auto traffic on the mall was because the area was struggling with bus service only. It can be observed that some of the existing businesses were operating on the margin already. Mr. Kattermann said there are always impacts on businesses with large-scale projects. One of the innovative things the Portland project has initiated is the sequencing of construction in the downtown; each phase of the project was allowed only six weeks to minimize the disruption for any given business.

Mr. Kattermann said the best practices for anticipating the impacts and advocating for exceptional mitigation include good planning and coordination; involvement of those affected; understanding the trade-offs of the different options; having a construction management plan with a clear understanding of roles of responsibilities; and planning for and addressing the impacts of construction.

One approach seen on the tour of the San Diego system involved a fare paid zone. Anyone in that zone must have already purchased a ticket or be in the process of buying one or face being asked to leave by the transit personnel or police.

Mr. Kattermann said the best practices committee concluded that alignment profiles should consider the unique qualities of each community through which the line passes. The committee was not charged with looking at particular alignments, but it was charged with looking at how the different profiles are treated in various case study cities and how effective they are. The research uncovered no one set of best practices that can be applied; everything depends on local conditions and circumstances. The report indicates advantages and disadvantages of the various profiles. At-grade is less expensive than elevated, which is less expensive than tunnel. Elevated and tunnel profiles have higher speeds than at-grade, which can be a benefit in terms of encouraging ridership. Elevated systems tend to have more visual impacts. At-grade systems provide a higher degree of street level activity and better access to the system.

The identified best practices include providing safe, secure and convenient access to the stations; linking the major population and employment centers; the profiles should fit the context and support the land use; minimize the impacts on street operations, which applies primarily to elevated and at-grade systems; and optimizing ridership is a function of connecting the right places, providing good access to the system, and travel times.

Mr. Kattermann said the Committee concluded that early and ongoing public involvement is essential for success. He said that point rose to the top consistently in the case studies and the research. The best practices project started with the idea that the public should be involved. The conclusion reached was the public should be involved in evaluating impacts through the EIS, through construction management to assure that the impacts are addressed and minimized, and in all station design and alignment decisions.

There are a number of different ways to involve the public. One way highlighted in the report is by forming an advisory committee of citizens to help advise the city and Sound Transit. The Committee has been clear that Sound Transit will be the builder of the East Link system and will own it, but recognized the important roles the city will play in terms of permitting authority and coordinating to make sure the project is done in a way that will fit with Bellevue expectations.

Mr. Kattermann said the Light Rail Best Practices Committee will be wrapping up its work by mid to late June. The bulk of the community input will be generated during the month of May; an open house is scheduled for May 15. The Planning Commission will be looking at the Comprehensive Plan amendment aspects only, and their work will be done primarily in July. The Council will start its deliberations in July and carry forward through August; they intend to wrap things up in August before the issuance of the DEIS in early fall.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh said “hide and park” is a critical issue for neighborhoods adjacent to light rail stations. She said she lived in Illinois where there was a big hide and park

issue; the residents got so fed up they decided to sell their parking spaces; the result was paved side and front yards. The issue should be addressed from the very start and there should be some coordination with Metro regarding feeder services.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh suggested the city should also consider having some parking maximums in the Bel-Red corridor to encourage people to utilize the light rail system. If parking is widely available and free or inexpensive, people will continue to drive alone. She said her solution would not be to create a large park and ride facility in the Bel-Red corridor; the better approach would be to have an effective feeder service in place.

Commissioner Glass said there has been a lot of consensus on the part of the best practices Committee regarding a number of topics. The topic that generated the most differing opinions was park and ride facilities, where they should be and how many of them there should be. The committee is focused on talking about where to draw the line and how forceful to be in the language directed at Sound Transit.

Ms. Koengeter pointed out that the connecting people to light rail chapter covers the issues of hide and ride, transit access, and a number of others. Some of the actions include evaluating development code around station areas and considering how to balance needs.

Commissioner Tanaka asked if anyone talked to Sound Transit about their experience of building a system through south Seattle. Mr. Kattermann said the Committee toured the Central Link system in the fall of 2007. Sound Transit staff provided the tour and the Committee members asked a lot of questions. The importance of coordination between the city and the transit agency was evident to the Committee following the case study tours.

Commissioner Tanaka said he has seen up close a number of public works projects. They always have good intentions with regard to public process and outreach, but somehow it is all never enough. To some degree it is just very difficult to get the attention of the general public. It would be a good thing for someone to take a fresh look at the public involvement process.

Commissioner Northey noted that some jurisdictions have incorporated performance bonuses for meeting guidelines for the minimal number of citizen complaints. One place actually hired another company to focus solely on mitigation during the construction phase. Other places have construction representatives sitting on the citizen advisory boards, giving them closer contact with the community.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh suggested the city should seek to find out how Chicago handled the construction of Wacker Drive, which involved a completely built-out environment. Ms. Koengeter said that would be good information to have in developing a construction management plan, which is one of the things the report talks about.

Mr. Kattermann pointed out that the best practices Committee project has in itself been an innovative idea. Even the case study city representatives praised the city for taking the tack; it is not something other cities around the nation have done. The effect has been very early engagement of the public in the process. The key will be to keep the community involved

throughout the rest of the process.

Commissioner Tanaka praised the best practices Committee for the draft report.

Commissioner Northey suggested the Commission did not need to take a position regarding the report, but held that subsequent briefings will be needed to keep everyone up to speed.

Mr. Kattermann said as early as the first best practices Committee meeting there was discussion about the roles of the different boards and commissions and whether they should weigh in individually. The response of the Mayor was that the best practices Committee was put together with representatives of each board and commission specifically for that reason.

Commissioner Glass said any and all comments from Commissioners would be welcomed by the best practices Committee, either in person or through the representatives serving on the committee.

E. Preliminary TFP/CIP Roadway/Intersection Candidate Project List

Packet material was for information only for a future discussion. There was no discussion on this item.

10. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh noted that there has been a lot of conversation lately about tolling on SR-520 and the potential diversion of traffic to I-90. She suggested the Commission should be kept informed. Mr. Berg said regional issues are typically within the purview of the City Council, but he said staff could provide an update to the Commission.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh said she was particularly interested in knowing whether or not the city will be taking an active role in getting an analysis on the table or leaving it all to the Puget Sound Regional Council. Mr. Berg said the department workload will not permit the city to do its own analysis.

12. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 13, 2008

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Van Valkenburgh. Second was by Commissioner Northey and the motion carried unanimously.

14. REVIEW CALENDAR

A. Commission Calendar and Agenda

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

B. Public Involvement Calendar

15. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Northey adjourned the meeting at 10:14 p.m.

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Secretary to the Transportation Commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

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Date