

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

July 14, 2011
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Tanaka, Commissioners Glass, Lampe, Larrivee, Northey

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Jokinen, Simas

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Krawczyk, Department of Transportation; Alex O'Reilly, Department of Planning and Community Development

GUEST SPEAKERS: Michelle Zeidman, Hopelink

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chair Tanaka who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. STAFF REPORTS

Senior Project Manager Paul Krawczyk reported that the city is anticipating a \$6 million deficit in the operating budget. All department directors have been tasked with formulating a plan for how to address the shortfall. The topic will consume much of the staff's energy in the coming month.

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

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Larrivee reported that the Eastgate/I-90 CAC has concluded its work of putting together a collection of alternatives. The alternatives were shared with the public at two open

house events, and an online survey gave the public another opportunity to provide feedback. Staff and the consultants will spend the next few weeks doing the necessary analysis. The CAC will meet again in September to begin the task of developing a preferred alternative. Everything is on track for meeting the end-of-the-year deadline. He said it should come as no surprise that the transportation issues facing the corridor are particularly challenging.

Commissioner Lampe noted that I-90 serves as the core of the corridor and he asked if there are any major changes planned to that system. Commissioner Larrivee said there will be changes in the longer term, including HOV and transit facilities. WSDOT is looking at extending the westbound onramp at Eastgate all the way to Lakemont Boulevard.

Commissioner Northey announced that as part of her job she will soon be meeting with Assistant Director Dave Berg to develop a workshop on transportation and utility recovery after a catastrophic event. The workshop will be scheduled for late January 2012 in conjunction with the state Department of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

8. STUDY SESSION

A. Easy Rider Update

Hopelink Mobility Manager Michelle Zeidman, along with Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly, spoke on behalf of the King County Mobility Coalition. Ms. Zeidman said the Coalition came together originally about a decade ago as key partners in transportation under the leadership of Margaret Casey with the Seattle/King County Area Agency on Aging. In 2006 after the passage of SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users), local transportation and human service plans were required to be integrated in order to receive federal funding. The Coalition fills that niche and is sponsored by King County Metro, Sound Transit, Puget Sound Regional Council, and the King County Alliance for Human Services. United Way was involved initially. Also involved are the city of Bellevue, Aging and Disability Services, and Hopelink. The vision is to develop a world-class transportation network so that all people can move freely around King County and the Puget Sound region.

Ms. Zeidman said the organization's achievements to date include strategic planning and coalition building. In just the last year veterans, mental health advocates and the tribes have been added along with other new partners. The position of mobility manager has been in place

for a year and a half and is funded through partnerships. Having a mobility manager makes it generally easier for the Coalition to function. The strategic planning efforts have resulted in bringing new people to the table, leading to new community outreach forums. Travel options brochures and maps have been created and are being widely distributed in east King County. For some people, transit is the best option, but others need a higher or different level of service of the type the Coalition is able to provide. The Coalition has been involved in local, regional and statewide planning efforts and is currently working on an immigrant and refugee elders transportation project; focus groups have been conducted, a survey was implemented, and a transportation summit will be held near the end of the month with representatives of the impacted communities to talk about what actions can be taken to help spread the word about available transportation services. Life in Motion is a project that set to be launched by the end of July. It will provide opportunity for community members who use the different transportation options to tell their stories.

For many, having transportation options is the difference between being stuck at home and being able to get out to see friends, do the shopping, or go to important appointments.

Ms. Zeidman said she works with the North King County Mobility Coalition which was founded in November 2010. That group is currently tasked with determining the transportation needs in north King County, what the capacity for transportation providers is, and what steps should be taken. Hopelink recently received a grant that will make it possible to add a third mobility coalition in south King County.

Ms. O'Reilly explained that the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative was founded before the King County Mobility Coalition came to be. In 2010 a two-day training was offered with a focus on different mobility options in place around the United States. She explained that the list of top human service needs in the community always includes transportation near the head of the list. Commissioner Larrivee attended the training session representing Hopelink, and Senior Transportation Planner Franz Lowenherz and Community Services Supervisor Cathy VonWald attended on behalf of the city. A few months after the training session, those who had attended began meeting together to discuss the formation of the Collaborative with the vision of including other cities on the Eastside.

The list of Collaborative members include the Kirkland Senior Council, Hopelink, Sound Transit, King County Metro, Aging and Disability Services of Seattle/King County, Bellevue Network on Aging, a number of citizen advocates, and staff from the King County Veterans Program. The mission is to identify, initiate and coordinate creative and sustainable ways to assist older adults, persons with disabilities and low-income individuals on the Eastside in obtaining a better quality of life by increasing transportation options, primarily by using what is already in place more wisely.

Ms. O'Reilly said the Eastside transportation resource website went live earlier in the day. It is necessary to visit a number of different websites to find volunteer transportation and other

options, so the website was developed to bring all the choices into a single place. Other accomplishments of the Coalition include the hosting of several transportation forums. Recently the Coalition hosted a Washington State Department of Transportation forum publicizing the SR-520 tolling for human services providers.

The Easy Rider Connector was an amazing resource for which there was limited funding from the Puget Sound Regional Council through Hopelink. Unfortunately, the funding ended on June 30. While active, the dial-a-ride transportation program was originally envisioned as a feeder to fixed route services for those with disabilities, older adults, and those meeting the low-income criteria. The free rides were offered in the area bounded by I-405, Lake Sammamish, SR-520 and I-90. When the funding dried up, the program was canceled. Some 300 persons were served the last month the program was offered.

Ms. O'Reilly said another forum conducted involved panelists who provided excellent information about travel options, particularly in rural east King County. At the forum a King County Metro representative talked about the JARC (Job Access Reverse Commute) program. In the audience were representatives from Hero House, a clubhouse-model program for chronically mentally ill persons. Hero House had a new van donated to them but they were unable to operate it because their budget could not support the fuel and operating costs. Because the Hero House program includes job training and support, a connection was made with the JARC program that has resulted in a collaboration that allows King County Metro to get the van on the road again.

An action planning session is planned for August 15 for east King County. The session will attempt to look into the future and determine what should be focused on.

Ms. Zeidman said two of the programs offered by Hopelink are the Travel Ambassador Program and Getting Around Puget Sound Program. The first is a program that offers training to human service professionals, medical staff and others who interact with members of the public who have questions about how to get to where they need to go. The training includes information about options available to specific clientele. The free training sessions are offered monthly at rotating locations around the county. The second is a program that trains volunteers to serve as travel ambassadors and sets them up in various locations. Rider on the Sound is a new transit training program that will be launched soon for members of the public who want to learn how to ride the bus.

Ms. O'Reilly said in the fall a forum will be held on the topic of emergency preparedness and transportation options for vulnerable populations.

Commissioner Larrivee said one of the motivations behind the formation of the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative was the fact that while several regional efforts were and still are going on to improve the transportation infrastructure, waiting for them to come online will take a long time. There was agreement around the need to focus on tangible and concrete projects that

could be moved forward in the interim, and to identify opportunities for collaborations building on resources that already exist but are underutilized.

Commissioner Northey said long-term care medical facilities would be a logical place to conduct outreach. She said Seattle/King County Public Health conducted a mutual aid plan among long-term care providers and found that collectively the organizations own a very large number of vehicles for transporting people; those vehicles might be accessible for other purposes.

Commissioner Northey noted that much of the information available from the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative is posted online and asked to what extent those who are in need of the information are actual tech savvy. Ms. O'Reilly said the older citizens who are comfortable with the web like being able to access the information themselves. Alternatively, they can have someone else access the information for them. To some extent having the data online looks to the future when the Baby Boomers, who are more tech savvy, will retire and need the information. Additionally many who are seeking information are the children of those who are in need of services, and they know how to seek information from the web.

Commissioner Lampe asked if any attempts have been made to work with individual neighborhoods. Ms. O'Reilly said the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative has joined the Eastside Time Bank, which could serve as one way to get volunteers willing to be trained or to give rides; it certainly could be one way of getting into the neighborhoods.

Answering a question asked by Chair Tanaka, Ms. Zeidman said more than 150 have been trained to serve as travel ambassadors throughout the county. On average, 60 persons per month are assisted through the Getting Around Puget Sound program. The Ride Around the Sound program is to conduct two trips per month, which will reach between 15 and 20 people per month. The attendance per forum has been around 40 and during the past year there have been six events.

B. Transportation Commission Retreat Planning

Mr. Krawczyk reviewed with the Commissioners the rough draft of the agenda for the annual retreat. He noted that the Commission's liaison Councilmember Lee will offer opening comments, followed by a state of the department report from Department of Transportation Director Goran Sparman. Many of the issues discussed at the previous retreat remain open and could be discussed again. Time will be allotted to allow the Commissioners to raise issues, and staff will outline possible future issues. Transportation Planning Manager Kevin O'Neill may possibly provide the Commission with a memo regarding the downtown plan update work set to begin in September.

Chair Tanaka said he wanted the Commission to get an in-depth briefing on the downtown planning work given that it will dominate the agenda through the fall months.

Mr. Krawczyk said the issue of prioritizing city projects came up at the last retreat, particularly with regard to the mobility initiative. The issue also was discussed by the Council which expressed some desire to bring to the Commission issues concerning revenue sources for the mobility initiative; much of that will start in September when the Council takes up the budget.

The topic of education relative to bicycle safety comes up every year but it has never really been addressed. Mr. Krawczyk suggested the Commission might want to raise the issue again and possibly engage in some investigation of the topic.

Commissioner Glass said if it were up to him he would direct staff to develop a program aimed at educating motorists and cyclists on the rules of the road with an eye on achieving a mutual respect for the shared space.

Commissioner Larrivee suggested that in general there is a lack of respect for bicycle and pedestrian corridors. He said one of his pet peeves is that during construction projects sidewalks are inevitably blocked off with signs, and there is no way for bicyclists and pedestrians, especially those in wheelchairs, to make their way safely around the blockage without getting into the car lanes.

Commissioner Northey observed that signs placed so that motorists will be aware of the possibility of having pedestrians and bicyclists in the travel lanes could cause accidents; it is better to place the signs on the sidewalks.

Commissioner Larrivee said another topic that has been lurking in the background is the idea of best practices for transportation construction. There are good ways of doing things that can address the concerns, and the Commission may want to take that on. Construction projects are inevitable, but mitigation to minimize the impacts on the surrounding communities should always be an integral element.

Commissioner Northey said she would like to see the Commission develop a strategic plan for the Commission with three to five things to be accomplished in the coming year. Construction best practices could be one item on the list. The Commission has talked for a very long time about doing a public transit plan and it may be time to push to get that done. There has been talk in the past about doing a survey to determine what the community really thinks is important relative to transportation in the city.

Mr. Krawczyk reminded the Commissioners that the budget is extremely constrained. The broader policies are therefore more important than specific activities, all of which must compete for funding. With regard to the ped-bike education component, he said some clarification is needed to better understand what the Commission wants to see done. Construction zone rules and priorities can be addressed as those issues are addressed through the right-of-way permit process. He agreed that flushing out the topic would be appropriate for

the retreat.

Commissioner Glass suggested the Cascade Bicycle Club might be willing to help fund a bicycle safety education program. Commissioner Larrivee agreed that partnering with outside organizations would be a good approach.

Commissioner Northey said she did not want to see the time at the retreat given over to briefings. Chair Tanaka agreed with regard to general topics but noted that a large part of the retreat time should be taken up by the briefing on the downtown update. The Commission should also focus on projects to be addressed, including further outreach to other transportation commissions in and around the area.

Commissioner Glass proposed talking a bit about transportation impact fees and the assumptions used in coming up with the current fees. Mr. Krawczyk noted that the Commission raised the issue about a year ago and the Council indicated it was not at that time looking for the Commission to weigh in on the topic. The issue is, however, relevant to the downtown plan update.

Commissioner Glass pointed out that there used to be 14 impact fee areas, but now there is just one. The old K-Mart site got its impact fee waived or effectively reduced to what it was as a result. There are little pockets where development may occur without significantly changing the transportation system, yet the developments may be hampered from getting off the ground because of high impact fees. He said he would at least like to look at the assumptions to see if they still hold true.

Commissioner Northey suggested the Council is unlikely to want the Commission to weigh in on the impact fee issue outside of the scheduled time to update them.

Chair Tanaka said he would touch base with Mr. Sparrman before the retreat to determine if the Commission should even bring the issue to the agenda.

Chair Tanaka suggested the Commissioners should save the city the money of providing food for the retreat by paying for the food themselves. There was agreement to do that.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None
10. NEW BUSINESS – None
11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None
12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. May 12, 2011

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

13. REVIEW COMMISSION CALENDAR AND AGENDA

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

There was agreement not to schedule a Commission meeting during the month of August.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Tanaka adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date