

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

October 14, 2010
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Krawczyk, Eric Miller, Dave Berg, Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: Captain Denny Bronson, Police Department

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 Commissioner Larrivee, who arrived at 6:37 p.m., and Commissioner Northey, who arrived at 6:47 p.m.

3. STAFF REPORTS

Capital Programming Implementation Manager Eric Miller reported that staff was before the City Council a couple of times in September regarding the local improvement district (LID) process that is ongoing. On September 20 the Council passed a resolution of intent to form the Wilburton connections LID. A formation hearing has been set for October 21 at City Hall in Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. during which the hearing examiner will take testimony with regard to whether or not the LID should be formed, the boundaries, the number of parcels in the districts, and the preliminary assessment ratio of 75 percent. The appraisal work done for the special benefit within the district totaled just over \$13 million, 75 percent of which is just under \$10.2 million. The \$10.2 million is in the City Manager's proposed budget earmarked for the 120th Avenue Segment 1 project and the extension of NE 4th Street.

Chair Tanaka asked if the formation of an LID for the Wilburton area will result in any specific work for the Transportation Commission. Mr. Miller said it would not. If the LID is

ultimately formed the city will be able to issue bond anticipation notes and get money to help move ahead with the projects.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Simas, Mr. Miller explained that the hearing examiner will have ten calendar days in which to issue findings, conclusions and a recommendation to the City Council. If the Council approves an ordinance to form the LID, there is a 30-day protest period open to property owners within the district. If property owners representing 60 percent of the preliminary estimate of the total special assessed benefit on a parcel-by-parcel basis protest, the LID cannot be formed.

Senior Project Manager Paul Krawczyk added that an open house for the projects is planned for November 9.

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

Commissioner Larrivee said it was his understanding that the Washington State Tolling Commission is undergoing a public process focused on setting rates for the SR-520 bridge tolls, which are set to commence in the spring of 2011. Their work is set to be wrapped up by the end of the year.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Vic Bishop, 2114 West Lake Sammamish Parkway SE, spoke as president of the West Lake Sammamish Homeowners Association. He noted that he had addressed the Commission earlier in the year and had also forwarded a letter to the City Council in support of the West Lake Sammamish Parkway CIP project. He said the Association continues to support the project. The residents have been waiting for a very long time for the project to be constructed.

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda as printed was approved by consensus.

8. STUDY SESSION

- A. Photo Enforcement Camera Program

Captain Denny Bronson said he has served the city as Traffic Commander since May 2010. He said five cameras are installed and operational in the city and Council approval is being sought for the remaining three that were in the initial proposal. Since September 2009 when the first cameras became operational, a total of 19,170 citations have been issued. The cameras at

Stevenson Elementary and southbound 148th Avenue NE at Bel-Red Road have been responsible for the bulk of those citations. The Stevenson location is well marked with overhead flashing lights but still drivers continue to speed through in large numbers. The planned installation of a right-turn signal at the southbound intersection of 148th Avenue NE and Bel-Red Road may help to mitigate the problems there given that the highest percentage of the violations at that location result from illegal right turns.

Captain Bronson said the photo enforcement program is aimed at more compliance and the issuance of fewer citations. Bellevue is fortunate in that it does not have a high number of traffic accidents annually, in part due to good design and overall low speed limits. It is hoped that the camera program will help to reduce those numbers even more by bringing about better driver behaviors.

Violators caught speeding by the Stevenson camera often complain in court that the overhead lights were not flashing and state that is why they did not slow down. However, the speed sensors are not active unless the lights are flashing, and thus the camera will not take a photo; they are all tied together and the judges know that.

Photo enforcement systems are very efficient. Captain Bronson said if he were to post every officer he had on duty at the Stevenson site, it would still not be possible to catch as many violators as the camera system. The camera system treats everyone exactly the same and does not blink or miss a violator in the same way an officer might. Every photo taken must be reviewed and approved by the police department. They match the license plate in each photo against the registered owner of the vehicle and make sure the vehicle color and type of vehicle matches the registration. There are instances in which errors are found and those citations are simply canceled.

All photo enforcement citations issued in Bellevue cost the driver \$124. The civil fine is attached to the vehicle and does not go on the driver's record. A driver caught by the camera doing 50 miles per hour in a school zone will receive a \$124 citation; the same driver caught doing the same speed in a school zone by an officer would be issued a \$500-plus ticket and the violation would go on their driving record. The city of Renton has a tiered system which increases the ticket price to \$250 for violations exceeding 15 miles per hour over the posted speed limit. The number of violations issued have dropped in Renton by 35 percent. Bellevue is also hoping to see a reduction of 35 percent, though there are fewer cameras in Bellevue.

Commissioner Northey asked what rationale is behind not having photo enforcement citations go on the driver's record. Captain Bronson said the cameras cannot identify who the driver of a vehicle is. A notice of violation is mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle who is given the opportunity to identify who was driving the vehicle at the time. In most cases, the registered owner simply pays the fine; where the registered owner determines someone else was driving the vehicle, it is up to them to collect from the actual driver.

Commissioner Lampe asked what triggers the cameras for right-turn violations. Captain Bronson said there are sensors in the right-turn lanes set to trigger the camera for vehicles moving 12 miles an hour or more. Studies have shown that cars going that speed are not likely to make a full or complete stop before the crosswalk before making a right turn. The sensor triggers the video camera which then records exactly what the vehicle does.

Commissioner Northey indicated her support for the cameras but asked if nationally anyone has raised the issue of invasion of privacy. Captain Bronson said there are safeguards built in. A robbery occurred right next to one of the city's traffic enforcement cameras, but the law is narrowly construed to allow the videos to be reviewed only for traffic enforcement purposes. Additionally, the cameras are only triggered by violations.

Commissioner Lampe asked what it costs per intersection to set up traffic enforcement cameras. Captain Bronson said the city has a contract with American Traffic Solutions that guarantees no cost to the city. There is a charge of \$3750 per month for the school zone cameras, and \$4750 per month for the red light cameras, and that is paid from the funds that flow from the court as the citations are paid. The city receives 20 percent of total court collections as well as all funds over and above the actual court costs.

Noting that collisions are down citywide, Commissioner Simas asked if the reductions at the camera-controlled intersections are proportional to the reductions for all intersections. Captain Bronson said he was not able to draw that conclusion.

Captain Bronson said the camera locations selected were all based on a study that showed where the highest number of citations were being issued. The fact that no cameras are installed in the downtown is likely predicated on the fact that the large traffic and pedestrian volumes there keep speeds down and drivers more aware of their surroundings.

B. Council Response 2011-2017 CIP Plan Recommendation

Chair Tanaka noted that the Council reacted to the transmittal memo from the Commission regarding the CIP projects. Both on September 20 and October 11 there were comments by more than one member of the Council to the effect of wanting to hear more from the Commission about some of the issues, including the balance between the downtown and the rest of the city's neighborhoods. He noted that Commissioner Northey had addressed the Council as a citizen and pointed out that the Council, by not raising taxes, in essence was robbing Peter to pay Paul. Many of the projects were self funded and by not raising taxes to support other projects the effect was funding was taken from those projects to benefit some of the larger downtown projects favored by the Council.

Chair Tanaka said the Commission has been asked by the Council to offer additional views. To some degree that includes going back through the unfunded projects and deciding which ones should be given a higher priority even if that means at the expense of the approved list of

CIP projects. There is, of course, not much time in which to do what the Council wants the Commission to do. It will not be possible to go line-by-line through the lists of approved and not approved CIP projects.

Deputy Director Dave Berg allowed that the request from the Council to the Commission was not overly clear and suggested it would be up to the Commission to determine how to address it.

Chair Tanaka noted that some of the projects on the proposed CIP were Council priorities. Some of the projects also had grant funding attached to them, while others were in mid-stream and it does not make sense to divert funds away from them. One of the few projects the Commission was able to mark as a high priority and recommend for funding was the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project. There has been, however, no direction from the Council to keep those issues in mind in developing an additional recommendation. He suggested going through the projects on the unfunded list and compiling a recommendation of what the Commission would like to see elevated to funded status.

Commissioner Northey asked which of the projects on the unfunded list were included in the previous CIP. Mr. Miller said the unfunded projects that are in the current CIP include 145th Place; 108th Avenue SE between SE Bellevue Way and I-90; NE 2nd Street; SE 34th Street; Transit Now, the downtown circulator; a couple of midblock crossings; the Neighborhood Traffic Calming program; and the neighborhood sidewalks program.

Commissioner Glass asked if any other projects were dropped from the current CIP. Mr. Miller said there were two in particular, the intersections on 148th Avenue NE at NE 20th Street and Bel-Red Road. Both are BROTS projects and will be costly. The proposed funded list includes a project called the 148th Avenue NE master plan which is funded for preliminary design. The project focus is between Bel-Red Road and SR-520. The master plan, which is not fully funded, will implement the improvements associated with the two intersections. The city of Redmond has a comparable line item in its budget for the projects on its side of the line.

Commissioner Northey asked where the Neighborhood Enhancement Program was. Mr. Berg said it is a capital project but is not included in the transportation budget or the Improved Mobility outcome. It was not recommended to move forward in its current state. A number of projects that were in the CIP are planned to be moved to the operating budget. They include planning studies and transportation demand management.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Simas, Mr. Berg said the proposal will not modify the Neighborhood Enhancement Program in terms of the kinds of projects that can be undertaken, but will modify the program by slowing down its rotation relative to how often it can go to the specific neighborhoods, and possibly adjusting upward the dollar amount per project.

Commissioner Simas asked if the Council is looking for ways to improve the program and make it more responsive to customer needs regardless of the cost, or how to deliver some things given that cost is the biggest consideration. Mr. Berg said it was his understanding that the Council was in fact trying to do both. Increasing the threshold for projects will be more responsive, but by increasing the time in which the program winds its way around the city, the dollar expenditures will be reduced. The Council believes the program is a good one that has not outlived its usefulness, so a way will need to be found to continue it.

Working from the list of projects proposed to be funded in the next CIP, Mr. Berg took a moment to explain the various pools of money that will be used to pay for the projects. He pointed out which funds are restricted and which are unrestricted.

Commissioner Northey asked how much city money must be available as a match in order to obtain grant dollars for the NE 4th Street extension project. Mr. Miller said technically the city must put up 13.5 percent of the \$5.6 million grant, which is close to \$1 million. Those funds could come from LID revenues but not from another federal revenue source.

Commissioner Northey commented that if the Commission wanted, it could recommend shifting money from some of the mobility initiatives to some neighborhood initiatives.

Chair Tanaka said it was his understanding that the Council would like to hear the opinion of the Commission relative to the elevating of projects on the list. He allowed that if one project were to be elevated, the funding would have to come at the expense of another project given that funding is limited.

Commissioner Jokinen commented that before he was appointed to the Commission, the top-ranked neighborhood project CIP recommendation was SE 16th Street between 140th Avenue SE and 156th Avenue SE. Mr. Miller clarified that the project was the top unfunded project.

With regard to the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project, Commissioner Glass noted that it had gone from being split into three segments to being split into five segments. He said he was happy to see one part of the project recommended to be funded, but was disheartened by the fact that the first phase section will not be as long as it once was.

Chair Tanaka commented that the project was never ranked as high by staff as it was by the Commission, but the Commission has diligently pushed it forward in order to see something accomplished. The project has been languishing for quite some time. Commissioner Northey added that the public process involved in getting to the point where all of the disparate parties could agree was remarkable, and to see nothing done with the project for so long has been disappointing. If the project is not done, the consensus could fall apart very easily.

Mr. Krawczyk explained that the available funding for the project is less than what would be needed to complete one phase of what was at first drawn up to be a three-phase project. The

funding is not even enough to complete one-fifth of the overall project.

Commissioner Glass called attention to project PW-W/B-56, pedestrian access improvements, and asked if the category includes any bike projects at all. Mr. Miller said there are both pedestrian and bicycle improvements in the overall project. Mr. Berg explained that there is a list of projects to be accomplished in 2011, but the program is designed to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. Commissioner Glass pointed out that the adopted ped/bike plan includes policies that could be a good basis for providing a recommendation to the Council in favor of funding more non-motorized projects.

Commissioner Northey commented that the 145th Place SE project ranked high because it was reported it would complete one of the east/west segments outlined by the ped/bike plan. She said she would personally prefer to see a project in downtown Bellevue along 112th Avenue NE.

Commissioner Northey said she could support recommending to the Council that the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project be constructed in thirds as originally envisioned and that the first third be funded in the next CIP, and suggested funding one leg of the bike corridors outlined in the ped/bike plan. She said she also would support increasing the funding for the neighborhood sidewalk program to a more reasonable level. She said she was interested in the planning studies and whether when shifted into the operating budget it got pared down. Mr. Miller said the planning studies program was shifted to the operating budget initially at about \$100,000 per year, but through the process it has been whittled down to approximately \$60,000 per year. In addition to planning work, the fund has been used for doing cost estimating for the TFP and the CIP. The program also funds the environmental analysis work for the TFP, and geotechnical analysis work ahead of constructing projects.

Mr. Berg clarified that the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project has always been a five-phase project. It has never been a three-segment project. Mr. Krawczyk added that there was a neighborhood vote that stronger favored constructing the south section first.

Mr. Berg agreed that the 145th Place SE project was ranked high by the Commission because it would complete the south end of the north/south corridor. The 108th Avenue SE section between Bellevue Way and I-90 was also a highlighted north/south corridor. The 145th Avenue NE project is fully designed and is ready to construct, and the 108th Avenue SE project will be at the 90 percent design level by the end of the year. Both of those projects are in the current CIP.

Commissioner Larrivee said he would support taking a stronger stance relative to advancing the ped/bike plan, which would include more of a commitment to the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project because of its multimodal elements. Along with focusing on neighborhood projects, the primary allocations should be for projects that will advance multimodal options; in the end, a more multimodal city will be a more resilient city.

Commissioner Northey proposed setting forth a relatively short menu of items the Commission would like the Council to consider if inclined to invest more in the neighborhoods. She said the projects would not need to be prioritized in any way.

Commissioner Simas agreed but suggested the projects should be prioritized.

Commissioner Northey argued in favor of the neighborhood traffic calming program. She said those projects clearly make a positive difference. In addition, the neighborhood sidewalk program should be included, along with the bike corridor projects, especially if they are fully or almost fully designed, and the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project.

Commissioner Glass said if he were king for a day he would eliminate entirely some of the projects proposed to be in the CIP. He did not specify which projects he meant.

Commissioner Lampe agreed with the notion of focusing on neighborhood sidewalks and traffic calming. With the economy the way it is, it could be many years before the planned development in the downtown and the Bel-Red corridor comes online; in light of that, the Commission should err on the side of putting more rather than less into its wish list.

Commissioner Simas concurred. He suggested redevelopment of the Bel-Red corridor likely will occur much slower than anyone thinks. Holding off on some of those projects could free up funds for projects that are currently needed in the neighborhoods.

By way of clarification, Mr. Berg explained that the neighborhood sidewalk program arose as a result of the Neighborhood Enhancement Program not being able to fund all of the projects people wanted to see constructed in their neighborhoods. A list of neighborhood sidewalk projects too big to be addressed by the NEP was developed and costed out, and the determination was made that many of the smaller projects would not compete well against much larger projects in the CIP. The various projects were lumped together and it became the basis for the program. The program contains a very long prioritized list of sidewalk projects. The Council funded the initial phase of the program in which three of the projects were completed.

Commissioner Glass said he would like to see the first segment of the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project extend down to SE 26th Street. Mr. Krawczyk said the first segment has always been envisioned to end at SE 34th Street because of the logical connection with Eastgate.

Asked to comment by Commissioner Northey, Mr. Bishop, president of the West Lake Sammamish Homeowners Association, said the residents are reconciled to having the project constructed in phases and agree with the phase selected to construct first. The problem is that \$4.7 million will not construct all of the identified first phase. It will take closer to \$6 million

to fully fund the first phase.

Chair Tanaka said what he was hearing from the Commission was a desire to send to the Council a list of projects focused on the notion of completing networks, especially those that will enhance multimodal transportation options within the city. With regard to the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project, he said he was hearing that the city has made certain commitments to the citizens and that the Commission would like to see the city follow through on them.

Commissioner Simas commented that the really big projects proposed to be funded, such as NE 4th Street and 120th Avenue, are geared toward serving the people who work in Bellevue; they will help get people into and out of the downtown. The projects highlighted by the Commission as also worthy of being funded, the neighborhood traffic calming program, the neighborhood sidewalk program, 145th Place, 108th Avenue SE, and West Lake Sammamish Parkway, all deal with serving the people who live in Bellevue. The business community pays taxes and one way or another funds the projects that will benefit them, but the residents of the city also pay taxes and deserve the quality of life the city has always tried to provide them.

There was agreement to draft a letter to the Council outlining the Commission's discussion and recommendation. There was also agreement that the rationale was to be able to fully fund the first segment of the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project given that consensus has been reached over a number of years, the project is a part of a major north/south corridor, and the city should fulfill its obligation; 145th Place and 108th Avenue SE are both priority corridors and both are essentially shovel ready; and neighborhood traffic calming and the neighborhood sidewalk program are part of the larger theme of providing benefit for the people who live in Bellevue and are needed to balance the downtown projects.

Mr. Miller said a quick adding of the highlighted projects, the neighborhood traffic calming program, the neighborhood sidewalk program, 145th Place SE, 108th Avenue SE, and fully funding the first phase of the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project, would total about \$18 million.

Chair Tanaka said he would make the presentation to the Council at its meeting on October 18. He said if the Council looks at the proposal and would like to know what the Commission would recommend cutting from the proposed CIP project list in order to pay for the recommended projects, it will be necessary for the Commission to address the money issue at its next meeting.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None
10. NEW BUSINESS – None
11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. August 18, 2010

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

B. September 9, 2010

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Jokinen. Second was by Commissioner Northey and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Larrivee abstained from voting.

13. REVIEW COMMISSION CALENDAR AND AGENDA

The Commission reviewed the items scheduled for discussion at upcoming meetings. There was consensus to move the November 11 meeting up to November 4 to avoid meeting on Veteran's Day.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Tanaka adjourned the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date