

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

November 10, 2011
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Krawczyk, Mike Mattar, Kevin McDonald, Michael Ingram, Eric Miller, Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: Joe Story, DKS Associates

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 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 6:33 p.m., and Commissioner Glass, who arrived at 6:46 p.m.

3. STAFF REPORTS

Transportation Design Division Manager Mike Mattar provided a follow-up on the letter written to the City Council by the Commission regarding the Mobility and Infrastructure Initiative projects. He said the letter has not yet gone before the Council; a timeslot on the Council's agenda is being sought. The Council schedule has been full with light rail and many issues have been placed on the back burner.

Mr. Mattar announced that the Department of Transportation and the Department of Utilities were re-accredited on November 3, 2011 for another four years. The APWA representatives reviewed 143 of the departments' practices and all were found to be compliant; five practices were identified as model practices. The accreditation process provides the departments with the opportunity to review all procedures to make sure they are in line with other agencies and established best practices.

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

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Chair Tanaka reported that the Council office is working to schedule interviews with the applicants for the vacant Commission seat.

Commissioner Lampe said he attended the hearing on the Memorandum of Understanding on November 7. He said the hearing was very well attended. The majority appeared to be in favor of signing the MOU, but there was definitely strong representation from both sides.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

8. STUDY SESSION

A. Downtown Transportation Plan Update – Measures of Effectiveness

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald introduced Joe Story with DKS Associates, consultant project manager. He said Mr. Story has a strong background in transportation planning and has been working with city staff to develop measures of effectiveness to help in the Downtown Transportation Plan Update.

Mr. McDonald said an open house for the project was held on November 1. Deputy Mayor Lee provided the introductory comments in Council Chambers. More than 50 signed in but total number of attendants exceeded that number. At least half of those who attended indicated they are Downtown residents; the other half noted that they work in the Downtown. A number of display boards were up regarding pedestrian mobility, bicycles, transit, roadways, and signal operations. People were invited to comment on the various issues and to offer solutions. All of the comments and suggestions will be relied on in developing the project scoping document; project ideas to address the issues raised will be crafted from the scoping document.

Mr. McDonald reminded the Commissioners that in September bicycle tours were conducted in the Downtown; included were commute routes into and out of the Downtown. In early December two pedestrian walking audits will be conducted; the first will be a midday event targeted at Downtown employees and focus on the Downtown core intersections and midblock crossings, and the second will target the residential population and focus on the north side of the Downtown. The walking audits will be conducted in partnership with Feet First, a pedestrian advocacy organization based in Seattle.

In any community, consideration must be given to the context in which decisions about projects are made. To that end, a lot of work has been done about the context of the Downtown with regard to employment, residential, the existing plans and policies, the projected land uses through the planning horizon year of 2030, and work done by regional transportation partners, including Sound Transit, King County Metro and the Washington State Department of Transportation.

As of 2010, the employment density in the Downtown stood at 103 employees per acre; that figure is projected to hit 171 employees per acre by 2030, comparable to major employment centers around the country. The residential density in 2010 was 18 residents per acre, and the 2030 forecast is 49 residents per acre. The vacancy rate in 2010 was very high but those units have started filling, so the actual current density is probably closer to 20 residents per acre. Metropolitan areas that are considered to be quite dense, such as the Vancouver West End, match the current residential density in the Downtown.

Mr. McDonald said four transportation modes will be given primary focus during the study: private vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle and transit. While the Downtown area will receive the most attention, the Council would also like information about how people are getting to and from the Downtown. The measures of effectiveness will help in addressing the mobility issues for each mode. The decision-making process begins with the issues to be addressed. Project ideas come from those. The measures of effectiveness are applied to the project ideas to help identify tradeoffs, weigh benefits of different types of projects, balance competing interests, and help with prioritization, all of which will lead to the development of a recommended project list.

The community has weighed in on mobility issues with respect to the four modes. Some common elements have emerged, though the components comprising the common elements may be different. The Downtown mobility network will include all four modes moving into and out of the Downtown, and within the Downtown.

Sustainability will also be studied. The sustainability matrix might include non-SOV mode share, and vehicle miles traveled, which contributes to greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Story said the performance of each mode will need to be described individually. He said there are aggregate measures related to sustainability, but it will be important to make sure that each mode is working well within the Downtown. It will be necessary to look at the mobility items that feed each of the different modes. The measures of effectiveness will ultimately go into each of the mobility modes, resulting in a mobility index or indicator. Information about intersections and segments individually and in the aggregate for the entire Downtown subarea will be important in that they will inform the tradeoffs for different projects. Some areas of the Downtown may be weighed in favor of one mode over another. Once priorities are identified, it will be possible to package complementary projects for implementation. The measures for

each of the different modes will be combined in order to achieve an aggregate performance for the downtown.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lampe, Mr. McDonald said the land use component will be held constant, and the transportation mobility strategies will be varied to accommodate the 2030 projections for employment and housing. Travel demand modeling will be done to determine how those who live and work in the Downtown are getting around, and transportation projects will be developed to ensure mobility for all modes through 2030.

Mr. Story said levels of service for private vehicle mobility can be evaluated in a number of different ways. Automobile delay data and volume-to-capacity ratios are factors that contribute to level of service calculations. Segment or corridor capacity issues are affected by how well signals work in coordination with each other.

It will be important to distinguish between personal mobility and aggregate mobility. Typically, level of service is looked at in a very abstract way, but drivers are actually impacted and that should be noted. Cost/benefit calculations will need to be made.

Commissioner Lampe said it was his understanding that by 2030 the transit share of the mode split in the downtown will be 40 percent. He asked if that percentage has been fixed for the study. Mr. McDonald said the prior work on the downtown subarea plan projected a 40 percent transit mode split by 2020; the percentage became a target set by the process. The intent behind the Downtown Transportation Plan Update is to have the process drive the target, not the other way around.

With regard to pedestrian mobility measures, Mr. Story said the proposal is to focus on crosswalks and walkways, which would include sidewalks and midblock paths. Each will be looked at differently, but both will be looked at. The Highway Capacity Manual has new methodologies that describe pedestrian levels of service for crosswalks. The key level of service components for crosswalks are related to pedestrian delay, the capacity of a crosswalk, the number of traffic lanes to be crossed, and the volume and speed of vehicles. It will be important to consider compliance with ADA accessibility, general usability, lighting, and countdown or audible signals.

Commissioner Larrivee asked how safety is measured for crosswalks. Mr. Story said safety in terms of traffic conflicts is certainly a factor to be considered. Traffic speed and volume are contributing factors. What makes a particular crosswalk less safe must be determined on a case-by-case basis; in some cases sight distance is the issue, while in others the issue is lighting, striping or maintenance. Crosswalks with higher numbers of accidents involving pedestrians should be included in the mix. Mr. McDonald pointed out that traffic calming measures can greatly improve pedestrian safety at crosswalks.

There are different elements to look at relative to walkways, including surface quality,

wayfinding, weather protection, security and safety, pedestrian delay, and the directness of travel. Those items are not explicitly called out in level of service calculations but should be taken into account. The number of benefited pedestrians relative to the costs of improvements will need to be determined, along with how well projects improve the quality of the pedestrian environment.

Commissioner Simas asked how pedestrian delay is measured. Mr. Story said such calculations begin with how much detailed information can be obtained relative to crosswalks and how they are being used currently. Signals can be programmed to ensure a pedestrian walk on each cycle, and where that is done wait time for pedestrians who must now push the button in order to cross is eliminated. The savings in seconds can be estimated and multiplied by the number of estimated pedestrians per day, from which an annual aggregate can be calculated. He added that with a tripling of the residential population and a doubling of the employment population, the number of persons using each crosswalk will be substantially increased.

Commissioner Simas allowed that the time saved by pedestrians over the course of a year will likely be an impressive number, but he questioned why it should be incorporated as a measure of effectiveness. Mr. Story said the personal and aggregate mobility numbers can be used to determine performance of a corridor or a system. He agreed that the numbers are somewhat abstract.

Commissioner Glass noted that nothing is specifically called out for skybridges or tunnels for pedestrians. Mr. Story said there is obviously no pedestrian delay related to skybridges. Well designed and well lighted structures with weather protection score very high.

Turning to bicycle mobility measures, Mr. Story said the bicycle community has done a lot of work over the last several years in coming up with a method to define bicycle level of service. A strong national standardized analysis process is in place that looks at bicycle level of service, with roadway factors such as the width of cross streets at intersections, the width of outside through lanes, the presence and occupancy of on-street parking, the number of vehicle lanes, overall volumes and traffic speeds of the through and turning vehicles, and the presence and width of on-street bicycle facilities. The standards have only recently been adopted. In looking at the Downtown it may be shown that some roadways are not suitable for bicycles and a decision will need to be made about whether or not money should be spent on making them suitable.

Mr. Story said consideration will be given to factors beyond just level of service, including encouraging a wider range of people to use bicycles for recreation, commuting, and even running errands. National studies have shown that while some citizens are fearless bicycle riders, a large number of others would consider riding a bicycle for short trips, provided they have safe facilities to use; there are also citizens who have no intention of ever using a bicycle for any purpose. Some types of bicycle facilities can attract those who are interested but who

have concerns.

The performance measures will include personal indicators, such as the number of benefited bicyclists relative to the cost of improvements and the quality of the bicycling environment, and aggregate indicators, such as bicycle system completeness, the overall number of new bicycle riders, and an improved demographic range of bicycle riders for recreation and commuting. Mobility measures will be looked at, both at the intersection and location level, at the segment or corridor level, and as an aggregate for the Downtown subarea.

Commissioner Jokinen said he has ridden in Downtown Bellevue in full police uniform and carrying a gun, but has still found the experience frightening. The city has a jewel in Downtown Park and is going to have another jewel in the waterfront park, and there should be some way for riders, including those with children, to be able to safely and easily cross the streets that lie between those two locations. Mr. McDonald said that was a common theme for those who participated in the bicycle rides in September. People want to be able to ride in the Downtown, but with the way the roadways are currently configured, they are hesitant to do so.

Turning to the issue of transit mobility, Mr. Story said the framework is different in that the city has little or no control over transit service. There are, however, components over which the city has some control, and those components can affect ridership. Three key areas have been identified: transit speed and reliability, transit rider facilities, and overall access to transit. Transit speed and reliability is positively supported through the transit signal prioritization strategy, through the Rapid Ride program, and the SCATS system. Travel lane allocation is another element to improvement transit flow. Transit rider facilities that are roomy, clean, comfortable and safe, and which provide protection from the weather, are important considerations for transit riders. Wayfinding and general information is important as well, as are sidewalks and trails that connect neighborhoods to transit rider facilities. ADA compliance is important. As the number of bicycle riders increase, secure parking for bicycles will need to be made available at bus stops.

Chair Tanaka said those who are not frequent bus users can be confused as to where the buses go and when the next bus will arrive. Route maps that are easy to understand are very helpful and encourage use.

Mr. Story said transit will be viewed from a personal perspective, such as the number of riders that benefit from certain improvements, and time saved by riders relative to the cost of improvements. In the aggregate the overall time savings of the transit strategies will be looked at along with transit savings resulting from specific improvements, the transit mode share attained, and the number of new transit riders. Transit crowding is usually an operator measure, but providing sufficient curb space to accommodate buses is something Bellevue can control.

Mr. Story proposed that what used to be called multimodal measures should be called

sustainability measures given the strong regional emphasis on achieving more sustainable environments. The first is the non-SOV mode share, a measure of effectiveness tied to reducing overall SOV use. Measures for system capacity will look at the total number of peak-hour and daily private vehicle SOV trips. Vehicle miles traveled is an important measure to track, both for Downtown residents and Downtown employees. Vehicle miles traveled is an important factor in estimating greenhouse gas emissions; there is general agreement that an increase in the number of vehicle miles traveled results in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

Commissioner Glass asked if a unit of measure will be drafted to determine how people get to the Downtown, or how the Downtown relates to other streets and pathways. The Downtown is somewhat of an island with very few ways to get in or out. Mr. Story said one way to look at the issue is through the concept of a gateway measure in addition to a segment or corridor measure; a gateway measure would involve all of the crossings from each direction. A second approach would be to extend the segments and corridors view beyond the boundaries of the Downtown. Commissioner Glass commented that the intersection of Bellevue Way and NE 8th Street works pretty well, but pointed out that getting there sometimes can be a real challenge.

Commissioner Jokinen observed that the transit center in the Downtown currently sees something on the order of 5000 users daily, and said the estimate is that by 2030 the number of daily users is expected to be closer to 25,000. The question is whether or not the existing transit center would be able to handle that much traffic. Mr. Story said the consultant team has recognized that the capacity question will be an issue. Another issue that will need to be addressed is the access to the Downtown light rail station.

Commissioner Larrivee said he would like to see the measures of effectiveness compared against the measure of overall economic activity in the areas the transportation infrastructure is intended to serve. In the end, transportation infrastructure is just a tool serving land use. He asked if the modeling and planning process will include letting the model indicate how well each of the measurement areas will perform. Mr. Story said the measures are designed to inform trade-offs. The travel forecasting model could return specific numbers that indicate every intersection in the Downtown needs to be widened in order to meet the LOS standard, but since that would not be possible, trade-offs will be needed. The model will show where there are problems and opportunities.

Commissioner Simas said he was struggling to figure out the cost effectiveness versus time saved equation. He noted that crosswalks can be fitted out with lights, beepers and pompom girls, but at some point more is just more and not more effective. There should be a minimum standard built to in order to be safe in getting pedestrians across the intersection, but going beyond that may not be either beneficial or cost effective. Mr. Story stressed the importance of keeping in mind how many people will benefit for the investments made. Measures of effectiveness are needed to help inform those decisions.

B. Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) Update

Senior Transportation Planner Michael Ingram noted that of the 71 projects on the current TFP, eight have been completed and another two are on track to be completed very soon. He explained that the TFP is updated every two years, and by ordinance the Transportation Commission must be involved. The TFP is an intermediate-range planning tool that looks out 12 years; it functions as a bridge between the city's long-range plans and the Capital Investment Program (CIP). The projects in the TFP are financially constrained, which means the identified project costs must be balanced against the city's forecasts for what will be available for transportation projects over the 12-year period. An environmental review is conducted based on the projects in the document to determine the cumulative impacts.

Chair Tanaka asked if the Budget One process has had or will have any impact on the TFP. Capital Programming Implementation Manager Eric Miller said the existing TFP was used to represent the universe of priority transportation facility projects during the Budget One process. As the budget process gears up again in 2012, the TFP project list will again be factored in as citywide transportation priorities. The staff are currently pushing the Council to answer the question of what role the Commission should play in the budget process, particularly in deciding project priority.

Mr. Ingram pointed out that the TFP provides the basis for the impact fee program, which feeds into the revenues available for transportation projects. Mr. Miller commented that impact fees are one source of revenues for transportation projects. The impact fees are calculated based on the capacity projects in the TFP; unless the Council acts, the impact fees are slated to step up in a series of three steps, the first of which has already been taken. The current fee is \$2000 per evening peak trip generated by new development, and the schedule calls for increasing the fee to \$3000 on January 1, 2013, and to \$5000 on January 1, 2016.

Mr. Miller said the impact fee revenues generated feed directly into the CIP. The current CIP projected very low revenues from impact fees in the early years as it was adopted as the economic downturn was coming on; for 2010 the projection was for zero dollars from impact fees, and for 2011 the projection was for \$600,000. To date revenue collections from impact fees are right on track. The increases in the fee, however, ramp up very quickly to account for the lion's share of the \$97.8 million in the impact fee category. The mobility and infrastructure initiative did not exist in 2008 when the current TFP was put together; it was adopted in early 2009. The revenue sources for the initiative included \$10 million from the formation of a Wilburton local improvement district (LID), though after it was formed the LID was dissolved by property owner protest, leaving a revenue gap. The city has been very successful in obtaining grant awards over the years, but projects have to be delivered in order to capitalize on them.

Mr. Ingram said the city has an established process for evaluating and scoring roadway and intersection projects, and it was used in developing the 2009-2020 TFP. There are also

evaluation criteria for ped-bike projects; those criteria will be discussed with the Commission in December.

In updating the TFP, the Comprehensive Plan level of service standards should be reviewed and monitored for each Mobility Management Area; resources should be adjusted as necessary to continue meeting the adopted standards. Vehicular level of service is determined by the volume-to-capacity ratio at key signalized intersections. The volume-to-capacity ratios for the key intersections within each MMA are averaged to yield a score which is then equated to a letter grade. The analysis done for the current TFP showed that by 2020 the LOS standards in the Comprehensive Plan in some MMA's could be compromised. With regard to the downtown and the mixed commercial/residential MMAs, the existing policy framework identifies mode split targets only for commute trips by modes other than SOV, not for all trips and all modes.

Mr. Ingram allowed that the roadway and intersection project prioritization criteria are very detailed. They were developed based on existing Comprehensive Plan policies. The weighting percentages were, however, developed by the Commission and can be revisited.

With regard to sustainability, Mr. Ingram said there are more reasons than ever to keep the issue in mind. The city has signed on to the US Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement which has the stated goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to seven percent below the 1990 level by 2012. That goal will not be reached, but the issue and the urgency remains. The Environmental Stewardship Initiative, launched by the city, is focused on improving practices within the organization as well as engaging the broader community in encouraging sustainability practices. Seattle has built sustainability into their project scoring criteria. The state has also made a commitment to reduce the per capita vehicle miles traveled by 18 percent by 2020, 30 percent by 2035, and 50 percent by 2050, all with an eye on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Ingram said there are a number of stream crossings associated with city roadways, a number of which represent complete or partial blockages for fish passage. The issue is raised anew every time the environmental analysis is done for the TFP. The Native American tribes have treaty rights to the fish and as such have a stake in making sure there is suitable habitat for the fish. The Washington State Department of Transportation has been directed to address fish passage barriers, and the state has developed programs for accomplishing the task.

Since the last TFP update was completed, the city conducted an inventory of ADA conditions throughout the city. Barriers were identified and a determination was made with regard to the level of activity that occurs in the area of each barrier. A barrier ranking score was developed based on the barriers and the level of activity surround each; barriers that are encountered the least are given the lowest scores. The scores could be used to inform the ranking criteria for roadway and intersection projects.

The city also has a responsibility under Title VI to ensure that no work done will disproportionately impact certain protected groups. All activities must be shown to benefit the broader community, not just those who show up and who are able to make their desires known. The latest census data will be used to inform that analysis.

Mr. Ingram shared with the Commissioners the projected timeline for updating the TFP. He said staff was not sure yet as to whether or not a full environmental impact statement will need to be developed. The TFP will need to reflect the projects that are in the CIP, so to the extent adjustments are made to the CIP through the budget process, the TFP will need to be revised. Accordingly, the Council will be asked to hold off on adopting the TFP until the next budget process is completed.

The public involvement component will include communications in *It's Your City*, *Neighborhood News*, the *Bellevue Reporter*, on the city's website, through web surveys, and public meetings.

Commissioner Jokinen suggested it would be an easy thing to simply put all of the projects in a survey document, send it out to all Bellevue residents and ask them to rank them. Not all of them would be returned, but those that do come back would represent useful information.

Commissioner Larrivee said he had the opportunity to participate as part of a panel discussion in Seattle that was focused on older adults. The room was packed and many who attended were outraged at the service cuts being proposed by King County Metro. One of the common frustrations was that the supposed public outreach efforts had not trickled down to the rank and file older citizens who are not tuned into using technology and who are often not able to attend events that occur after hours. Had Metro been willing to seek input directly from the seniors by meeting with them at senior centers, they would have gained valuable information. He said every attempt should be made to reach out to the different populations in Bellevue who are impacted by the city's roadway infrastructure.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS

Chair Tanaka reminded the staff that the Commission had previously asked for a quick primer on the Open Public Meetings Act. Senior Project Manager Paul Krawczyk said he recently received an email from the city attorney reminding everyone that emails from Commissioners must not take the form of debate, and that replies should be to all. All deliberation and decisions must be made in the open.

Commissioner Larrivee noted that the Commission had also previously asked for a presentation on mitigation regarding construction sites. He said after he experienced the construction at the SE 8th Street and the Lake Hills Connection intersection where for periods

of time the intersection was completely inaccessible for pedestrians and bicyclists from a safety point of view, even though the intersection is on the route for a school. Additionally, access for pedestrians and bicyclists has been blocked off at the Kelsey Creek Plaza development and for much of the surrounding corridor. Mr. Krawczyk said he spoke with Ron Kessack who is currently the assistant director in charge of capital projects who pointed out that the city has a written policy that is on point. He allowed that the Commission would benefit from having a presentation focused on how the policy is implemented.

Commissioner Lampe pointed out that the state would soon implement tolls on SR-520. Ahead of that event, the city of Kirkland is working to collect baseline traffic counts data for its major arterials so that they will be able to accurately measure the diversion impact. He suggested Bellevue might want to consider taking the same approach. Mr. Krawczyk said he would seek to know what the city is doing in that regard.

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

13. REVIEW COMMISSION CALENDAR AND AGENDA

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

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Tanaka adjourned the meeting at 9:01 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date