

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

October 25, 2012
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Krawczyk, Judy Clark, Sean Wellander, Kevin McDonald, Cat Silva, Department of Transportation; Alex O'Reilly, Department of Parks and Community Services

OTHERS PRESENT: Eileen Rasnack, Catholic Community Services; Zach Munsey, Hopelink Mobility Management Program

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Chair Simas who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Bishop, who arrived at 6:34 p.m.; Commissioner Jokinen, who arrived at 6:42 p.m.; and Commissioner Larrivee, who arrived at 6:44 p.m.

3. STAFF REPORTS

Senior Project Manager Paul Krawczyk reported that staff have been in contact with Mr. Phil Morrissey, president of the Horizon Heights Community Club, and Mr. Tom Dean, both of whom addressed the Commission on September 13. He said staff is working with both men to identify pedestrian improvements in the areas about which they voiced concerns.

Mr. Krawczyk said an open house on the TFP environmental process is slated for November 11 at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS,

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Chair Simas reported that on October 15 he presented to the City Council the memo agreed upon and approved by the Commission subsequent to its last meeting. He said he covered the main points, including maintaining the city's current infrastructure, the importance of following through on past commitments to existing investments, coordination with East Link, and the importance of the mobility and infrastructure initiative. He said he reiterated the fact that there are many transportation priorities and needs that are still unfunded that are not associated with the mobility and infrastructure initiative. The Councilmembers had no questions or comments.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Glass and was seconded by Commissioner Lampe. The motion carried unanimously.

8. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly with the Department of Parks and Community Services introduced Eileen Rasnack, program manager for Catholic Community Services and chair of the Bellevue Network on Aging, and Zach Munsey, mobility management program manager for Hopelink. By way of background, Ms. O'Reilly stated that in 2005 a number of persons from the Eastside attended a National Transit Institute workshop in Seattle; she said she attended along with Commissioner Larrivee, transportation planner Franz Loewenherz, and Cathy Von Wald, manager of the city's older adults programs for the Department of Parks and Community Services. The national models shared at the workshop on how to increase access to health and human services for transportation-disadvantaged populations using creative mobility options were particularly inspiring; transportation-disadvantaged populations include older adults, people with disabilities, low-income people, and youth. A coalition was formed in 2005 to identify access barriers in the community, and not surprisingly transportation rose to the top. The coalition reached out to staff from King County Metro, Sound Transit, Seattle/King County Aging and Disability Services, and United Way. Others have since joined the conversation, including human service providers, the Network on Aging, the Kirkland Senior Council, and staff from the cities of Issaquah and Redmond.

Ms. O'Reilly said the King County Mobility Coalition was formed after the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative. The Coalition is an important entity in that it helps to give voice to the

needs of the special needs populations in King County.

Also in 2005 a group of folks from all over King County, including King County Metro, Sound Transit, United Way, Puget Sound Regional Council, and Aging and Disability Services began meeting under the Key Partners in Transportation name. Their discussions focused on how to better coordinate within the municipalities and throughout the county to get people where they need to go when they need to go there in addition to fixed-route transit. Later in 2005, a federal executive order was handed down which dictated that a special needs advisory group must be in place before federal transit dollars could be distributed to planning areas. At that time the Puget Sound Regional Council acted to help formalize the group, and that occurred early in 2006. The group continues to meet and its 28 members include urban and rural transportation providers, non-profit members serving special needs clients, system users, and those representing veterans groups; in addition, each of the subregional cities is represented. The group advises the Puget Sound Regional Council and the work it does relative to transportation planning.

In 2011 one of the King County Mobility Coalition's active subcommittees received a grant from the National Council on Aging and used it to develop a series of DVDs translated into ten different languages that showed people how to ride the bus and use an ORCA card.

Ms. Rasnack said the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative has for the past couple of years focused primarily on advocating for improving mobility options for people in east King County. The group has convened meetings to educate Eastside residents around mobility issues, and in collaboration with Hopelink has helped to develop programs that have improved access for many. The list of accomplishments for the groups includes helping to develop and promote the Bellevue Easy Rider Connector dial-a-ride service, which was operated in 2010 by Hopelink; helping to develop and promote the Travel Ambassador and Bus Buddy programs that are operated by Hopelink; developing the Easy Rider website, a resource for transportation options; sponsoring the human services providers transportation forum on SR-520 bridge tolling; hosting workshops on travel training options; and sponsoring Eastside neighborhood conversation cafés from the growing transit community's equity grant program.

Ms. Rasnack said the Collaborative is very excited about two upcoming projects. The Collaborative supported Hopelink in applying for a federal transportation administration grant from the Puget Sound Regional Council and King County Metro to create an Eastside shuttle service for seniors and people living with disabilities in Bellevue and Redmond; if funded, the program will begin in July 2013. The other project is the human services ticket program. The Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative is exploring ways to increase the number of tickets donated via the transit incentive program. Currently only two percent of people renewing their car tabs are donating their free tickets through the program; many simply do not know the program exists. By increasing awareness, local agencies stand to benefit in significant ways. The Bellevue-based organizations that currently receive tickets through the program include Sophia Way, Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council, Congregations for the Homeless, Eastside

Academy, and Bellevue College.

The Bellevue Network on Aging has worked very closely with the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative. The Network identified transportation as one of the key issues facing older adults in Bellevue when it was formed in 2006; since that time the Network has had a standing committee focused on transportation issues. Network members participated in the first Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative community survey, assisted in compiling survey data, conducting faith community focus groups, and provided advocacy efforts in key city initiatives. Recently Network members toured the city's traffic center to learn about and provide input on traffic signals and crosswalk timing as it affects older adults and people with limited mobility.

Mr. Munsey said in 2011 the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative and Hopelink were awarded a grant through the Growing Transit Communities Equity Grant Program. The program supports activities related to educating and organizing around transit-related issues in historically underrepresented communities. With East Link light rail coming to the Eastside, the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative and Hopelink felt it important to start educating the underrepresented communities on the Eastside with regard to the planning process and how to get involved in it. The objectives of the program are to help community members develop an understanding of the local planning process; to increase awareness of what makes an equitable transit community; and to build community capacity by engaging in civic activities, influencing local planning, and promoting social equity.

Mr. Munsey said five neighborhood conversation cafés were hosted in Mercer Island, Redmond and Bellevue in April and May. The neighborhood conversations were conducted in partnership with the Alliance for People With Disabilities, King County Housing Authority, Jewish Family Services, SeaMar and Somali Youth and Family Club. Close to 70 people participated. They were encouraged to discuss the challenges facing their communities, and to talk about what is needed to improve their communities. An outline of what the local planning process looks like was shared along with reasons for the public to become engaged. Participants were encouraged to discuss why they have not been engaged, and that conversation yielded a list of barriers to engagement that included language barriers, a lack of awareness about the public planning process, a lack of knowledge of what is required to provide public input, and timing issues.

Mr. Munsey said as a result of the conversations, a list of recommendations were drawn up for cities and organizations to use in helping to promote engagement from underrepresented communities. The recommendations include publishing public meeting notices in community newspapers and announcing them on the radio; making public notices available in alternative languages; occasionally hold public meetings away from city halls in locations such as elementary schools; schedule public meetings at alternating times, not just during the afternoons; and to encourage attendance by providing educational materials on the planning process and to show examples of how public input has influenced past decisions.

Commissioner Tanaka asked the degree to which the target audience in the underrepresented communities have access to the internet, and indeed the degree to which they are computer literate. He noted that much of the information that is available about transit and the like is available online. Mr. Munsey said about half of the participants were seniors but stressed that information about computer literacy and access to the internet was not collected as part of the conversations.

Commissioner Bishop asked if anyone is working with the taxi industry on any kind of a subsidy program. He suggested taxis could serve as a very good resource for underserved populations. Mr. Munsey said there is a taxi script program operated by King County Metro, but the program is for seniors and persons with disabilities. Ms. Rasnack said she at one time had funding to provide taxi service where a volunteer transportation driver was not available; it was found, however, that while taxis are widely available in urban areas, they are less available in rural areas.

Commissioner Lampe asked if King County Metro has been approached directly about the percentage of coupons being donated to induce them to find a better way to distribute the tickets to those who need them. Ms. O'Reilly said that certainly would be a good conversation. She said King County Metro provided some \$200,000 to the program operated by King County through which non-profits can purchase bus tickets at twenty cents on the dollar. The dollars allocated for 2012 were allocated very quickly, and the \$200,000 from King County Metro represents a new infusion of funds. Agencies that provide housing for the homeless are big users of the program because the tickets help get clients to and from the shelters. Better ways to promote having people donate their bus tickets are being sought in conjunction with King County Metro.

B. Initial DTP 2030 Forecasting Model Results

Modeling and Analysis Group Manager Judy Clark said the conversion of short downtown motorized trips to walk trips is something that came out of a combination of unusual things in a multimodal model. The downtown area has very small zones compared to other areas of the city; each superblock is its own zone. The understood rule of trip generation has been that trips that leave one zone to go to another are always motorized trips.

Earlier studies have suggested that up to 25 percent of trips in the downtown were simply people moving their cars from one parking facility to another. Some of those trips are necessary and logical, but some of the trips would likely be walking trips instead.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bishop, Ms. Clark said the model assumes no internal trips within any TAZ in the downtown. Commissioner Bishop pointed out that apartments and jobs can and do exist within single TAZs in the downtown and as such logically there are trips within single zones that logically must be walking trips. He asked if

those trips are counted as trips of any kind. Ms. Clark said they are not provided they do not cross a street. She said all transit access trips in the downtown are walk trips because there is no park and ride there, and the model does show auxiliary transit trips to be walk trips.

Ms. Clark said transit modeling has in the past primarily involved only the morning and midday periods, but for the downtown plan update the evening peak trips are included. King County Metro for a long time modeled only the evening peak, whereas the Puget Sound Regional Council models the morning and midday peaks but not the evening peak.

Ms. Clark said the model estimates that of the 137,000 daily trips internal to the downtown, some 11,000 of them are transit trips. Many of these transit trips may actually be walk trips; the number has been estimated but not yet reported. The walk trip numbers derived from the transit trips, however, do not affect the vehicular level of service measures.

Ms. Clark said it is widely recognized that many trips within the downtown are short walk trips. The consultant team along with staff devised a method that could become more sophisticated in time but which can be operationalized in the near term without a lot of detail knowledge about the difference between current and future land use relative to parking policies.

Modeling and Analysis Group planner Sean Wellander said the process to reduce the number of vehicle trips in the model involves two steps. In the first step involves identifying the potential trip makers who would not have access to a car, which was calculated to be 39,000. In the second step a look-up table is applied to reduce the shorter trips, which calculated to be another 37,000. Of the original 126,000 vehicle trips, the balance is only 50,000, which is a 60 percent total reduction. Mr. Wellander shared with the Commissioners a chart showing the reassigned trip tables comparing the 2010 and 2030 baseline and noted that the concentrations appear in the center of the downtown area. Ms. Clark said the numbers mirror the wedding cake land use patterns of the downtown.

Ms. Clark said some staff in her department have suggested that 76,000 is a very large number to pull from the total trips. She pointed out, however, that if the potential trip makers who would not have access to a car were left in, there would still be a 43 percent future reduction. The walking trips number would then be 53,753.

Commissioner Lampe commented that time of day certainly is a variable that influences the percentage of walk trips. At lunch time a lot of people leave their work places and walk to various destinations. The real issue relative to capacity is that it is related to the peak hours and therefore primarily commute traffic. He asked how the time of day variance is captured. Ms. Clark said the model includes varying percentages by purpose for each of the peak periods, morning, midday and evening, as well as for off-peak.

Ms. Clark stated that in order to assure that the walk trip reduction methodology does not materially affect the model calibration, the base year model was re-run with the reductions and was

compared against the downtown screenline results. She noted that small differences were detected but within an acceptable range. If the approach ends up being used permanently, some calibration in downtown trips would be warranted. The model should be recalibrated to mesh with the 2010 census data.

The model that been used for the past couple of decades is a link impedance model. Mr. Wellander said that inputs to the model include capacity per lane and the number of lanes for each link in each direction. The V/C ratio represents the volume assigned to the link divided by the total capacity of the link. He shared with the Commissioners a color-coded graph indicating the V/C calculations for each link in the downtown. In such a demand model, all of the trips get served. Operational models, however, yield letter grades for intersection levels of service as well as the percent of trips served; such models will not accept numbers that exceed the capacity. A mid-level model is being used for the current exercise, and the intersection levels of service from the link model are not being assumed because levels of service can be calculated from the node impedance model.

Some of the transportation projects not included as part of the baseline have been added to the 2030 baseline for testing purposes. The list of projects includes ramps to and from the east on SR-520 at 124th Avenue NE; a slip ramp eastbound under 148th Avenue NE to 152nd Avenue NE on SR-520; a southbound braid from SR-520 to NE 10th Street on I-405; the addition of one auxiliary lane northbound and one southbound between SE 8th Street and SR-520 on I-405; HOT lanes on I-405 between NE 6th Street and I-5; expanding the NE 2nd Street arterial to five lanes between Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue NE; extending the HOV lanes on NE 6th Street across I-405 and connecting to 120th Avenue NE; and adding one HOV lane south on Bellevue Way from 112th Avenue NE to the South Bellevue park and ride.

Commissioner Bishop asked if staff would be able in time to provide the Commission with information about the impacts of individual projects. Ms. Clark said currently the projects are included as a group, but information about the individual projects could be extracted.

Ms. Clark shared with the Commission a comparison of the load levels on the 2030 network with these “build” scenario projects, and the 2030 network without the projects. She noted that the crossing of I-405 at NE 2nd was modeled and was shown to offer significant improvements.

Ms. Clark said the modeling done so far warrants the conclusion that the downtown area is not expected to be gridlocked in 2030. Roads within the downtown proper do not need to be widened. Improvements are needed at certain intersections, some of which is being done via the SCATS system and is yielding benefits. With increased growth, however, the SCATS-derived benefits will not last. The planned regional projects will improve downtown accessibility. The 2030 “build” scenario will help to relieve congestion in the downtown, particularly on the east-west arterials, and over time the number of pedestrians and bicyclists will increase and need to be accommodated.

C. Downtown Transportation Plan Update

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald said the conclusions being drawn from the modeling work will be important for the downtown transportation planning. With modest improvements in the

downtown and improved regional connectivity, the downtown will be in pretty good shape by 2030 in terms of vehicle capacity. The modeling does show an increased demand to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, however. He said the department's new intern, Cat Silva, a graduate student in both planning and public policy at the University of Washington, has been working behind the scenes on the issue of accommodating pedestrians, the components of which are crosswalks, midblock crossings, sidewalks and through-block connections.

Mr. McDonald said all crosswalks are not created equal. Their inequalities stem from serving different purposes in terms of capacity to accommodate pedestrians and the manner in which pedestrians are accommodated. The standard crosswalk involves the traditional parallel white lines spaced eight feet apart. They are generally functional but not always adequate in every situation. Enhanced crosswalks are warranted in situations where design or traffic volumes call out the need for more than parallel white lines. They may simply be white stripes spaced farther apart than eight feet to accommodate increased pedestrian flow, but they could also include wayfinding features, special pavement treatments, or bump-outs to accommodate pedestrian queuing. Exceptional crosswalks are identified as those which are expected to handle large volumes of pedestrian activity. They need a special emphasis on infrastructure in order to keep pedestrians safe and to provide them with a high-quality experience waiting to cross the street and actually crossing the street. The anticipation is that the standard crosswalks will be primarily located around the perimeter of the downtown, the exceptional crosswalks will be needed in the core of the downtown, and the enhanced crosswalks will be needed in between.

Commissioner Glass suggested the crosswalk at 100th Avenue NE and NE 1st Street would qualify to be an enhanced crosswalk given that the adjacent park may be improved. Mr. McDonald concurred.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if making some crosswalks inherently safer would have any implications in terms of liability for the city should there be an incident involving a standard crosswalk. Mr. McDonald said the principle behind the enhanced and exceptional crosswalks is to improve the pedestrian experience; they may or may not be safer than a standard crosswalk. The parallel white bars that constitute a standard crosswalk are as safe as a crosswalk can be. The locating of exceptional crosswalks will be predicated on the adopted code, which calls for the Pedestrian Corridor and Main Street in Old Bellevue to be Category A rights-of-way. The enhanced crosswalks will be determined by adopted policy as well along with the anticipated increases in pedestrian volumes that will occur.

Commissioner Tanaka pointed out the need to address the crosswalk on NE 4th Street between 100th Avenue NE and Bellevue Way by the park. Mr. McDonald agreed it should be designated as an enhanced crosswalk.

Mr. McDonald said midblock crossings are created for a number of reasons, but primarily to

accommodate pedestrians who want to cross in the middle of a superblock. The downtown subarea plan holds just about every midblock location as a candidate for a midblock crossing, both in the form of at-grade and grade-separated crossings. Signalization and pavement markings for some older downtown midblock crossings have been beefed up to provide more visibility for pedestrians.

Commissioner Tanaka said he has seen in some cities where the streets are very wide little islands in the middle on which pedestrians can take refuge if not able to make a complete crossing before the signal changes. He asked if consideration is being given to taking that approach for some crossings in the downtown. Mr. McDonald said there are a couple of signalized crossings in the downtown that have timers showing pedestrians how much time they have to cross the street; the timing is set to be adequately accommodate most people to get all the way across. However, if at-grade midblock crossings are ever created on NE 4th Street or NE 8th Street, refuge islands likely will be created. Grade-separated crossings, of course, are a viable alternative in approved locations.

Mr. McDonald said midblock crossings can include medians and special pavement treatments, and full signalization is becoming more common, particularly on busy streets. A new signalization technology called rectangular rapidly flashing beacons was recently installed on the midblock crossing to the north of Bellevue Square on 102nd Avenue NE. He shared with the Commission a map indicating the location of current midblock crossings in the downtown and the location of proposed priority midblock crossings not yet constructed. He noted that the proposed crossing of NE 6th Street between City Hall and Meydenbauer Center is in a location where an elevated structure is not currently allowed by code. The crossing could, however, provide good access to the future light rail station.

Commissioner Glass said the midblock crossings on all of the major arterials in the downtown should be grade separated to avoid impeding vehicular traffic.

Commissioner Tanaka asked if tunneling is ever an option for creating a midblock crossing. Mr. McDonald said it has been done in some cities and could be done in Bellevue. Tunneling qualifies as a grade separated approach.

There was consensus to add a midblock crossing to the map on Bellevue Way between NE 8th Street and NE 10th Street as an early implementation project.

With regard to sidewalks, Mr. McDonald said the comments of the community were generally favorable in terms of quality and design in the downtown. They did, however, point out the substandard sidewalks and missing sidewalk segments. The city has relied on the development community to fill in the gaps as development occurs. The public highlighted their desire to see more benches and weather protection elements. Landscaping and street trees serve as good buffers in lieu of parked cars in the downtown. Because there are no alleys in the downtown, there are lots of driveways and curb cuts that impact the sidewalks, and there is a need to

address them to assure pedestrians a level walkway.

Ms. Silva said there are three different minimum widths in the Land Use Code for sidewalks in the downtown. Along Bellevue Way NE, NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street the sidewalks are required to be 12 feet wide and to include a four-foot planter strip, for a total of 16 feet. Additionally, the sidewalks along NE 6th Street, 106th Avenue NE, 108th Avenue NE and 110th Avenue NE are also required to be 12 feet wide but with a four-foot strip containing street trees. Sidewalks in the northern and southern portions of the downtown are generally required to be eight feet wide. The recommendation of staff is to increase to 12 feet wide the eight-foot sidewalks on 106th Avenue NE to the north of NE 8th Street and to the south of NE 4th Street, and increasing the 12-foot width crossing the Pedestrian Corridor on NE 6th Street to 16 feet, to accommodate increased volumes of pedestrian traffic. The additional widths would be accomplished as development occurs. The staff recommendation also includes removing the street trees requirement from several streets and instead requiring planter strips for improved permeability and to provide a better buffer between the sidewalk and the street.

Mr. McDonald said if the code requirements are changed, it will not necessarily flow that property owners will need to retrofit their existing sidewalks or landscaping types. The new requirements would only apply to new development or public projects.

Mr. McDonald explained that through-block connections are shortcuts through the superblocks; they make it easier for people to get around the downtown and within TAZs.

Commissioner Tanaka asked if the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements apply to throughways. Mr. McDonald said not all of the connections have included ADA accommodations. He suggested that the downtown livability study may address the issue. He allowed that the public raised the issue as well.

Mr. McDonald said typically the through-block connections involve public easements through private property and are developed as code requirements. The space allocated to the connections is not lost to the developers given that the potential is simply moved to another part of the site; the same is true for the space taken up by sidewalk easements.

Wayfinding is an important element of through-block connections. People need to know the spaces are open to use by the public, but they also need to know where the spaces lead to. Other cities have discovered the link between economic development and pedestrian mobility, and downtown Bellevue is only beginning to understand the benefits.

Chair Simas commented that the wording of wayfinding signs can be very telling. He suggested that while the phrase “public access” may lead someone to believe the route leads to a specific destination, the phrase “public walkway” is more indicative of something that is simply open to use by the general public.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None

10. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Bishop asked about the Commission's annual retreat. Mr. Krawczyk said the retreat offers the Commission the opportunity to meet a bit more informally to talk over issues. The meeting is generally held away from City Hall, though it must be noticed as a public meeting. The agenda is generally left up to the chair.

Commissioner Bishop voiced concern over the fact that the Commission is not talking about or weighing in on some of the city's major transportation issues, including East Link and I-405. There should be a forum for discussing those kinds of issues.

Chair Simas said he is open to having a meeting with the Commission's Council liaison but added that he would like to have a clearer idea of what to talk about or ask before such a meeting.

Commissioner Lampe agreed the Commission should have a broad discussion about regional transportation issues that will directly and dramatically impact Bellevue.

Commissioner Tanaka acknowledged that the topic of regional transportation issues comes up periodically and the question is always asked why the Commission does not address them. The fact is the Council has drawn very specific jurisdictional lines that encompass the issues they will deal with and the issues to be tackled by the Commission. Regional transportation issues is one topic the Council has clearly held for itself. That said, there is a great deal of information relative to regional transportation issues and projects that the Commission needs to be on top of because they will directly affect transportation issues within the city.

Commissioner Bishop suggested the Commission should be acting to inform the Council's discussions relative to developing its legislative agenda for the upcoming year.

Mr. Krawczyk clarified that the Commission was created by ordinance and that ordinance specifies the duties of the Commission. There is nothing specific in the ordinance relative to the general topic of regional issues, though it does state that the Commission may be assigned other duties. The Commission could ask the Council to assign it the authority to explore regional issues that will in some way directly impact the city.

Commissioner Larrivee said there is a difference between being informed about what is happening regionally relative to transportation in order to make better decisions about the local transportation network, and being asked to weigh in on what the city should do relative to regional transportation issues. Commissioner Bishop said his opinion is that the Commission should be engaged in the latter.

Commissioner Lampe said he is not averse to talking with the Council liaison about the areas around which the Commission could provide valuable input.

Commissioner Jokinen pointed out that the last time the Commission brought to the Council's attention concerns about the role of the Commission, the Council adamantly restated that regional issues are theirs and theirs alone. Thinking the Commission needed more to do, the Council directed that the Commission should be involved in the downtown transportation plan update.

Chair Simas asked Commissioners Bishop and Lampe to work offline on ideas and opinions to be discussed by the full Commission, before setting up a meeting with Mayor Lee.

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Bruce Nurse with Kemper Development Company, 575 Bellevue Square, suggested that thus far the data shown the Commission by staff relative to the downtown transportation plan update has been an urban planner's vision of a dream. For one thing, there has been an overrepresentation of ped-bike issues. Millions of pedestrians visit the Bellevue Collection, yet there are no crosswalks in the west driveway; there are 5000 parking spaces and the pedestrians cross what is essentially a roadway, all without a crosswalk. Some research has shown that 30 percent of people hit by cars were not using a crosswalk, which would seem to argue that 70 percent of those hit by cars were in a crosswalk. Pedestrians take crosswalks for granted; they are only white lines, they are not protective concrete walls. Crosswalks at intersections certainly are warranted, but they are less desirable at midblock locations. It is not insurmountable for people to walk from a midblock position to an intersection crosswalk, make their way to the other side of the street, and then walk back to their destination; at most they will walk 660 feet, the length of a superblock. Planners assume pedestrians will walk some 800 feet to access a light rail station. It is far more than 800 feet between Nordstroms and Penny's in Bellevue Square. Bellevue Square is unique in that it is situated more than a mile from the closest freeway; major regional shopping centers are nearly always located adjacent to freeways. Regional shopping centers can only thrive when there is a market potential of some 500,000 people, and of course those people must be able to get to the shopping center. In the case of Bellevue Square, the drivers must pass through the downtown area. The number of people living in the downtown is increasing steadily, a trend that is expected to continue. As that number increases there will be increased competition in all modes for the downtown streets. Making the traffic flow slower in an attempt to create the perception of improved safety for pedestrians, the retail shops in the downtown could suffer. Kemper Development has in the past, and continues to, oppose on-street parking in the downtown. Any traffic engineer can easily outline ten reasons why on-street parking is dangerous and detrimental.

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

13. REVIEW COMMISSION CALENDAR AND AGENDA

The Commissioner reviewed its calendar and list of upcoming agenda items.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Simas adjourned the meeting at 9:13 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date