CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

July 5, 2016 Council Conference Room
6:00 p.m. Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Stokes and Councilmembers Lee, Robertson, Robinson, Slatter, and Wallace

ABSENT: Deputy Mayor Chelminiak

1. Executive Session

At 6:01 p.m., Councilmember Robertson called the meeting to order, and declared recess to Executive Session for approximately 70 minutes to discuss two items of pending litigation and one item of potential litigation.

The meeting resumed at 7:10 p.m., with Mayor Stokes presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) Public Engagement Activities related to the Long Range Financial Plan

City Manager Brad Miyake said the Council's work on the long-term capital budget has focused on funding in three areas: 1) significant mobility projects through the use of federal funding mechanisms, 2) a new Downtown Fire Station and capital improvements to other Fire facilities, and, 3) smaller transportation projects that improve neighborhood safety and connectivity. During the June 6 meeting, Council directed staff to conduct public outreach regarding a potential property tax levy to fund Fire facilities needs and to accelerate the backlog of smaller transportation projects. He introduced staff's presentation of recent public engagement activities and the recommended next steps if a ballot measure is desired.

Toni Rezab, Interim Finance Director, said three open houses were held the previous week and the online survey is still open for public input. She recalled discussions with the Council in May and June regarding the long range capital plan, including three high priority areas: 1) mobility needs in the BelRed corridor to be financed through a TIFIA loan (i.e., Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act), 2) Fire Facilities Plan, and 3) transportation neighborhood safety and connectivity projects. With regard to the TIFIA loan, the City anticipates submitting its letter of interest to the U.S. Department of Transportation by late July,

and staff will provide an update to the Council this fall. Ms. Rezab recalled that the Fire Facilities Plan was developed in 2014. In early June, Fire Chief Risen provided an update and his proposed approach for implementing the plan to the Council.

Ms. Rezab said that, pursuant to previous Council direction, staff initiated an online survey regarding potential ballot measures and held three public open houses. Staff requests Council direction on July 11 about whether to continue to move forward with preparing a voter ballot measure or measures for the November election to accelerate project implementation. If the City moves forward with voter packages, Council action on the specific structure, composition, and property tax rates will be needed by August 1.

Councilmember Wallace clarified for the public that these are not the only items included in the City's long range capital plan. The seven-year Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan includes large transportation projects as well as parks, utilities, and numerous other projects. He suggested enhanced public education about the City's overall capital planning. Ms. Rezab said she will provide an overview of all capital priorities during the July 11 Council meeting.

Councilmember Slatter asked staff to provide more information to overlay the ballot measures with how the City is dealing with congestion and transportation needs within the broader CIP Plan.

Bob Hyde, Deputy City Attorney, described the Council actions necessary for a ballot measure: 1) adopt an ordinance with ballot language to be forwarded to King County and an explanation of the measure, and 2) appoint Pro and Con committees to prepare statements in favor of or opposed to the ballot measure or measures. In order to be prepared for potential Council action, staff will advertise to recruit members of the public to serve on the Pro and Con committees. If Council chooses to not move forward with ballot measures, the committees will be disbanded.

Ms. Rezab said the online survey opened June 14, and 456 individuals had responded by the morning of July 1. She noted that this is not a statistically valid survey. She highlighted responses to certain questions in the survey, noting that traffic, congestion, growth, and over-development were identified as the key problems facing Bellevue. Approximately 52 percent of the respondents indicated that Bellevue is headed in the right direction, and 29 percent responded that Bellevue is on the wrong track.

When asked to express support regarding two potential ballot measures (i.e., neighborhood safety/connectivity and Fire facilities/emergency response), 69 percent of survey respondents indicated they strongly or somewhat support a neighborhood safety and connectivity ballot package. Similarly, 71 said they strongly or somewhat support a Fire facilities package. When asked which measure should be a high priority, 33 percent identified neighborhood safety and connectivity, 27 percent identified Fire facilities, and 25 percent indicated both areas.

Mark Poch, Assistant Director of Traffic Management, provided an update on the open houses held on June 28 at the Bellevue Youth Theater, June 29 at the South Bellevue Community Center, and June 30 at City Hall. The events attracted a total of 75 attendees, who were given the

option to provide feedback via a community input card and/or the online survey. Computers were provided at the meetings for completing the surveys.

Mr. Poch highlighted the input received on specific items through the open houses and the online survey. Responses from the open houses ranked Fire Facilities seismic upgrades as the top priority, followed by establishing a new Downtown Station, remodeling outdated stations, upgrading existing stations, and improving facility locations. Online survey respondents indicate seismic upgrades and existing station upgrades as higher priorities, followed by adding a Downtown Station, remodeling outdated stations, and improving facility locations.

Feedback regarding neighborhood transportation projects tracked more closely between the open houses and online survey with the priorities ranked as follows: neighborhood safety, reducing congestion, new sidewalks and trails, enhanced technology for traffic management, sidewalk and trail maintenance, and new bike facilities.

Mr. Poch said more detailed information on the public responses is provided in the Council's desk packet. He noted a memo in the meeting packet from the Transportation Commission and introduced Chair Janice Zahn and Vice Chair Vic Bishop to present the Commission's feedback.

Chair Zahn said the Transportation Commission supports establishing a capital investments levy to address the demands related to all modes of transportation and to ensure that adequate maintenance is provided for facilities. She said the Commission's recommendations are organized into five thematic categories. She said the goal of the levy is to accelerate the smaller transportation projects that otherwise likely would not be funded in the near term.

Vice Chair Bishop said the five thematic areas are: 1) major maintenance, 2) neighborhood safety program enhancements, 3) sidewalk, pathway and bikeway connectivity, 4) neighborhood traffic congestion solutions, and 5) Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) and advanced technologies.

Councilmember Robertson thanked Ms. Zahn, Mr. Bishop, and the Transportation Commission for their work. She questioned whether the Commission recommended funding percentages for the five areas and whether they talked about having a CIP match similar to what was done in the Parks levy.

Chair Zahn said the Commission originally developed percentages but, upon further discussion, later removed them. The Commission determined it would be better to see which projects emerge without creating required spending levels for the five areas. The Commission did not discuss a CIP match mechanism for the ballot measure. Responding to Councilmember Robertson, Ms. Zahn and Mr. Bishop confirmed the Commission's intent that projects should be selected for all five areas.

Councilmember Wallace expressed concern that some commissioners have made public comments about specific projects. Responding to Mr. Wallace, Chair Zahn said some of the commissioners suggested specific projects during discussions. However, the Commission

decided to identify the five thematic categories instead of listing or committing to specific projects. Mr. Wallace observed that staff will develop a recommended transportation package for review and discussion, and Ms. Zahn concurred. In further response, Mr. Bishop said the Commission did not take a position on any specific projects. Councilmember Wallace said the Council received an email earlier in the day referring to statements by a Commissioner that conflict somewhat with this understanding. Mr. Wallace said it is important to avoid misinformation before staff develops a list of appropriate projects to be considered for the ballot measure.

Mayor Stokes said the ballot measure is part of a broader overall capital strategy. Staff will come back with recommended projects, and both staff and the Council will continue to work with the Transportation Commission. He said the goal of the voter package is to expand the overall transportation capital program.

Councilmember Lee said he appreciated Councilmember Wallace's questions and the clarification by the commissioners. Mr. Lee thanked the Commission for its work. He said it is important for the public to understand that the voter package is meant to supplement the larger CIP Plan.

Referring to the five thematic areas identified by the Transportation Commission, Councilmember Slatter suggested perhaps combining neighborhood traffic congestion solutions with ITS/advanced technologies. She said it would be helpful to have metrics and targets for assessing improvements to traffic congestion.

Councilmember Robinson thanked the Transportation Commission for its good work and expressed support for the five thematic categories. She recalled that, when the Newport Way sidewalk project was introduced, the City did not have funding available. She observed that every neighborhood has important projects and the ballot measure is an opportunity to respond to those needs.

Chair Zahn thanked staff for their extensive work with the Transportation Commission. She said the Commission trusts that staff will identify the most appropriate projects within the five areas defined by the Commission.

Councilmember Wallace asked staff to comment on the next steps and on how the levy package will be refined based on the five categories identified by the Transportation Commission.

Ron Kessack, Assistant Director of Transportation, said staff has not created a package but will bring back recommendations. While there is a robust project list of needs, he suggested retaining flexibility for new priorities that might arise as well (e.g., Newport Way/150th Avenue project). Responding to Councilmember Slatter's earlier comment about performance metrics, Mr. Kessack said staff will bring that type of information back for each project included in staff's recommended list.

Councilmember Wallace noted that the Newport Way sidewalk project scored high based on the City's safety criteria. Mr. Kessack said that is a $8 million project, which is likely more appropriate for the larger CIP Plan than for the voter package under consideration. He said part of the evaluation will be to determine whether projects should be included in the levy or as part of the CIP Plan.

Councilmember Robertson noted that the next steps listed in the presentation are to talk about the rate, composition and structure of the ballot measure, should the Council decide to move forward. She questioned how specific the language will be in the ballot measure. She said it is important to let voters know what they are voting for, while maintaining the flexibility to adjust to changes in the economy and/or priorities.

Mr. Hyde said he envisions the first draft of the ordinance containing broader categories with examples of projects under each category. He concurred with maintaining flexibility for future needs and unforeseen changes.

Mr. Kessack said the Council will make the final determination on the levy amount, which will dictate the levy rate. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Kessack confirmed that the Council will make decisions about project expenditures on an annual basis.

(b) Council Compensation Review *[Moved to Regular Session, Agenda Item 12]*

At 8:00 p.m., Mayor Stokes declared recess to the Regular Session.

Kyle Stannert
City Clerk

/kaw