CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

January 9, 2014
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Chris Dreaney, Laurie Gromala, Franz Loewenherz, Paula Stevens, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 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 Larrivee who arrived at 7:02 p.m.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Simas opened the public hearing.

Development Review Manager Chris Dreaney explained that the Transportation Development Code provides a regulatory framework for transportation system impact mitigation requirements relating to new development and redevelopment. The code also provides the authority for the design standards for the design and construction of transportation facilities. The update to the code is intended to: clarify and expand definitions; remove conflicts and inconsistencies; clarify the required design of public streets, private roads and driveways; and increase consistency with fire department standards regarding street-end design. Notice of application and the SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) were published following the presentation to the Commission in October 2013; no appeal to the DNS was received by the deadline.

No members of the public elected to participate in the public hearing.

Chair Simas closed the public hearing.

4. STAFF REPORTS

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald shared with the Commission a flyer regarding a planned transportation workshop primarily intended for new Bellevue residents in the Eastgate annexation areas. The workshop is scheduled for January 30 at 7:00 p.m. at the Newport Way library.

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

6. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Lampe said he attended the recent Eastside Chamber legislative coalition breakfast. To no one's surprise, high on everyone's agenda was transportation, followed by education and economic development.

7. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Michael Hornfet, a senior transportation planner, applauded the city for putting together a thorough transit master plan. He stressed the important role transit will play in the coming years as the city continues to grow. One important element of the plan that warrants further consideration is the proposed speed and reliability improvements.

8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda as printed was made by Commissioner Lampe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tanaka and it carried unanimously.

9. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Transportation Development Code Update (B.C.C. 14.60)

Ms. Dreaney said notice of the proposed changes was sent to 411 email addresses on a listserve for the Transportation Development Code, and also to the Bellevue Downtown Association and Chamber of Commerce, following the Commission's October 10 study session. Notice was also sent to a list of 21 local consultants and developers. Responses from the public, the Commission and city staff resulted in the modifications to the code amendment outlined in Attachment 1.

Commissioner Zahn thanked the staff for their responses and good explanations relative to her comments.

Traffic Operations Division Assistant Director Laurie Gromala observed that comments were made regarding the transportation demand management section. She said that section will be the subject of a future Commission meeting. Some comments were also received from the Department of Parks and Community Services regarding tree issues which may appropriately belong in the right-of-way use code rather than in the Transportation Development Code.

Commissioner Lampe referred to section 14.60.060.B and noted that he was unclear as to establishing a fund for a specified period of time not to exceed five years. Ms. Dreaney said the five-year period would be measured from the date of permit issuance. The fund would need to be established as a condition of receiving a permit, but if the funds are not used within five years they would be refunded to the developer.

Commissioner Bishop asked if the fund would be tied to concurrency in any way. Ms. Dreaney answered that it is an operations issue and is not related to concurrency.

A motion to recommend to the City Council adoption of the Transportation Development Code update was made by Commissioner Tanaka. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lampe and it carried unanimously.

Ms. Gromala said the issue is tentatively scheduled for Council study session on March 17.

B. Transit Master Plan

Senior transportation planner Franz Loewenherz informed the Commissioners that on January 13 he would be giving a presentation to the Bellevue City Council on Metro's service reduction proposal. A counter-proposal will be presented for Council consideration that is more in line with the work done by the Commission relative to abundant access.

Mr. Loewenherz highlighted commuter parking as an important component of the capital element. Commuter parking fits in the transit stop category and is something over which the city can influence relative to location, size, and integration with land use. Commuter parking provides one way for the public to access transit, in fact park and rides represent 16 percent of all boarding and alighting activity in the city. There are five commuter parking lots and nine private leased lots in Bellevue.

Mr. Loewenherz allowed that there are some system imbalances. At the South Bellevue Park and Ride many people park outside of the designated parking areas. The lot is set for a significant expansion as part of the East Link light rail project and will likely be closed for five to six years. The city is working with Sound Transit to develop a mitigation plan.

Commissioner Bishop suggested it would be safe to say that the bulk of the commuters utilizing the park and ride lots in Bellevue are headed to downtown Seattle, even though they may be Bellevue residents. As such the lots are not primarily an asset to Bellevue's transit

system.

Mr. Loewenherz said the commuter parking report anticipates the future need for facilities. The methodology was based on the work done in 2001 by the Washington State Department of Transportation on the I-405 and I-90 corridors. Between 2000 and 2012, the I-405 corridor has had a utilization growth rate of 19 percent, while in the I-90 corridor the growth rate has been 121 percent. Added to those figures was information in the travel demand model relative to the anticipated frequencies for 2030 based on Bellevue's transit service vision report.

Continuing, Mr. Loewenherz said the BKR model was run with two different lenses. The first was a constrained approach predicated on all of the commuter parking facilities that are projected to come online by 2030, including the expansion of the South Bellevue park and ride and the park and ride to be created at the 130th Ave NE light rail station. The second model run took out all physical constraints and hypothetically included 10,000 commuter parking stalls at each location in an attempt to serve absolutely everyone. The constrained scenario suggests a shortage of 247 stalls in the I-90 corridor and 198 stalls in the I-405 corridor, whereas the unconstrained model indicates a doubling of all of the stalls in both corridors would be needed to accommodate everyone.

Commissioner Bishop commented that transit ridership in the model is heavily driven by the price of parking. The exercise run for the downtown indicated that if there was no charge for retail parking, coupled with a reduction in the parking rates, the 60,000 transit rider trips would be reduced to 32,000. The Puget Sound Regional Council model assumes paid parking for all retail in the downtown, but it would not be honest to think that will occur by 2030, so the city's plan should not be based on it. The parking rate is the single most important factor in determining how much transit ridership comes out of the model. The demand for commuter parking is overstated as a result of using intellectually dishonest information in the model regarding transit ridership.

Mr. Loewenherz allowed that Sound Transit is looking into the topic of whether or not park and ride lots should have a fee associated with them; depending on what they decide, the demand for park and ride stalls may be reduced. He reiterated that commuter parking accounts for only 16 percent of all boardings and alightings, yet the community frequently highlights commuter parking facilities as an area of concern. It is unlikely that 11,000 stalls will be built by 2030. It is likely, however, that the region will look at pricing commuter parking; a pilot study is currently under way by Sound Transit. Many new technologies are developing, including an online app in Los Angeles that identifies parking availability for commuters and something similar could easily be instituted locally to indicate how full park and rides and leased lots are. Leased lots will continue to be valid considerations, and new construction will be part of the equation as well.

Chair Simas said he was surprised to know how many leased lots there are in the city. He suggested that as time goes on the city should come up with a marketing plan for making those

places more well known. Mr. Loewenherz said all of the leased lots are managed by Metro; the city's only role is in allowing them through an administrative use permit. He added that Bellevue is the only jurisdiction in the county to require any kind of a permit for leased lots and it is a real impediment to realizing additional lots. A recommendation from the Commission to amend the Land Use Code to make leased lots a permitted use might be something to consider.

There was consensus in favor of directing staff to start looking at a strategy to increase the number of leased commuter parking stalls in the city.

Mr. Loewenherz stressed that he was not suggesting that the full demand for commuter parking stalls once the South Bellevue lot is closed down should be met in Bellevue. Generally the philosophy in the siting and sizing of park and ride facilities is to try and capture commuters as close as possible to their points of origin to reduce the total vehicle miles traveled.

Commissioner Tanaka asked if there is data indicating how much of the parking that occurs at park and ride lots is unrelated to transit. Mr. Loewenherz said the Eastgate lot has the unintended consequence of serving as a satellite parking site for Bellevue College, though the practice may not be as extreme as some might speculate. He said he did not have data on how much non-commuter parking occurs at any of the park and rides, but suggested that most facilities will eventually charge for the service and that may mitigate some of the problem.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Zahn, Mr. Loewenherz said the current assumption is that there will eventually be tolling on I-90 and hot lanes on I-405. The numbers in the transit service vision report for 2030 do not, however, include tolling on I-90.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that the entire transit system is oriented toward Seattle, not Bellevue, and does not in fact serve the I-405 corridor even though that is where the demand is. Commissioner Lampe commented that transit systems generally are focused on population centers which on the Eastside are more dispersed, which tends to put vehicles more in demand north and south relative to east and west.

Mr. Loewenherz called attention next to the measures of effectiveness report. He said three of the four measures of effectiveness chosen by the Commission in collaboration with other boards and commissions build on the Frequent Transit Network, while the fourth builds on Bellevue's Mobility Management Areas. With the guidance of the Commission, time has been spent thinking about how to develop measures of effectiveness that are consistent with best practices. In the past year the Transportation Research Board produced the latest in a series of transit capacity quality of service manuals, which served as a very useful reference point for developing measures of effectiveness for Bellevue.

For the first measure of effectiveness, measure service availability on Bellevue's Frequent Transit Network, there are three metrics considered: route frequency, service coverage and

span of service. Route frequency is consistently the top requested improvement from the community. The intent is to monitor on a five-year basis the extent to which progress is made toward achieving the 2030 Frequent Transit Network vision. Another option would be to look at the frequency of connectivity between major activity centers and regionally. Nationally, very few jurisdictions are going to great lengths to track service availability which puts Bellevue out in front.

With regard to route coverage, the measure is reasonable walking distance from one's origin and destination. The tolerance level of most people is one-quarter mile. Graphics created from data pulled from the existing and future conditions report was shared with the Commissioners that showed areas within a quarter-mile walk of bus stops having 15-minute or less and 30-minute or less service on weekdays. Additional graphics were shared which further segmented the information by time of day. The proposal is to update the analysis every five years to mark the progress toward increasing the number of persons having access to frequent transit availability.

The second measure of effectiveness, transit usage, is a good indicator of the demand for and satisfaction with transit service. It is an easy metric to track and in fact will be tracked twice annually by Mobility Management Area. The tracking done since the transit plan was last approved has shown a usage increase of 129 percent.

The person throughput measure of effectiveness responds to the discussions that took place at the Commission level in October where a desire was expressed to broaden the understanding of transit's contribution to improved mobility beyond just the volume-to-capacity ratio. The metric will differentiate vehicles that are transporting many people from those carrying only one or two and will rely on data received from the transit agencies.

Commissioner Bishop said the approach is a much more valid option than relying on the BKR model projection for transit ridership that is based on parking ratios and parking fee schedules for 2030 that are unrealistic. The BKR model is yielding numbers about the total number of 2030 trips and the percentage of them that will be by transit, which are inflated. Thus the trips on any given route are also inflated by a dramatic percentage.

Commissioner Zahn commented that there is uncertainty involved with all numbers. In looking out to 2030 it is necessary to make assumptions about any number of things. Recent studies have shown that young people are moving away from cars, but that data is not reflected in the model. Every assumption made will have the effect of changing the numbers for each category, but assumptions are by their very nature imprecise.

Chair Simas said it is absolutely necessary to have targets even if they are not fully accurate. What it boils down to is individual beliefs about what is going to happen in the future. He said his personal view was that as more people move into the area and density increases, it will become more difficult to navigate by single-occupant vehicle and more people will choose to

migrate to high-occupancy vehicles. The projections need to be reviewed and adjustments need to be made at regular intervals.

Commissioner Bishop suggested that reviewing the numbers every five years is not often enough. It would be more reasonable to choose 15 or 20 specific locations for review every two years.

The fourth measure of effectiveness is travel time. Mr. Loewenherz explained that travel time is a critical element in decisions made by the public regarding whether or not they should take transit. Generally transit travel times should not exceed by a factor of two the travel times of a single-occupant vehicle. Calculating operating speeds in absolute terms and comparing observed speeds to the service vision targets, as well as calculating transit travel time in relative terms compared to auto travel times, is intense and time-consuming work that likely will not be carried out more frequently than every five years. The desire to improve transit travel times will inform investments in infrastructure.

Commissioner Zahn pointed out as a transit user that transit offers advantages over vehicles that the time difference does not take into account. She said she can read, send and respond to emails, and do any number of things while riding the bus that she cannot do while driving a car.

Commissioner Larrivee agreed that the travel time measure of effectiveness is valid even though it may be impractical from the standpoint of time involved. He said he would like to see the city strive to implement a process where the data can be captured more effectively.

Commissioner Bishop agreed but suggested it would be even better to have door-to-door information. He said what really matters to riders is the total time it takes them to reach their destination, including the time it takes to access a bus, the trip time, and the time needed to make it from the bus stop to their final destination. Such data would be more intellectually honest.

Chair Simas asked if staff have discussed the measures of effectiveness with any Councilmembers. Mr. Loewenherz shared that the measure of effectiveness report has not been discussed with the Council, though a series of Council briefings have been conducted for virtually all of the Councilmembers during which they were brought up to speed regarding the Commission's discussions. The Councilmembers all noted how impressed they were the amount of time being put into the issue by the Commission. The briefings were timed to give the Councilmembers background information ahead of the upcoming discussion regarding Metro's service reduction proposal.

Assistant Director for Transportation Planning Paula Stevens added that one of the benefits of the Council briefings was the opportunity to portray some of the projects that will be coming

out at the tail end of the current effort. They were pleased to receive the information because it helped them understand how the policies will translate into actual projects.

Mr. Loewenherz said in addition to data from the perspective of the users, there is the perspective of the transit agencies and their ability to implement the service frequency targets identified in the service vision. Time is money and when transit agencies make investment decisions, they look at the operating speed opportunities by corridor. If the cycle time, which is the total amount of time it takes to complete a round trip, increases, it becomes necessary to put another vehicle out on the road to maintain frequency of operation. If the speed of transit vehicles can be improved, the amount of vehicles required can be constrained and the overall cost to the transit agency can be reduced. He said the proposal is to gauge the extent to which the city is tracking relative to the target operating speeds.

C. Comprehensive Plan Update: Multimodal Level of Service

Mr. McDonald welcomed Chris Breiland and Don Samdahl from Fehr & Peers to continue the discussion regarding multimodal level of service and concurrency. The current approach measures only one mode of mobility even though people rely on multiple modes to get around, including transit, pedestrians and bicycles. The Commission previously supported the notion of exploring different ideas. Since the Commission's last discussion on the topic, staff and the consultant team developed four policy options for the Commission to consider. The options will be developed further based on input from the Commission and will ultimately be included in a proposal for updating the Transportation Element.

Mr. Samdahl noted that in the previous discussion it was not made clear how some of the multimodal level of service policies might be used. He shared with the Commissioners a table outlining how each policy might work for long-range planning and for concurrency and asked the Commissioners to keep in mind that it was not necessary to choose one over another given that a mix and match approach might work best.

Mr. Samdahl said the first option, revising the Mobility Management Area structure, involves two elements: a possible change to the geographic structure, and how the mode analysis is done. One option would be to reduce the overall number of Mobility Management Areas and separate out activity centers and residential areas. The simpler approach could allow the larger Mobility Management Areas to capture some of the continuity along some of the corridors, such as NE 8th Street, and could have a little more transparency with different level of service standards for different modes.

Mr. Brieland recommended that in the downtown and in the mixed use areas explicit multimodal methods should be implemented. The auto-biased level of service should be reserved for the residential areas, though there should be some accountability for the other modes in residential areas.

Mr. Brieland said the second policy option, the corridor approach, moves away from a geographic approach and focuses on corridors of travel. The principal transportation system would need to be defined for along corridors. The layered network approach would look at what modes are important along different streets and then would build a level of service methodology from there. He shared with the Commission a map on which the Frequent Transit Network was drawn, a map showing the priority pedestrian/bicycle corridors, and a map showing the city's principal streets. By layering the pieces into a single map it can be shown where the various elements align, which are the corridors were specific modes can be defined and prioritized. For instance, 108th Avenue NE is listed as a bike route and has no other modal priorities assigned to it, so it would seem to be appropriate to assign it a strong bias toward bicycle level of service. By contrast, the Lake Hills Connector is shown as a busy auto street, a transit corridor, and a bike corridor, which highlights the need to prioritize and balance investments along it. The layered network lends itself to design standards that support an established level of service or corridor mode type.

Commissioner Tanaka asked if the layered network approach could be designed under the existing Mobility Management Area scenario. Mr. Samdahl said it certainly could be, except that within the Mobility Management Area approach there are a variety of different facilities and the focus is on a geographical area rather than a corridor.

Mr. Samdahl noted that either of the first two policy options could work well for planning or concurrency purposes. The third option, mobility units, is best suited for concurrency where the needs have been defined, there is a plan in place, and where concurrency is used to match the pace of growth with the pace of implementing the plan. The idea is to keep the bucket of capacity from being overfilled with too much demand. The approach works well from a multimodal standpoint because it can incorporate things like miles of travel or person demand. It is not, however, a good planning tool in that a plan needs to be in place before the approach can be implemented.

Mr. Brieland said the fourth policy option, defined as a target-based system, is the opposite of the mobility unit approach and is not a good concurrency management tool. The approach allows for the establishing of reasonably aggressive targets to serve as guideposts. Sample targets include person delay, greenhouse gas emissions, and modesplit. With targets established, it is an easy step to draw up a list of projects that will achieve the targets. The targets serve as excellent accountability tools.

Commissioner Tanaka suggested that if taken to the extreme the corridor approach could favor all traffic moving along the corridor to the expense of those trying to cross the corridor. Mr. Brieland said the balance in the corridor approach lies in the idea of an ultimate facility concept that will not allow crossing delays to exceed a certain level.

Mr. Brieland said in talks with the staff it was noted that regardless of what measure is used, good planning should lead to what can be termed a transportation master plan that incorporates

all of the individual modal plans layered on top of each other. The way the city has evolved it already has a lot of corridor approach elements in place and it would not be a major leap for the city to continue moving in that direction.

Commissioner Zahn suggested that the Mobility Management Area approach essentially cuts up the city into little pieces. The corridor approach is more of a holistic approach and seems to make more sense.

Chair Simas said he would like to see a proposal brought to the table by staff and the consultant team for a unified solution. Mr. Brieland said in developing transportation plans for cities he tends to use the layered network approach. Zonal systems are used where cities do in fact want to define sharp lines between different areas.

Mr. Samdahl said his preference is to look at things from a network perspective. He said the downtown has a grid system in place and in such cases there is merit in keeping the zonal approach because of the way people move around.

Mr. McDonald said the layered network corridor approach is something the city has been quietly perusing. The notion of having different zones or Mobility Management Areas is, however, also important, in taking the citywide view. A single corridor across the city may well be auto-biased, have a bicycle facility, and also serve as a transit priority corridor, but the way the roadway will be designed will be different in different parts of the city. Some notion of having zones or Mobility Management Areas in conjunction with a layered mobility network makes sense for long-range planning.

Commissioner Lampe noted his support for the hybrid approach utilizing the first two of the four policy options. The other Commissioners concurred.

D. Comprehensive Plan Update: MMA-11

Mr. McDonald explained that under the current system the Mobility Management Areas tend to be a static feature of the geography, though they can be revised in light of changed circumstances. He said the modeling analysis group and the traffic operations group have made the request to take another look at MMA-11 with an eye on adding intersections and making some minor adjustments to the boundary where it abuts MMA-10 and MMA-13. The staff recommends adding the intersections not built when the original MMAs were described, and to include roadway segments that were not built when the MMAs were described. Additionally, there should be an acknowledgement that MMA-11 is largely built out.

Mr. McDonald noted that with the concurrence of the Commission, the proposal will come forward in the Transportation Element as part of the Comprehensive Plan update.

Commissioner Bishop referred to the second page of the memo and the statement that Newport Way is identified as an arterial that not only provides access to the neighborhoods but also engages through trips in the same way Coal Creek Parkway does.

Commissioner Zahn said the two-lane roadway has no sidewalk and has poor lighting. Even so, the roadway serves as an arterial similar to Coal Creek Parkway. Commissioner Bishop said he did not question the arterial status of the roadway but suggested it primarily serves the neighborhoods. Commissioner Zahn said the roadway is used to get from Eastgate to Factoria and points south and is used by far more than just the local neighborhoods.

Commissioner Tanaka said the roadway is also very heavily used to get to and from schools in the mornings and afternoons.

Mr. McDonald said Newport Way relates more to the Newcastle MMA than it does to the Eastgate MMA.

The Commissioners concurred with the proposed revisions to MMA-11.

9. OLD BUSINESS - None

10. NEW BUSINESS - None

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 12, 2013

Commissioner Bishop called attention to the last line of the second paragraph on the third page of the minutes and suggested the word "police" should be changed to "policy."

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Commissioner Tanaka. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Larrivee and it carried unanimously.

13. REVIEW COMMISSION CALENDAR AND AGENDA

The Commission reviewed its calendar of upcoming events and agenda items. It was noted the Commission will be conducting a second January meeting on January 23.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Simas adjourned the meeting at 9:11 p.m.

Kevin McDonald

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

2-13-14

Date

Chris Salomon

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

2-13-14

Date