

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

January 24, 2008
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Yuen, Commissioners Glass, Tanaka, Van Valkenburgh, Wendle

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Northey

STAFF PRESENT: David Cieri, Kevin McDonald, Kris Liljebld, Kevin O'Neill Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chair Yuen who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Northey who was excused.

3. STAFF REPORTS

Transportation CIP Construction Manager Dave Cieri made available to the Commissioners copies of the revised agenda. He noted reviewed the materials included in the Commissioner desk packets.

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

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Chair Yuen reported that he attended the January 23 meeting of the Neighborhood Enhancement Program (NEP) and learned that much of that program overlaps some of what the Commission does in budgeting for road enhancements. The NEP has traditionally focused on sidewalk and landscaping projects. He said it seemed odd that the neighborhoods would choose to put their NEP dollars into sidewalk projects when that is an area the Transportation Commission addresses with part of the CIP budget.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh asked where the funding comes from for the NEP projects. Chair Yuen said there is a special budget for the NEP program. He explained that the city is divided into 13 neighborhoods, and the NEP comes along every three years to each of the neighborhoods. The residents are asked to vote on what they would like to see improved in their specific neighborhood, and very often the choice made is for sidewalks.

Commissioner Glass said he and Commissioner Northey traveled to San Jose and San Diego

on January 18 to tour their light rail systems as part of the Light Rail Best Practices committee. He said the committee asked representatives from both cities what they would do differently if they had it to do over again. Both said they would underground the portion of the light rail line that runs through their respective downtown areas. The at-grade systems tend to slow down traffic and affects the flow of vehicles.

Commissioner Glass said the committee also saw firsthand the impact that landscaping can have on light rail systems. San Jose has a lot of landscaping and the system looks very nice. San Diego does not have nearly as much landscaping and it does not look as nice.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jim Wright, 13435 NE 47th Street, distributed to the Commissioners written materials from local residents who oppose the NE 47th Street trail, and copies of a letter addressing the staff memo. He said the intent of the changes are to give more transparency to the projects in the process and those who are affected by them, and to change the timing of the knowledge earlier in the process.

Mr. Jack Creighton, 3711 130th Avenue NE, said he serves as president of the Compton Green Homeowners Association. He said the Association has not had time to discuss the ped-bike plan with the membership. Hopefully as the process moves along there will be opportunity for the Association to provide the Commission with input. He requested to have a representative from the city attend an Association meeting and provide a briefing on exactly where things stand with the plan.

Ms. Marylyn Poole, 3518 129th Avenue NE, echoed the comments of Mr. Creighton. She commented that while the city says it values public input, the fact is that the residents of Compton Green only learned about the work to update the ped-bike plan a week ago and then only by happenstance. The message should be made known to all members of the community.

Mr. Todd Woosley, 12001 NE 12th Street, spoke as one of the owners of Briarwood Center. He thanked the Commission for the work it has done in deciding the future of the Bel-Red corridor. He voiced his support for seeking reasonable infrastructure investments in the corridor and recognized that there are great transportation infrastructure needs. He spoke in opposition, however, to the extension of NE 10th Street to the east of 120th Avenue NE given that it would run through the middle of the Briarwood Center property. The project would be disruptive and would not be cost effective for the benefits yielded. Having the project on the books will put a dark cloud over the Briarwood Center property. The project was not identified by the steering committee until the consultant indicated that only two or three properties would be impacted; the fact is, dozens of properties would be impacted. Better options exist, and the city and Transportation Commission should consider them. Among them are widening NE 12th Street, widening the old Bel-Red Road, increasing the grid on the Safeway site, expanding NE 8th Street east from 116th Avenue NE to 120th Avenue NE, and encouraging the state to fund a study of increased capacity on SR-520 east of I-405, which would include the half diamond interchange.

Ms. Christine McKenzie, 13225 NE 47th Street, echoed the comments made by the Compton Green representatives. She said she chose to move into the Bridle Trails community for the ambience it provides. She said how the Commission and the city intends to approach planning for the area from a philosophical point of view is of vital interest to the local residents.

Mr. Jeff Cole, 13225 NE 47th Street, added his voice to those who are concerned about the proposed trail system through Bridle Trails, specifically along NE 47th Street. He said he lives

in a community that is not formally organized, except around the issues of emergency response and neighborhood watch. Some have argued that there are conditions that would appropriately allow for a trail system to enhance responsiveness. To do so, however, would negatively impact the neighborhood by allowing more porosity through the neighborhood, which is a security concern. The Commissioners were asked to keep an open mind as the process moves forward.

Ms. Marta DeWolfe, 12342 NE 26th Place, said she is concerned because the bike trail connecting NE 24th Street to the Bridle Trails State Park commences on her property. She said she just spent thousands of dollars removing brush and beautifying the area so the kids in the neighborhood can gather there. What was found was evidence of use by transients. Bridle Trails State Park is one of the only untainted parks in the city. It is not necessary to go up the powerline to get to the park. The hill is very steep and not suitable for bikes. A better place for a bike trail would be develop a bike lane along Northup Way.

Mr. Jake DeWolfe, 12342 NE 26th Place, said he and his father recently began construction on a tree house along where the proposed bike path would go. He suggested that it would not be safe to spend the night in the tree house with friends while random persons walk or ride nearby.

Ms. Emily DeWolfe, 12342 NE 26th Place, said her playground is right where the path would go. She said she and her friends play there and take the dog for walks there. It would not be fun playing with the dogs and have to move over to the side to allow a bicycle or pedestrian to pass.

Mr. Patrick McGrath, Cascade Bicycle Club, 7400 Sandpoint Way NE, Seattle, thanked the Transportation Commission for the opportunity to speak. He referenced a letter previously sent to the Commission and highlighted a couple of the points made in it. He said there are a number of things the Club is happy about in terms of the initial draft facilities plan. It is good to see that the city is considering a full range of facilities for use by bicycles. He noted that there is a new treatment considered by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices called the sharerow; he asked the Commission to consider using that treatment going forward. The Club is also happy to see many of the regional routes identified in a study released in 2005 called *Left by the Side of the Road* addressed in the plan, and to see plans for key north-south and east-west corridors. The level of outreach by the city has been commendable; there have been numerous community meetings and have had a presence at nearly every community event in addition to participating in an innovative outreach using the internet. As a broader policy, Bellevue should consider adopting a complete streets ordinance. The city should apply wide outside lines with caution given the data that shows they can increase risks for cyclists. The downtown area is of key concern to the Club; bicycle facilities are very needed there.

Mr. Patrick Neville, 16934 NE 32nd Street, said he is employed by the King County Labor Council to do economic development research and policy. He said labor is always in favor of economic development that creates jobs that pay good wages. As the result of four years of coordination and effort, the Washington State Labor Council has devised a climate action and green jobs agenda. The organization has been working with its environmental, business and community partners in a coalition called the Apollo Alliance. Governor Gregoire in 2007 put together climate action and green jobs goals, and the Alliance has been working on statewide policy to fulfill those goals. Actions by the city that will broaden non-motorized transportation options will have a positive impact on the climate, and from an economic perspective will increase freight and mobility options. As transportation options are expanded into urban centers, a broader range of workers with different skills, knowledge and abilities will be attracted. Gridlock on the roadways will not tend to attract more workers to the area. Labor

will wholeheartedly support any type of economic development regarding transportation that is equitable.

Mr. Bill Ptacek, 10047 Main Street, agreed with many of the points highlighted in the letter from the Cascade Bicycle Club. He said the King County Library System, of which he is the head, has three libraries that serve the city of Bellevue. Young people, who are heavy users of the library system, need non-motorized systems to get back and forth between their homes and the libraries. A plan that addresses bicycle access will be very well received by those who use the libraries, especially the young people. Many library employees like to ride to work on their bicycles; others would like to but find the lack of facilities a challenge. As a bike rider himself, both occasionally as a commuter and as a recreational rider, he said getting through the downtown is very difficult, and getting outside of Bellevue to regional destinations is very dangerous. The Commissioners were encouraged to take the ped-bike plan very seriously in deciding the future of the system. The non-motorized system is becoming more of a significant issue to Bellevue, its livability and economic viability as the powerhouse of the Eastside. It would be a good idea to look at the complete streets ordinance; it offers a lot of possibilities and is not as inflexible as some think.

Mr. Isaac Alshehabie(?) spoke representing Su Development, 1100 106th Avenue NE, Suite 101. He explained that Su Development is a developer of multifamily and mixed use in the downtown and has some 1000 housing units that will come online in the coming few years in the downtown. One of the priorities for the developer is the need for the downtown to improve in terms of livability and mobility. Over the past several months the company has been looking at shared public biking programs in use in other cities around the world and has researched how a similar program might fit into downtown Bellevue. The fact is the downtown area as is currently is configured does not have the facilities to support widespread biking, which is discouraging. The downtown should be made more friendly to bicyclists and pedestrians.

Mr. Chris Serratto, 13530 NE 29th Place, emphasized the equestrian nature of the Bridle Trails area. As new trails are contemplated or existing trails are enhanced, the equestrian nature of the area must be kept in mind. Trail surfaces should have soft surfaces; horseshoes and pavement do not mix. The rustic nature of the area should be preserved.

Mr. Warren Halvorson, 13701 NE 32nd Place, asked how many of the Commissioners live in Bridle Trails, how many own horses, and how many have voluntarily given up 15 feet of their properties on all sides to accommodate trails. He said he has done all of that, and the resulting trail is used all the time by Bridle Trails residents. The trail is, however, blocked off a couple of weeks each year in recognition of the difficulty of private property rights, public property rights, and generally who comes and goes. The city should take a look at every plat in the Bridle Trails area to ensure that the original plats, and where trails have been put in, are upheld. The city should also pay close attention to private property rights; there is no powerline trail except largely for what has been given up by private property owners, each of which has horror stories to tell. The city should not be too invasive.

Mr. DeWolfe, 12342 NE 26th Place, said he moved to the Pikes Peak area because of the sanctity of the area and the closeness to the downtown. The area is wooded, which provides the local homeowners with a certain degree of safety. Recent actions to clear brush was done to increase safety. He said he will oppose any trail running through his backyard; there has been evidence of transients living in the area and doing drugs. Tax dollars would be much better spent providing for a route to the downtown area for pedestrians and runners, or continuing the SR-520 bike trail.

Ms. Loretta Lopez spoke representing the Bridle Trails Community Club. She thanked the Commission for giving the Club additional time to review the ped-bike plan and provided the Commission with the recommendations voted on by the Club on January 17. Highlighting the recommendations, she said the Club supports maintaining the equestrian and rural character of the area; supports public connectivity to Bridle Trails State Park; supports equestrian/pedestrian access to existing public trail segments; supports the city providing trail maintenance after consultation with property owners on the public trail segments; respects private property rights; supports the continuation of existing private trails maintained and controlled by private property owners; and believes that all affected property owners should receive at least 90 days advance notice. The fact is that within the Bridle Trails community there are both public and private trails, which makes the issue complex. With regard to the proposed policy language, she said the city should continue to coordinate with community associations and neighborhoods to include the notion of connecting with the community so people will know what is going on on or near their private properties. Some type of notice requirement should also be established to guide the city in how to send notices to neighborhoods, property owners, and neighborhood associations. Policy PB-6 refers to improving existing facilities, but the language is unclear with respect to what is meant by "improving." In the past "improvements" made in the neighborhood were not appreciated by the neighborhood. PB-9 uses the phrase "neighborhood character and context" but there should be a specific reference to the subarea plan. TR-43 should take into account the need to accommodate the environment, the type of vegetation that would have to be destroyed to widen the path.

Mr. David Plummer, 14414 NE 14th Place, urged the Commission to recognize the fact that the proposed road network in the southwest corner of the Bel-Red corridor does not look anything like what the steering committee came up with. It was not studied by the city or covered by the Environmental Impact Statement. Furthermore, the city has no analyses of traffic flows in the corridor in the absence of a light rail system. Even though WSDOT urged the city to investigate it, they chose not to. With regard to the proposed intersection of 124th Avenue NE and SR-520, he said the state has no plans to implement the revisions, and the traffic analysis done by the city did not consider the absence of the intersection improvement. The state recommended the city investigate the traffic conditions in the corridor in the absence of the improvement, but the city chose to ignore the suggestion. Inca Engineers under contract to the city to develop preliminary designs for the road network in a portion of the corridor is currently continuing their preparation of the five percent design report; presumably it will not be available until the early part of February. The report will include cost estimates that the Transportation Commission should be aware of. The city has continued to propose a development scheme for the Bel-Red corridor that has absolutely no relation to the downtown plan. It had no substantive public input during the steering committee review. The Commission was urged to send the whole matter back to the city with the suggestion to start over.

Ms. Nancy Bennett, 13549 NE 54th Place, spoke representing Canterwood Estates Homeowners Association. She said the Association has been led to believe that staff would recommend removal of project M-631 to the north of project L-462. The proposed section of trail dead-ends on private property and does not connect to any existing trail. The existing dirt path will, however, remain for pedestrian and equestrian use. City funds should be utilized for projects that actually have public support. She submitted to the Commission a petition signed by the homeowners of Canterwood Estates asking to have M-631 removed from the list.

Ms. Elaine Short, 13545 NE 54th Place, said she has owned her property in Canterwood Estates for 12 years. During that time, bicyclists, pedestrians, cross-country skiers and others have freely traveled across her property. During the summer months waves of adolescents cross the

property between 8:30 p.m. and 2:30 a.m. It make no sense to construct what will be the equivalent of a four-lane highway through the middle of her property to encourage more people to use it makes no sense at all. The system of pathways existing in the neighborhood is adequate and meets all neighborhood needs.

Ms. Betty Lou Cappela, 5652 132nd Avenue NE, asked to have M-631, the trail to nowhere, deleted from the ped-bike plan north of project L-462, the Cantershire trail. There has never been a trail in the proposed location, which runs directly through the Overlake Farm pasture, making the horse farm unworkable. There are adequate trail facilities in the neighborhood already which connect to Bridle Trails State Park. Overlake Farm previously donated land for a trail along the entire northern border; that trail is heavily used by a variety of people. The new trail along 140th Avenue NE is also very popular, as is the existing powerline trail. Riding a horse along 132nd Avenue NE or 134th Avenue NE is very dangerous; equestrians instead ride the powerline trail and then cut into the park.

Ms. Dana Ficke, 5650 132nd Avenue NE, said a trail through Overlake Farm would make using the pasture very difficult given that it would bifurcate the property. The Bridlecrest trail on the north side of the property was created with land donated by Overlake Farm many years ago to provide access to Bridle Trails State Park; that path is used by pedestrians and equestrians, not bicycles. It would make no sense to create a bicycle path through the Overlake Farm connecting to a pedestrian and equestrian trail. The city should work with the state in supporting equestrian access to Marymoor Park. She submitted a petition supporting the removal of M-631.

Mr. Joe Coolidge, 12224 NE 39th Street, opposed the Walk and Roll project, saying it is not a good fit for the Pikes Peak neighborhood. Project L-442 would pass directly through residential properties. There is no public easement on record, nor is there an easement for the city to use the property for the purpose of a public trail or path. The neighborhood has not given the city to use the property for such a purpose, nor is there any intent to do so. The property is fenced at the north and south ends where the proposed trail would pass, and the gates are kept locked. There have been instances of trespass over the years which on occasion has resulted in deliberate property damage. Putting a trail through the property would result in more trespass activities and additional damage and destruction. Most who live in the neighborhood chose it for its quiet, low-density equestrian setting. A bicycle trail would not be in character with the neighborhood. Bridle Trails State Park was created to be an equestrian park; it was never intended for bicycles, which are not permitted in the park. Horses frighten easily at bicyclists, and that can result in a rider being thrown and injured. Horses and bicycles should never be allowed on the same trail, and it is not logical to create a bicycle trail leading to a park that does not allow bicycles. Throughout the public process, the Bridle Trails neighborhood has remained adamantly opposed to the proposed new trail, and has voiced the opinion that the existing trails are adequate. The city has not communicated very well at all with the affected property owners.

Mr. Charles Kimbro, 12811 NE 34th Place, said he previously served on both the Parks and Community Services Board and the Planning Commission. He said Bellevue is one of the best-planned cities in the entire country. Historically, the city has sent out notices to every private homeowners association in the city to get as much public comment as possible; it does not appear that that practice is uniformly followed but should be. Mistakes have been made in the past, mostly by not looking far enough into the future when making plans. The wide gravel strip running alongside 140th Avenue NE was intended to serve as an equestrian path; it was supposed to connect from 160th Avenue NE to Bellevue Community College. The path was not realistic and has never been finished. A path was planned along the powerline right-of-way as well, but it met with conflict. The city should have the most accurate and factual

information possible before making a final decision; much of the information regarding public ownership is not accurate. Bicycles should never be commingled on trails with horses. Once the plan is pared down, the city should conduct a series of community meetings to let the public know exactly what the proposals are.

Mr. George Barnard, 12223 NE 32nd Street, said his reaction to putting a public trail up the Pikes Peak powerline was not positive. Several years ago the residents living along the powerline purchased the property from the daughter of Mr. Pike. In the process of acquiring the land and short platting it, a trail along the powerline was designated for Pikes Peak residents only all the way to the park. The property owners are required to carry a one million dollar liability insurance policy on the trail in order to protect themselves. An easement was granted to Seattle City Light for a transmission line, but not to the city of Bellevue for any purpose.

Chair Yuen stressed that no final decisions have been made regarding the ped-bike plan. He said an additional Commission meeting will be scheduled during March to focus solely on the plan.

****BREAK****

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

8. STUDY SESSION

A. Bel-Red Subarea Draft Plan Transportation Policies

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald reviewed with the Commission the work done to date to review the draft subarea plan. He noted that staff was seeking from the Commission a preliminary recommendation on the transportation policies. All five of the boards and commissions working on the subarea plan will meet together on February 27 to share their individual recommendations.

Mr. McDonald noted that 21 draft policies have been written in support of the goal statement. He asked for comments on the three draft overall policies. He informed the Commissioners that the contents of the figures in the draft plan will be the subject of a future meeting.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh suggested the language regarding the need to preserve right-of-way should be further articulated with regard to context and mechanism. Mr. McDonald explained that the intent is to lay out projects ahead of development so that when opportunities arise to obtain the land it will be known exactly how much is needed; the policy language will also preclude future development from occurring on land needed for transportation improvements. He agreed that additional language could be added to describe the mechanisms available for preserving the right-of-way.

Commissioner Glass observed that the map shows a much tighter street grid. The items listed as projects appear to be tied more to the existing major arterials. He asked if the tighter grid in an around NE 16th Street will involve public rights-of-way and if the policy is intended to preserve them. Mr. McDonald said the public roadway system will consist of the arterials that are part of the project list and local streets that provide internal circulation. The local streets will be mapped but will not be shown geographically specific given that there has been no survey work done. That point will not be reached until development begins to occur and

survey work is done to determine exactly where access is needed. In some cases the local streets will be dedicated to the public, but in other cases they will provide internal circulation and will be privately held.

Mr. McDonald asked for input regarding the draft roadway policies. Commissioner Glass noted that policy H-7 talks about encouraging vehicle access to garages from alleys and secondary streets and asked if that can be made to work in all cases. Mr. McDonald answered that the idea for the arterial streets is to have them be continuous in terms of mobility for pedestrians, bicycles and cars, as well as a potential future light rail system. Adding multiple access points to arterials decreases their functionality for through purposes. The intent of the policy is to discourage multiple access points to arterials by providing access from alleys or local streets wherever possible.

With regard to policy H-11, Commissioner Glass asked how providing public access to the streams might play out. Mr. McDonald said the vision, particularly with regard to NE 16th Street, is to provide an interface between the stream trail system and the roadways wherever they intersect. The policy is aimed at seeking ways to provide those connections. The other component is environmental restoration, including the removal of fish passage barriers. Commissioner Glass suggested that the caveat “when or where appropriate” should be added to keep the policy from being too broadly interpreted to mean that public access is to be incorporated to all of the streams in the corridor. Mr. McDonald agreed to modify the language accordingly.

Commissioner Wendle asked if there is policy language calling for most if not all of the arterials to include bike lanes or pedestrian facilities. Mr. McDonald said that policy language is included in the ped-bike section. Commissioner Wendle proposed elevating it to the general roadway section, and the other Commissioners concurred.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Glass regarding the West Tributary, Mr. McDonald said it was determined there should be a policy to inform the design of the project. He said the language is not specific to NE 16th Street but does apply to that roadway because it intersects the West Tributary.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh suggested that there should be a policy relating to the discussion the Commission had at its last meeting regarding impact fees. There should be some language about the pedestrian and bicycle facilities being incorporated into the roadway design standards for the corridor, making them eligible for impact fees. Mr. McDonald said all of the ped-bike facility projects identified by the steering committee and documented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement will be incorporated into the ped-bike plan. Those projects have been put on a map and to some extent have been designed for purposes of categorization.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh noted that only capacity projects can be used for impact fee calculations unless the design standards include pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Kris Liljeblad, Assistant Director, Transportation Planning, said the point made by the consultant at that meeting was that if sidewalks and bicycle facilities are incorporated into the design cross section, those elements can be improved as part of a roadway project; that is the approach the city already takes. He said it would be difficult to attempt to fund with impact fees facilities that are outside the usual roadway environment, such as separated paths or trails. He agreed the design standards for facilities in the Bel-Red corridor should include pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Commissioner Glass said the Light Rail Best Practices committee is being told by the

consultant that the nodes should incorporate a half mile walking distance radius. The Bel-Red steering committee used a walking radius of a quarter mile. The tours in San Diego and San Jose demonstrated that systems that are slow because they stop frequently or operate in traffic have less ridership. He suggested consideration should be given to removing one of the nodes from the corridor to avoid having them too close together.

Commissioner Wendle pointed out that if stations are too far apart, the ability of people to access them and use the system conveniently is diminished. Sound Transit has found that out in the Rainier Valley.

Mr. McDonald reminded the Commission that the nodal development pattern envisioned by the steering committee is supportive of but not dependent on high-capacity transit. There will certainly be development in each of the nodes regardless of whether or not there is high-capacity transit. The vision includes having stations spaced as they are shown on the map adopted by the steering committee.

Kevin O'Neill, Long Range Planning Manager, said it may be that not all of the stations outlined on the map will get constructed once light rail comes to the corridor. The map does, however, depict the vision of the steering committee for what they wanted to see.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh asked if policy H-16 is intended to address Rapid Ride improvements in the Bel-Red corridor. Mr. McDonald said Rapid Ride as currently funded by King County Metro serves the NE 8th Street corridor, travels up to the Crossroads area and then goes north on 156th Avenue NE. Policy H-16 is focused on something different, namely a new bus rapid transit-type service running approximately along the route of the Eastlink light rail ahead of the actual construction of light rail. Commissioner Van Valkenburgh noted that none of the policies reference Rapid Ride or bus rapid transit but one of them should at least reference the concept.

Mr. McDonald noted that there is only one transportation demand management policy.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Wendle, Mr. McDonald explained that parking policies are included in the urban design section rather than in the transportation section. Commissioner Wendle suggested it might be worthwhile to marry the downtown and Bel-Red corridor areas together relative to TDM activities. If there is going to be an employer- or developer-based program to give people free bus passes, the Bel-Red corridor should be included as a benefit area.

Commissioner Tanaka asked what other TDM tools are available. Mr. McDonald said the list includes flexible work hours, parking pricing, bus passes and telecommuting.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh asked how the ped-bike plan policies will be integrated with the Bel-Red subarea plan, especially policy TR-14 which requires new development to incorporate physical features designed to promote the use of alternatives to single-occupant vehicles. Mr. O'Neill said agreed that the array of various plans can get confusing. He said policy TR-14 is in the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan, so in theory it applies across the entire city. It is incorporated into the ped-bike plan because it relates to the non-motorized environment. There would be no harm in utilizing the same policy language in the Bel-Red subarea plan, but the fact that it is already in the Comprehensive Plan means the Bel-Red area is covered.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh argued for inclusion the policy language in the Bel-Red subarea because of the level of redevelopment anticipated in the corridor. Having the policy

language there will make it particularly clear that it applies in the corridor. She said it would also be good to include a policy encouraging the formation of a transportation management association for the area.

Commissioner Glass observed that there is nothing said in the policies about level of service. He said it is his understanding that in order to maintain the current level of service will require including double left-turn lanes and more general lanes on the arterials. The other option would be to change the level of service in anticipation of allowing for more congestion. Mr. McDonald said there was a recommendation from the steering committee to take a look at changing the existing level of service to more of an urban standard. He said staff was prepared to do that under the umbrella of the Transportation Element. Some modeling has been done to look at what the level of service would be with the level of development envisioned for the corridor under the current standard, and the early indication is that there is capacity in the planned roadway system to accommodate the development given the new roadway capacity and new multi-modal options for getting around that the plan includes.

Mr. Liljeblad said the approach taken in dealing with the downtown was to establish the long-range vision and then balance the transportation facilities with it. A similar exercise has been done for the Bel-Red area. A number of recommendations were made concerning the transportation network in order to accommodate that level of growth. The transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan establishes the concurrency standards citywide, and those would still be in effect for the Bel-Red corridor unless a specific policy is included about changing the standard. The downtown area was at 0.95 before the DIP study was undertaken. The Bel-Red area is somewhat different given that the standard is a bit more suburban. The Commission could suggest that it be shifted to a more urban level of service.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh suggested the Commission may also want to look at what might be an appropriate modesplit given the development pattern anticipated in the corridor. That might be a different way to approach the level of service issue. Mr. O'Neill said it would be appropriate to include a policy that recognizes the area is urbanizing and should have as many trips as possible encouraged to use other modes of transportation. Mr. Liljeblad agreed with taking that approach, but cautioned that staff will not be able to say with any degree of certainty how achievable that might be for a couple of months.

Commissioner Wendle pointed out that the graphic indicates a phased program, but there is no indication of what will trigger the phasing. Some language should be included that ties it all together and outlines the objectives for service levels. Mr. McDonald said phasing is driven by the relationship between land use and transportation. That relationship is more fully described in the land use section. Mr. Liljeblad added that the concurrency system that is already in place regulates by default the pace of development.

There was full agreement with regard to the policy language aimed at minimizing neighborhood cut-through traffic.

Mr. McDonald said the next opportunity for the public to weigh in on the Bel-Red subarea plan will be the January 31 open house event in City Hall. A lot of the technical work done to date will be put on display.

B. Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan Update Policy Framework

Mr. O'Neill explained that staff was seeking preliminary action and direction from the Commission as a means of helping to set the direction for the network discussion that will begin on March 6. He suggested that because of the number of helpful public comments

offered earlier in the evening, the Commission may want to schedule one more review on February 28 before finalizing it and moving on to the network plan discussion.

Mr. O'Neill said within the existing ped-bike plan and Comprehensive Plan there are a lot of policies that relate to the non-motorized system. The policies that are in just the ped-bike plan are those with the "PB" prefix.

Mr. O'Neill briefly reviewed the discussions that have taken place to date regarding the ped-bike plan. He noted that a slightly different organization of the goals and policies has been called for. Staff has drafted both an overall goal statement and objective-based policies, some new policies have been added, and suggestions have been made for revising and deleting some existing policies.

The new overall goal is intended to answer the question what is being done and why. There could be specific reference in the statement about working and coordinating with the community, and it would be easy to incorporate that notion. There was agreement to do that.

Before having to leave the meeting, Commissioner Tanaka commented that the work done by staff to include objective measurements for achieving goals was very helpful.

Mr. O'Neill said the objective-based policies are consistent with the strategic plan of the Department of Transportation and the stated desire to complete something with the system as called for by the Council. The policies address implementing at least one completed bicycle route connecting the north-south and east-west boundaries of the city; having connected routes through downtown Bellevue as a priority; reducing accidents; constructing arterial sidewalks; and doing a better job of counting bicycle trips and of calculating pedestrian volumes at intersections.

Commissioner Glass suggested that calling for at least one north-south and east-west route sets the bar a bit low. An east-west connection created in the Factoria area would not benefit anyone in the Bridle Trails or Northup Way area; the same is true for north-south connections. Mr. O'Neill concurred. He said staff will bring back as part of the network discussion a list of several north-south and east-west routes to be designated as priority connecting corridors. In setting a benchmark, however, the issue is how many routes can be achieved in a ten-year period. The initial draft language called for constructing several routes, but the term appeared to be too nebulous; the Commission could set the bar higher by saying at least two or some bigger number in each direction.

Commissioner Glass indicated his desire to set the bar at at least two in each direction.

Commissioner Glass said reducing the number of accidents by 25 percent is a laudable goal, but commented that without knowing how many accidents there are now it is difficult to know just what the 25 percent will mean. Mr. O'Neill said the city tracks pedestrian/vehicle and bicycle/vehicle accidents but admitted to not knowing exactly what the numbers are; he agreed to determine what the numbers are and follow up with an email.

Commissioner Glass said the policy calling for the addition of 25 miles of sidewalks presents a similar issue absent something to measure it against. Mr. O'Neill said that number is actually fairly ambitious given the expense. There is a goal in the ped-bike plan of having a network of sidewalks totaling some 250 miles or more; about 60 percent of that goal has been reached to date. Adding 25 miles will be ambitious but will not be enough to fully attain the goal. Commissioner Glass said he will need more information before determining that 25 miles is an appropriate goal.

Chair Yuen suggested the public should always be given some input with regard to where sidewalks should be constructed. Mr. O'Neill agreed.

Referring to policy PB-1, Mr. O'Neill explained that the policy talks about considering pedestrians and bicyclists as users in all roadway projects, and then calls for working with the community on identifying projects. No attempt was made to leave community organizations out; the language could be tidied up a bit to make that clear.

New policies PB-4 and PB-5 both relate to trails issues. The comments received in writing from Loretta Lopez and Jim Wright suggest changes and clarifications to those policies, and Mr. O'Neill said staff would like to deliberate on the proposals prior to the next meeting. The language of the policies is in the current ped-bike plan but it is buried in implementation strategies.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh questioned use of the term "convert private...systems and easements..." in PB-5. She suggested that to do so would require the city to acquire the rights first. Mr. O'Neill concurred. He said one of the projects highlighted by the public was the powerline trail where there is a utility easement but no public access easement; that project has been on the ped-bike plan list and is an example of where an easement would have to be acquired in order to make it happen. The policy language is meant to suggest that that should be a goal of the city when feasible and when it makes sense to have a particular project in the network. Commissioner Van Valkenburgh said as worded the policy appears to indicate the city will simply take the land it needs for trails. It would be better for the language to read "acquire the rights" or something similar.

Commissioner Glass said he would not support the conversion of private property to public property for the purpose of constructing a trail. Where there are private trails that private citizens have and want to maintain, they should be allowed to do so. He pointed out, however, that where private trails are generally used by the public and for which the private property owners have elected to hold liability insurance policies in order to be protected, the transfer to city ownership could be a good thing; under city ownership, both the maintenance and liability issues would rest with the city.

Mr. Liljeblad said one of the difficulties the city faces is that in many cases trail sections cannot be linked because they are not fully under city ownership. In order to complete those facilities, the city will have to purchase the additional property rights. The policy talks about factoring system connectivity in order to fill gaps in the network.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh commented that the word "convert" as used in the policy appears to say the city will exercise its right of eminent domain in order to obtain the necessary property rights.

Mr. O'Neill accepted the direction to rework the language to include working directly with affected property owners in a collaborative process.

Mr. O'Neill briefly reviewed the prioritization policies with the Commission and asked them to consider how the policies should be weighed against one another.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh suggested that TR-79.5 should include libraries in the list.

Mr. O'Neill explained that the attachment to the ped-bike plan includes an explanation for each instance in which staff is recommending the deletion of a policy.

It was noted that policies PB-26 and PB-27 are new. The former calls for the development of a program for conducting pedestrian and bicycle usage counts, and the latter directs the establishment of an interdepartmental team to facilitate and coordinate plan implementation.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh proposed adding policy language calling for the inclusion of secure bicycle racks at some transit stops. Mr. O'Neill said that is in part the intent of policy TR-54, but agreed the language could be expanded to include secure bicycle facilities.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Glass, Mr. O'Neill said there is a subsection regarding regional coordination and agreed that it would be good to include a specific reference to the BNSF rail corridor to the section.

Commissioner Glass asked if the issue of sharrows is covered by the document. Mr. O'Neill said the intent of policy TR-94 is to be open to emerging technologies and methods. The network plan itself does not include sharrows as a typology because MUTCD has not yet approved them.

Commissioner Van Valkenburgh asked if any specific policy language is needed to address the issue of bicycle sharing. Mr. O'Neill said the city has had talks with King County about potential bicycle sharing programs. The county has an RFP out currently focused on creating a business model for how such a program might work. There have also been talks with Su Development and Wright Runstad. He agreed that it would be appropriate to add a policy regarding being open to implementing programs of that sort.

Commissioner Wendle asked if staff has underscored anything that should have been done differently regarding public involvement for the ped-bike plan. Mr. O'Neill said there was a fairly extensive public involvement campaign as part of the update. What will be important going forward will be to inform directly people who have come to previous meetings and to use paper ads as well. The network plan discussion should include a summary of the public comments received to date, especially as they relate to specific projects.

Mr. O'Neill reported that staff is scheduled to brief the City Council on March 24 regarding the ped-bike plan.

C. Concurrency Model Platform Update

The agenda item was not presented given the lateness of the hour. The presentation materials were distributed to the Commissioners and they were encouraged to raise any questions with staff.

9. OLD BUSINESS – None
10. NEW BUSINESS – None
11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None
12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 13, 2007

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

13. REVIEW CALENDAR

A. Commission Calendar and Agenda

The Commission reviewed the items scheduled for discussion in upcoming meetings. It was agreed to add an additional meeting on March 6 beginning at 6:00 p.m.

B. Public Involvement Calendar

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Yuen adjourned the meeting at 10:06 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date