

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES

July 9, 2009  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Tanaka, Commissioners Glass, Kiel, Larrivee, Simas

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Jokinen and Northey

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Krawczyk, Mike Ingram, Maria Koengeter, Drew Redman, Department of Transportation; Alex O'Reilly, Parks and Community Services

GUEST SPEAKERS: Gary Dickerman, Bellevue Network on Aging

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chair Tanaka who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Larrivee, who arrived at 6:35 p.m., and Commissioners Jokinen and Northey, both of whom were excused.

3. STAFF REPORTS

Senior Project Manager Paul Krawczyk provided the Commissioners with copies of the bike map and the Puget Sound Regional Council report requested at the June 25 meeting.

Following up on a request of the Commission to know more about the city's standard practice prior to doing surveying on public right-of-way and the adjacent private properties, Mr. Krawczyk shared with the Commissioners a copy of a standard letter that is sent out to property owners. He noted that in the case of the survey work on West Lake Sammamish Parkway, a notice was sent out about a year ago in advance of the initial work, but no additional notice was sent ahead of the follow-up survey work. He said it is city policy to provide notice ahead of such actions, which clearly was not done for the follow-up work.

Commissioner Simas asked if the claim made at the June 25 Commission meeting of survey

work being done on private property has been validated. Mr. Krawczyk said he spoke with the engineer who sent out the survey team. He said it is sometimes necessary for survey teams to walk across private properties in order to get to the public rights-of-way. However, the local property owners should be provided with notice ahead of time. Proper notification will be made before any additional survey work is done.

#### A. Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative Update

Human Services Planner Alex O'Reilly provided the Commissioners with copies of the 2008 annual report for the Collaborative.

Bellevue Network on Aging member Gary Dickerman said the mission of the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative is to identify and initiate coordinated, creative and sustainable ways to assist special needs populations on the Eastside to obtain better quality of life by increasing their transportation options. Special needs populations include older adults, youth, folks with disabilities, and the foreign born new to the area. The Collaborative works to emphasize ways to maximize existing transportation systems without incurring high costs; promotes aging in place; supports independence for older adults; advocates for special needs transportation initiatives; and works to develop key transportation partners.

In 2008 the Bus Buddy and Travel Ambassador programs were launched, and both have been very successful in reaching their goals. Recently a mobility coordinator was hired to oversee the programs and seek out new funding sources.

Mr. Dickerman said the Collaborative continues to seek new opportunities that meet the mission statement and workplan goals. While funding is a challenge, the Collaborative believes 2009 will be its best year yet.

Commissioner Larrivee said he serves with the Collaborative as well. He said while there are regional transportation efforts under way, the Collaborative has seen the importance of implementing local projects. The group has been successful in partnering with local transit authorities to get funding for some of the efforts. City of Bellevue staff has played a seminal role in the Collaborative that cannot be understated.

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

Commissioner Larrivee reported that the Puget Sound Regional Council recently released its Transportation 2040 document. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released in May, and the comment period was extended through the end of July. He suggested that the Commission may want to review the document. It is available on the PSRC website.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda as printed was made by Commissioner Glass. Second was by Commissioner Kiel and the motion carried unanimously.

8. STUDY SESSION

A. 2008 Modeshare Survey Results

Senior Transportation Planner Mike Ingram said he was the project manager for the modeshare survey project. He said the survey is conducted every three years with the most recent one done in the summer and fall of 2008. The downtown survey results were available earlier, and he noted that he had previously updated the Commission on those results.

Mr. Ingram said the survey focused on commute behavior in the five major employment centers in the city, specifically the areas for which there are non-SOV targets designated in the Comprehensive Plan. The information is gathered to improve understanding of how well the city is doing in relation to the adopted targets, and to inform programming of the city's transportation management efforts.

In addition to the five employment centers, the most recent survey included a separate analysis of the new Bel-Red MMA.

Mr. Ingram shared figures with the Commission showing that the targets for the Factoria area are being exceeded, but in all other areas the targets are not being met. He noted that since the last survey, the performance of the downtown improved by ten percent. The Bel-Red/Northup area, however, slipped backwards. Crossroads remained about the same, but both Eastgate and Factoria improved.

The downtown figures improved as a direct result of a significant increase in the use of transit. About 19 percent of all trips in the downtown are now by transit. There has also been an increase in vanpool usage in the downtown. The improved figures for the Factoria and Eastgate areas can be tied to an increase in telecommuting. Carpooling is most popular in the Bel-Red/Northup area and less popular in Crossroads. Walking is highest in the downtown. Bicycling accounts for only a small percentage of the total trips in all areas.

Large employers tend to have lower drive-alone rates than smaller employers. That can be explained by the fact that employers with 100 or more employees must take steps toward implementing trip reduction plans. Large employers are also more likely to offer things like FlexPass, and they have a bigger pool of people from which to form carpools.

Mr. Ingram said the methodology for the survey was essentially the same as that utilized in past

years, allowing for comparisons between survey cycles. Much of the data that goes into the analysis is collected through the state Commute Trip Reduction program. While that is beneficial in many ways, it does constrain the asking of certain questions on the survey.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if the survey data offers clues as to why the non drive-alone shares dropped in Bel-Red/Northup and Crossroads from the last survey. Mr. Ingram suggested that in Crossroads the reduction has to do with the employer profile. In 2005, Puget Sound Energy had a significant office presence in Crossroads; that office has since been moved to the downtown. There is currently only one large employer in the Crossroads area; it is new and survey data was not available. The move of city hall out of Bel-Red/Northup contributed to the change in that area.

Mr. Ingram said the survey looked at each of the study areas to determine where the trips are coming from. He observed that 15 to 20 percent of the trips come from Seattle. Another 15 to 20 percent of the trips come from within Bellevue. Trips from Kirkland account for between five and eight percent. Overall, about 20% of trips come from the north, about 20 percent of the total trips come from the south, and the balance come from the east and northeast.

Transit service from outlying areas into Bellevue varies and the survey results bear that out. People coming from Seattle use transit in higher percentages, either because they have better connections or because they are predisposed to using transit. The percentage of people who walk to work primarily indicate people who live in Bellevue. People who travel the farthest to work in Bellevue are more likely to commute by carpool and vanpool; those with shorter commutes usually do not bother with those modes of travel. Bicycle commuters generally have shorter commute distances. People who commute by carpool or vanpool are consistent in their use of those modes; bicyclists are the least consistent and often commute by bike only once per week.

The survey respondents have been consistent over the years in indicating a high interest in telecommuting, but are also consistent in saying it is not an option for them.

Mr. Ingram said the survey information will be used to inform the ongoing programming of transportation demand management work. The full report will be posted to the website.

Commissioner Larrivee asked how much the numbers will guide future efforts in the Bel-Red corridor where it is known that things are set to change rapidly. Mr. Ingram said it is always important to have a baseline, which the survey results provide. The information will be helpful in charting a course for future development of the corridor.

Chair Tanaka asked if there is any linear correlation between gas prices and non-SOV trips. Mr. Ingram said the 2005 survey and data review included a look at the bigger picture, particularly with regard to the downtown. Data was collected about the cost of parking and the price of gas. That step has not been taken with the 2008 survey but could be. There are few, however, who doubt that the cost of vehicle fuels and parking directly influences commuter

habits.

## B. Citywide Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan

Associate Transportation Planner Drew Redman said the citywide TDM plan under development has a horizon year of 2020. The project represents an approach not previously taken in the city.

Transportation demand management in the city has three elements: the four-year Connect Downtown plan; the Commute Trip Reduction Act which applies to large employers; and the transportation management programs that typically affect large office developments. There is some overlap between the various elements. The TDM work is done to manage congestion and to make the existing transportation facilities operate more efficiently. With about 47 percent of all emissions affecting the environment coming from the transportation sector, it makes sense to minimize the total number of trips.

Mr. Redman said the gaps identified in the survey relative to meeting the 2005 targets will play a role in the development of TDM programs. He reminded the Commissioners that the Bel-Red/Northrup MMA was split as a part of the Bel-Red corridor study. The 2008 measurement for the Bel-Red area was 15 percent, but there was no measurement made for the new Wilburton MMA; those areas will be included in the citywide TDM plan, both to determine what the baseline is and what course to chart for the future.

The project goals are to clarify the relationship between TDM and the overall mobility goals by subarea, and to show the link between TDM and potential concurrency measurements where feasible; identify any current constraints in commute/mobility options by subarea and determine what measures, if any, might be effective in facilitating an increase in commute/mobility options; identify appropriate and feasible strategies to reduce drive-alone travel by subarea; and identify and quantify the relationship between TDM and reduction in environmental pollutants, including reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Redman said \$30,000 has been allocated in the current CIP for the project. About \$3000 of that will be used to determine what the Wilburton modeshare is. The project will take between six and eight months and will include looking at current policies to determine if there are any gaps, and looking at best practices used by other jurisdictions. The project staff will keep the Transportation Commission in the loop.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if the best practices survey reaches beyond the state of Washington. Mr. Redman said cities and counties nationwide will be studied; some international jurisdictions may be included as well.

## C. East Link Project Update

Senior Planner Maria Koengeter shared with the Commissioners a map of the locally preferred

alternative. She noted that in Segment A, the part from Seattle to Bellevue, the preferred alternative includes joint bus/rail operations of the D-2 roadway connecting the tunnel to I-90. In south Bellevue, the preferred alternative preserves both the eastbound and westbound HOV ramps from Bellevue Way to I-90. The B-3 alternative is identified as the preferred alternative; it comes off of I-90 elevated and then runs primarily at grade on Bellevue Way and 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The City Council's preference for B-3 is a side-running alignment along the same course; if that is found to be feasible, the Sound Transit Board might advance that option.

Two alternatives have been advanced for Segment C: C-4A, the at-grade couplet on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and C-3T, the deep-bore tunnel under 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The alternative identified for Segment D is D-2A, which is consistent with the preference of the Council and the Bel-Red plan.

Ms. Koenigter said the city has a keen interest in evaluating certain issues as Sound Transit advances the EIS and the conceptual engineering for East Link. The issues include participating in the conceptual engineering for the new side-running option in south Bellevue; conducting a city-led analysis of the traffic operations and opportunities with an at-grade alternative in the downtown, and participating in a peer review with Sound Transit of that analysis; developing a finance plan to help pay for the tunnel alternative; and an early analysis of the cost differential and impacts between C-2-T and C-3T. In Bel-Red, the city has an interest in looking more closely at alternative station designs and the potential for partnering with Wright Runstad as they develop the Spring District project.

The continued environmental review will include completion of the at-grade traffic analysis by the end of the year. The final EIS is expected to be published in the summer of 2010. Sound Transit is advancing engineering on all of the alternatives in the locally preferred alternative to the 15-percent stage, to be completed in the beginning of 2010. With that work completed, the options will be narrowed to only one and advanced to 30 percent engineering by the summer of 2010. Development of a finance plan and identification of potential sources of funding will be done by the beginning of 2010. The decision-making process for the Sound Transit Board includes narrowing the options in the first quarter of 2010, and confirming the final EIS in the summer of 2010.

Ms. Koenigter said the schedule is fairly aggressive, which necessitates a significant investment on the part of the city. The local work program consists of traffic modeling the at-grade alignment, identifying tunnel funding sources, participating in the final EIS, participating in the conceptual engineering of the B-3 side running, and preliminary engineering for all of the options to make sure the design tradeoffs are reconciled in a way that will be compatible with Sound Transit and city goals. The city will also be supporting Sound Transit in the fall as they go out to the public with preliminary engineering for station platform locations and access points, will be working to ensure that the overall process is coordinated with the city's land use goals, and will be working to develop an interlocal agreement with Sound Transit to formalize a partnership. Other tasks will be tackled as needed.

Sound Transit conducted a traffic analysis as a part of the DEIS. The city had a lot of questions about the results and wanted to see more detail about some of the aspects of the analysis, including how flexible the signal phasing would be, ensuring the full level of traffic volumes were incorporated into the model, making sure the new Bel-Red and Wilburton land use areas were reflected in the model, assuring consistency with the city's transportation network assumptions for 2030, assessing access to some of the parking garages along the proposed alignment, looking more closely at the assumptions about the performance of the light rail system operations in the downtown, and testing the potential impacts of more frequent headways of light rail trains.

In conducting its own analysis, the goal of the city will be to assist in the creation of a model that will help inform the decision regarding an at-grade or tunnel light rail system, as well as to provide more detailed information for future downtown planning efforts. The local model will include expanding the geographic scope to include the I-405 operations and some areas to the east of I-405 that affect how the downtown street network operates, updating and reflecting the Bel-Red and Wilburton plans, looking specifically at every single driveway that could be closed, or if kept open how it might interact with light rail, looking at the optimization of a variety of modes at the signals, the flexibility to play with street and lane channelization options, looking at local transit operations, and a qualitative assessment of post-2030 performance. The BKR traffic model will be updated to 2030 from 2020, and a new traffic simulation model will be acquired which will let the city analyze the travel demand model results in more detail. The city will participate in a peer review along with Sound Transit of the analysis.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if there is anything that would compel Sound Transit to adopt the Bellevue findings. Ms. Koengeter said the local work will provide more information on which to base a solid decision. The local work could result in a variety of outcomes.

With regard to the work item to identify additional funding resources for the tunnel alternative, Ms. Koengeter pointed out that the downtown tunnel option will cost approximately \$500 million more than the at-grade alternative, based on current estimates. In its Motion, the Sound Transit Board directed the city to identify additional funding resources by early 2010, and requested interim reports on what the resources are and their potential value. The city is pursuing a three-pronged approach that is closely coordinated with the Sound Transit staff to identify project savings through a value analysis, identify supplemental resources, and evaluate options for a local contribution.

Commissioner Glass noted that the city does not have any representation on the Sound Transit Board and asked how the members of the board were selected. Ms. Koengeter said the King County Executive appointed the board members. Connie Marshall represented the city for many years on the board, but following her resignation the mayor of Redmond was appointed to fill the vacancy.

Commissioner Glass commented that the additional analysis to be done by the city appears to

send the message that the Sound Transit DEIS analysis was incorrect in its traffic modeling. Ms. Koengeter explained that Sound Transit conducted a traffic analysis as part of the EIS, and that process was very prescriptive as outlined by the Federal Transit Authority. The city is interested in a higher level of detail about how to operate the light rail system in the event of an at-grade alignment.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if there is a threshold beyond which Sound Transit would determine that the impacts are unacceptable. Ms. Koengeter said Sound Transit has indicated a willingness to construct a tunnel if the money can be identified. Tunnels provide for much better light rail performance. If the money cannot be identified, however, they may advance an at-grade system and proceed accordingly. The local modeling will help the city to identify and analyze the impacts and help determine what the mitigation should be, which will position the city better in negotiating mitigation.

Commissioner Glass allowed that while Bellevue and Sound Transit are partners in the effort, they are not necessarily on the same side of the fence on all the issues. If necessary, the city should call a spade a spade and do all it can to get its own way. Chair Tanaka commented that the city's elected officials are not passively standing by to see what will transpire; they are actively engaged in the process at the political level.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if Sound Transit is involved at all in the process to identify additional funding sources. Ms. Koengeter allowed that they are actively participating with the city in the search.

Chair Tanaka asked if any of the local work to be done will trigger work items for the Commission. Ms. Koengeter said staff intends to provide regular briefings to the Commission as the process moves along and as decisions are made. The work program is primarily focused on getting to the completion of the FEIS and a record of decision in 2010. After that, the city anticipates undertaking additional planning work, including station area planning. One of the recommendations of the light rail best practices project was to consider how city projects relate to Sound Transit projects, and to consider reprioritizing projects to coordinate with the construction and opening of light rail. That work will certainly involve the Commission.

## 9. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Krawczyk said the presentation to the Council of the Transportation Development Code and the Transportation Management Program is slated for July 20. A recommendation on the south segment of the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project will be going to the Council on July 27. He said he would be making the staff presentation and suggested that it would be good to have a Commissioner present as well. It was agreed that Chair Tanaka would represent the Commission on July 20, and that Commissioner Simas would represent the Commission on July 27.

## 10. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Glass said it was his understanding that the state had finished its study of quiet pavement on SR-520. He suggested the Commission should be briefed regarding the findings.

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 28, 2009

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Simas. Second was by Commissioner Kiel and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Larrivee abstained from voting.

13. REVIEW CALENDAR

A. Commission Calendar and Agenda

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

B. Public Involvement Calendar

14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Tanaka adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

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Secretary to the Transportation Commission

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Date

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Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

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Date