

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

November 8, 2012
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Tanaka

STAFF PRESENT: Paul Krawczyk, Franz Loewenherz, Kevin McDonald,
Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 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 Tanaka who was excused.

3. STAFF REPORTS

Senior Project Manager Paul Krawczyk said the \$4.8 million contract for West Lake Sammamish Parkway was awarded on November 5. The construction work is expected to begin in January and take most of the year. Between March and October there likely will be one-way-only traffic between I-90 and SE 34th Street; southbound traffic will be detoured onto SE 34th Street into Eastgate.

Mr. Krawczyk informed the Commissioners that the City Council at its next meeting will be reviewing budget scenarios.

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald called attention to a management brief authored by him and Comprehensive Planning Manager Paul Inghram relative to initiating the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan, which is the city's vision document, was last updated in 2004. During the update, the 20-year time horizon will be moved out to 2030. All

of the city's boards and commissions will have a role to play, and as such all are being asked to attend a forum slated for January 24 to talk about what is good about the plan, what should not be lost, what should be updated, and what should be added. The update work will begin early in 2013 and the anticipation is it will take 18 months to complete.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCILS,
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Chair Simas took a moment to welcome those present representing other boards and commissions: Commissioner Hamlin, Planning Commission; Commissioner Liljeblad, Arts Commission; Lynn Robinson, Network on Aging; and Dallas Evans, Parks and Community Services Board.

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS – None

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Bill Eager, 1120 Belfield Park Lane, said he recently reviewed the modeling results for the Downtown Transportation Plan update. He voiced support for the fact that the city is using a dynamic assignment model. He noted that the staff memo indicates the data shows everything to be okay on the average, but the average can sometimes obscure some important details, such as the fact that traffic on NE 8th Street and 112th Avenue NE is always bad and will get worse in the future; the same is true for NE 4th Street and 112th Avenue NE. The real culprit is the freeways. With a few exceptions at key intersections, the downtown grid works pretty well, but access to and from I-405 and SR-520 create problems which then back up the arterials and key intersections.

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Simas noted the need to amend the agenda by removing item 8(b), Downtown Transportation Plan Modeling Results.

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

8. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Bellevue Transit Master Plan

Senior Transportation Planner Franz Loewenherz said the three components of the transit master plan update are service, capital and policy. Currently the focus is on the service element which will identify the city's transit service priorities while being responsive to different financial scenarios and attuned to different time horizons. Vision input has been

collected from a variety of sources, including transit riders and non-riders, a technical analysis focused on route performance, modeling future needs, and a transit consultant who is also supporting the downtown plan.

Mr. Loewenherz said the Transit Master Plan forum held on September 18 generated a number of themes, including the notion that transit is an essential component of the city's mobility strategy and an increasingly important tool for addressing Bellevue's anticipated growth in traffic; the understanding that more can be done to improve bus service for people who depend on transit due to age or disability, in areas of lower density, and during non-peak hours; the fact that current sources of funding will not cover everything that needs to be done and that the near-term focus needs to be on maximizing ridership; and the need to make strategic investments to support future development and growth in transit ridership.

The current route network in Bellevue is comprised of an all-day route system and a peak-only route system comprising 38 total routes. Not surprisingly, the peak-only routes are oriented toward the freeway system. Many of the routes serve the downtown directly. The all-day routes have a more dispersed pattern throughout the city. Mr. Loewenherz shared with the Commissioners a map of the city's street network with the bus routes overlaid on it. He noted that there are significant concentrations of bus services in certain areas; on some streets there are in excess of a thousand bus trips on a given weekday.

Another way to look at service in Bellevue in aggregate is by consulting the Walk Score website which has developed a new transit score measure that looks at the degree to which transit serves different areas. Their assessment is that Seattle has an aggregate score of 59, which is characterized as "Good Transit," and that Bellevue has an aggregate score of only 39, which is characterized as "Some Transit."

The Commissioners were shown maps indicating areas in Bellevue lacking 15- and 30-minute bus service frequencies at different times of the day on weekdays. The maps showed that the best service coverage is for 30-minute frequencies during the morning and evening peak times, though areas left out include the lower density residential areas of Somerset, Newport Hills, and Bridle Trails, and the Bel-Red corridor. Very little of the city geographically enjoys 15-minute bus service frequencies; during the midday hours, only 29 percent of Bellevue residents have access to 15-minute service frequency. During the evening and overnight hours service frequencies dwindle almost to nothing. On weekends, only 21 percent of Bellevue residents have access to 15-minute frequencies between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Loewenherz noted that despite the limitations in the service network, there has been a significant 84 percent increase in ridership citywide in Bellevue since 2003. Ridership has increased in all activity areas but particularly so in Eastgate following the significant expansion of the park and ride there.

Not surprisingly, ridership is correlated to population density. The highest ridership occurs in

the city's cluster of densely populated areas. The nodes around Bellevue College and the Eastgate and the South Bellevue park and rides are not densely populated but do enjoy high ridership for obvious reasons. There is also a relationship between ridership and employment density.

The data through 2010 indicates that ridership has also increased in the corridors between the downtown transit center and Overlake via Northup Way and Bel-Red Road, between the downtown transit center and Kirkland via 116th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE, between the downtown transit center and Bellevue College via the Lake Hills Connector and 145th Place, between Crossroads and Overlake via 156th Avenue NE, and between Bellevue College and Crossroads via 156th Avenue NE. Each of those corridors saw an increase of more than 100 percent.

Mr. Loewenherz said in thinking about ridership in Bellevue one could easily surmise that all ridership occurs in the downtown or at the park and rides. The fact is, however, that a significant percentage of all ridership actually occurs on local streets.

Regardless of trip purpose, the majority of people access transit by walking to a transit facility. The one exception is those who are attending special events who access transit primarily from a park and ride. Between 2011 and 2012 the utilization of the park and ride facilities in the city increased dramatically; it is the point where many of the facilities are at or are exceeding their capacity.

The Commissioners were shown a chart indicating productivity of the all-day routes by time of day for regional transit services, Eastside transit services, and community transit services. Mr. Loewenherz pointed out that usage for the regional routes is clearly oriented toward the peak hours, whereas the internal transit routes remain fairly stable in the morning, midday and evening peak hours. He added that increased ridership is not just related to increases in service hours; the King County Metro performance metrics, when boarding activity is normalized with hours and mileage, clearly shows that people are making more use of the services available to them.

Commissioner Bishop expressed concern that the performance metric indicates several routes are in the bottom 25 percent ranking, positioning them for possible elimination. Mr. Loewenherz said King County Metro will in 2013 begin the process of carefully considering where cuts will need to be made in the event the legislature does not come through with a new funding measure to address the lapse of the vehicle license fee that has bankrolled Metro during the economic downturn. Bellevue certainly will be reviewing the less productive routes and make suggestions for restructuring rather than cutting them out altogether. If routes are eliminated, it will be necessary to address the trip purposes that will go unmet as a result.

Chair Simas asked if in looking at underperforming routes consideration is given to the infrastructure or the lack thereof that allows residents to quickly and easily access bus routes.

Commissioner Larrivee said infrastructure is clearly an area in which the city can play a role in improving transit performance. Infrastructure is certainly something that is taken into consideration.

Commissioner Glass pointed out that weather can be a factor in determining ridership as well. It is one thing to stand at a bus stop waiting for the next ride on a beautiful and warm spring or summer day and quite another to stand there in the rain, snow or wind. Mr. Loewenherz said typically the correlation between ridership and weather has not been significant. There certainly is a correlation between ridership and improving employment figures. Gas prices, parking prices, roadway tolls and other factors also play correlate to ridership figures.

Commissioner Lampe asked when the 40/40/20 was instituted and how much it impacted Bellevue's bus system. Mr. Loewenherz said 40/40/20 came out around 2003. Prior to that Bellevue received 28 percent of the allocation of all new service, and the program increased that to 40 percent. Since 2003 there has been a significant investment in transit and Bellevue has benefited from increased 15-minute headways on several routes.

Mr. Loewenherz said another assessment tool being used evaluates how fast it is to get around by bus in Bellevue. During the outreach effort many indicated they have a difficult time in getting from Point A to Point B in a time that is competitive with the auto. A transit/auto ratio of greater than 1.0 means it takes longer by transit than by auto. Currently the route between the Eastgate park and ride and downtown Bellevue has a ratio of 1.27, and the route between Factoria and downtown Bellevue has a ratio of 1.5; those routes are far more competitive than the route between downtown Bellevue and Crossroads, which has a ratio of 1.67, and the route between downtown Bellevue and Overlake, which has a ratio of 1.80. Given the potential ridership, the city should look to expedite bus trips where possible to make them more competitive and therefore more attractive to people.

Mr. Loewenherz said market segmentation focuses on the attitudes and preferences that drive traveler choices, both among transit riders and non-transit riders. The online questionnaire had 2241 respondents who indicated they are current riders, and the vast majority of them reported that they use transit for home-based work trips. Most reported themselves as regular riders, meaning they take a bus three or more times per week. The data shows that over half of all regular riders use transit during the morning and afternoon peak times, while less than 20 percent use transit during other times of the day.

An all-around transit user who lives in South Bellevue commented that the routes she uses are not very direct and typically require a number of stops along the way, making the ride take longer. A non-commute transit user who lives in Wilburton stated that bus stops are often quite a ways away from where people live. A work commuter who lives in East Bellevue indicated that as a commuter to a job in Seattle it is not very realistic to catch the bus from her neighborhood and have to make transfers, thus she relies on the park and ride lot; she went on to say it is critically important for park and rides to have adequate parking. A Northwest

Bellevue all-around transit user called attention to the need for more HOV lanes for buses and prioritized signals to allow buses to move more quickly through congested areas. Another all-around transit user who lives in West Bellevue said overcrowding on the 550 bus is getting to the point where she is considering driving her car instead of taking the bus.

According to current transit users, the three most significant priorities are speed and reliability, frequency, and park and ride capacity.

There were 684 respondents to the online survey who indicated they are former riders. Asked why they no longer take the bus, 21 percent indicated traveling by bus takes too long; 13 percent moved, changed jobs, or now work from home; and 11 percent indicated that driving is more convenient. A former rider, a resident of East Bellevue, stated that bus stops are geared towards daily commuters only and transit offers limited to no service on nights and weekends in the Lake Hills area. Another former rider from East Bellevue suggested it would be beneficial to increase the number of neighborhoods that are directly served by transit.

More than 1300 survey respondents indicated they have never ridden transit in Bellevue. The overwhelming response to the question of why to do not use transit was that traveling by bus takes too long. The open-ended responses from non-riders, however, generally indicated they would like to be using transit. A non-rider resident of downtown Bellevue stated that even though he does not use it, mass transit is still a part of his community and it affects him. Another non-rider resident of the downtown area said he supported public transit in Bellevue to ensure that it is available to people who do not have a car, who must rely on public transportation, but added that for him he would use transit only if there were advantages in saving gas, saving time, and if it were easier to get to and from a bus stop. The top responses from non-riders to the question of what improvements would get them to consider riding the bus were proximity of stops to home/destinations; speed of service; and simplified routes and schedule information.

Mr. Loewenherz said the future travel market aspect of the study is aimed at determining which segment of the city, west, east or south, transit services should compete for. The percentage of all travel to and from Bellevue, and within Bellevue, was determined for each of the three segments. In 2010 there were about 1.2 million daily person trips to, from or internal to Bellevue, with the majority of them coming to or from West Bellevue. By 2030 the number of daily person trips is projected to increase to 1.7 million, with the majority of the increase again associated with West Bellevue, with the largest flows associated with the I-405 corridor north and south markets. The Seattle market is smaller than the close-in suburbs market, which suggests the need for some additional suburban park and ride capacity and express bus capacity in the I-405 corridor. A bus rapid transit approach, which tends toward all-day, two-way, weekday and weekend operations, may not be best suited to the I-405 corridor. The corridor probably warrants more express bus service, however, particularly with a peak hour orientation.

Of far more interest is travel internal to Bellevue. There has been a significant increase in the number of bus trips within the Bellevue West area. Internal trips in 2010 accounted for 30 percent of all trips beginning and ending in Bellevue, and by 2030 the projection is the percentage will increase to 34, representing an increase of 150,000 trips. A general rethink of how transit operates in the city will be in order; the current home-based, peak-oriented network is not well suited to the projected market.

Chair Simas pointed out that most of the trips in the Bellevue West corridor are really associated with the downtown. He suggested it might be helpful to indicate the downtown as a corridor of its own and then add the West Bellevue area as a fourth corridor. Mr. Loewenherz said there are a lot of ways of slicing and dicing the data, but staff felt that for the purposes of the presentation having only the three corridors would be sufficient.

With regard to market-driven strategies, Mr. Loewenherz said service design and quality, along with management and staff skills and leadership, are examples of what can be done to seize the opportunities. Equally important, however, are local policy decisions with regard to land use, parking, zoning and urban design, and location actions taken to address density, land use patterns, congestion and geography. Implementation of the SCATS system benefits vehicular traffic and transit equally.

The last time park and ride capacity was looked at was in 2001, and the time horizon used was 2020. The anticipation was that by the horizon year there would be a need for an additional 3300 stalls serving I-90, or an increase of 174 percent, and an additional 1300 stalls serving I-405, or an increase of 26 percent. About two-thirds of those projected needs have been brought online to date, and most of it is already full.

There is no question that the quality of the pedestrian environment plays a big role in whether or not people choose to use transit. Beyond encouraging the use and extending the reach of transit, however, the pedestrian environment represents a cost containment strategy for King County Metro. The extent to which the city can build neighborhood sidewalks and enable people to get to fixed-route bus service will enable King County Metro to provide far more cost-effective services.

Mr. Loewenherz said going forward the focus will be on areas where restructuring might be warranted, where additions to address overcrowding might be needed, and where reductions may be in order.

Commissioner Hamlin said he is a regular rider on the Rapid B and Route 550 services and as such is experiencing firsthand some of the issues those routes face. He said as a rider he would like to see technology better utilized, such as an app that will accurately indicate when the next bus will arrive. Route 550 is certainly overcrowded, to the point where the bus cannot pick up everyone waiting for it; the park and ride lots are also very crowded.

Network on Aging Chair Robinson asked how the distinction is made between a non-functional bus route and an unpopular bus route. Mr. Loewenherz said canceling routes is usually a last resort, and actions of that sort are never taken lightly. Often the least productive routes are those that wander through lower-density areas. Restructuring stop locations is sometimes all that is needed to make a route more productive. Providing options for making connections elsewhere can also be effective.

Arts Commissioner Liljeblad commented that the progression in quality of service has been dramatic over the past decade. The ability to get to downtown Bellevue in a decent time has for most of the community been greatly improved. Better management of the available parking supply at the Eastgate park and ride is needed to make it available to transit riders instead of other uses. The ridership gains in the Eastgate area can primarily be tied to the expansion of services in the I-90 corridor to and from Issaquah, but that has resulted in buses arriving at the Eastgate park and ride being already almost full.

Commissioner Larrivee agreed that not everyone who parks at the Eastgate park and ride is getting on a bus; a large number of Bellevue College students are using it as a regular parking lot because of the proximity to the college campus. He asked if plans are being made to look at open parking facilities that may supplement the park and ride infrastructure, particularly along the major commuter routes. He also noted that the use of transit by students has proven to be cost effective for the school district, but asked how that is factored into the analysis. Mr. Loewenherz said usage at the Eastgate park and ride lot increased substantially after Bellevue College began charging students to park; they collected proceeds are used to get students to use alternative modes of travel. King County Metro and Bellevue College have set in place a program to keep students from parking at the park and ride. Operating and maintaining a park and ride is expensive, and at some point it may become necessary to charge for parking; that is a common practice in Europe. The transit master plan update process will not, however, delve into the issue or even cite park and rides. The model will generate an anticipated demand for commuter parking in the I-90 and I-405 corridors as part of looking to the future and what it will take to support the vision. Bellevue School District bus routes will definitely be part of the transit plan given the district's high interest in collaborating with transit providers.

Arts Commissioner Liljeblad asked if the plan will anticipate trying to build transit service in the Bel-Red corridor incrementally as the land uses change. Mr. Loewenherz said the service element will look at service in different time horizons and will consider several different financial scenarios.

B. Downtown Transportation Plan – Modeling Results

This item was deleted from the agenda.

C. Downtown Transportation Plan – Bicycle Accommodations

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald explained that the 2030 base year project assumptions were changed. The most significant change involved the extension of NE 6th Street connection across I-405 to connect to 120th Avenue NE; the model was revised to show that project as a 2030 baseline project instead of a build scenario project. Additionally, the NE 2nd Street overpass project and the associated connections to I-405 to and from the south has been removed from the 2030 build and pushed back beyond the 2030 timeframe. Those changes are the reasons the modeling results discussion were removed from the agenda. Staff will be back before the Commission in December with modeling results showing those revisions.

Mr. McDonald said much of the preliminary work on the downtown transportation plan has involved non-motorized facilities and what will be needed to accommodate the anticipated future pedestrian and bicycle activity. He noted that a couple of outstanding projects required some additional internal deliberation, including the design options for the 112th Avenue NE bicycle facilities between NE 6th Street and NE 12th Street, and the concept for integrating bicycle facilities on the NE 6th Street Pedestrian Corridor. He said he was not seeking from the Commission a finalized design for either of the projects, rather a review of the available options before moving forward with additional analysis.

Mr. McDonald reminded the Commissioners that the section of 112th Avenue NE through the downtown is part of a regional bicycle route called the Lake Washington Loop. It is identified in regional bicycling circles and in the 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle transportation plan. The section of the loop that has proven to be the most difficult to address in terms of bicycle facilities is the part that runs through downtown Bellevue, primarily because of the roadway constraints and the capacity demands. The overall bicycle access plan developed for the downtown includes a number of shared lane and dedicated bicycle facilities on downtown streets and on streets leading to and from the neighborhoods and the regional bicycle facilities along SR-520 and I-90.

The segment of 112th Avenue NE between NE 6th Street and NE 12th Street currently has no on-street bicycle facilities. The Ped-Bike Plan recognizes the corridor as a regional route and calls for standard width five-foot bicycle lanes on both sides of the roadway. Five options have been identified to accommodate bicycles in this segment: 1) expanding the roadway footprint by ten feet to provide for bicycle lanes on each side; 2) expanding the roadway footprint by only five feet to accommodate a northbound lane only, which is uphill; 3) reduce the existing lanes by removing one northbound travel lane to free up ten feet for bike lanes on each side; 4) creating an underpass under NE 8th St.; and 5) creating an overpass over NE 8th St.

Chair Simas asked if consideration had been given to using 110th Avenue NE instead of 112th Avenue NE. Mr. McDonald explained that uphill out of direction travel, especially on a regional facility, is truly an inconvenience to bicyclists. The Ped-Bike Plan determined that the 112th Avenue NE route is best suited to accommodate both the recreational and commuter riders. Furthermore, there is no good east-west connectivity north of Downtown to even get riders over to 110th Avenue NE. He added that a significant portion of the bicyclists who use

112th Avenue NE are commuting to jobs in the downtown, but another group continues south for destinations in Eastgate and Factoria.

Currently along 112th Avenue NE between NE 6th Street and NE 12th Street there are two travel lanes in each direction and a center turn lane. The corridor width varies but the minimum is 52 feet. Expanding the width by ten feet would not yield an overly wide footprint. However, given the land uses on either side of the roadway it would be difficult to gain an additional ten feet of right-of-way and this option may not be feasible. Adding only five feet of additional right-of-way may be more doable. Removing one of the northbound travel lanes and dedicating the space to creating travel lanes on either side of the roadway could be done; the modeling indicates northbound travel is less than the southbound travel demand.

The more intriguing options have to do with working along the east side of 112th Avenue NE to get the bicycles off the roadway altogether. That solution would require getting across NE 8th Street on a grade-separated facility given the traffic volumes and the length of the crossing. Both the underpass and overpass options would connect to existing facilities on the south side of NE 8th Street where the trail extends from 114th Avenue NE. A new facility for pedestrians and bicycles would be needed on the north side of NE 8th Street. One issue facing the underpass option is the fact that there are a lot of utilities under NE 8th Street; in order to miss them all, the underpass would need to be far deeper than the typical pedestrian underpass, which would be expensive to construct and uncomfortable for those using it.

Commissioner Larrivee suggested consideration should be given to moving the facility further to the east. Mr. McDonald said that option was not specifically considered. The grassy areas to the east are stormwater management ponds and may preclude the option.

Mr. McDonald said the overpass option would eliminate the utility impacts associated with the underpass option and could become an iconic gateway feature for the downtown.

Commissioner Bishop suggested consideration should be given to taking the bicycles across the freeway to the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe right-of-way, then back across the freeway to 112th Avenue NE on NE 12th Street. Commissioner Larrivee noted that the railroad corridor does run fairly close to some bicycle trails near the Mercer Slough, so access could be provided there for people wanting to go around the downtown. Mr. McDonald said there is support for developing the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe corridor, but the city does not have control over it.

Commissioner Glass said he appreciates that any of the options will be expensive. The fact is, however, the route is heavily used by bicyclists. He said as a rider he will go out of his way to stay on roads that work for bikes, but more often than not in seeking to get to one's destination is becomes necessary to deal with traffic in busy intersections.

Commissioner Larrivee said all things considered he would favor a grade-separated option for

112th Avenue NE crossing NE 8th Street.

Chair Simas said if 112th Avenue NE is the chosen route, an elevated pathway would be the best option to avoid having bikes share the road with cars. Cost should not be the only determining factor in deciding what the best solution is. If it is going to be done, it should be done right the first time.

Commissioner Jokinen voiced the opposite view, suggesting that a minimal facility costing the least amount of money should be constructed, then the facility should be studied to see how much use it gets and how effective it is. Chair Simas countered that a simple approach could be as easy as adding a bike lane to 112th Avenue NE and leaving cyclists to navigate the obviously dangerous intersection at NE 8th Street; because of the risks involved, it is likely few riders would use the facility, and the facility would then be deemed a failure for lack of use, and that could prevent a more substantial facility from ever getting built, one that could in fact be heavily used. The first step in any case should be to show conclusively that bicycle facilities are needed on 112th Avenue NE.

Commissioner Larrivee commented that the downtown transportation plan should seek to expand the number of ways people can get into and through the city. Around the world, bicycling has proven to be a viable and cost effective way to get around. If the city limits the number of facilities it offers bicyclists, that form of travel will not significantly increase over time, and the challenge of how to get people into and out of the downtown will only become more complicated.

Arts Commissioner Liljeblad commented that while a grade-separated facility would be beautiful, it would be costly and it would take a long time to bring online. The problems bicyclists face in crossing NE 8th Street are primarily associated with going northbound; the southbound travelers have gravity on their side. The route is already a signed bike route, so adding facilities will not necessarily encourage more people to use it. Riders are coming off of 114th Avenue NE and then are dumped onto the street at 112th Avenue NE. Simply creating a northbound lane would go a long way toward identifying what increase in usage might result.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that a number of ped-bike facilities are outlined in the Downtown Implementation Plan, and there are north-south arterials all through the downtown. He said he was not convinced that 112th Avenue NE needs to be one of them. The city should act to gain control of the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe right-of-way and develop it into a major ped-bike facility.

Commissioner Glass said the draw of 112th Avenue NE is that it connects to other major regional facilities. The other facilities existing or planned in the downtown do not offer that benefit. He agreed that the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe corridor would be a great asset for the city.

Chair Simas agreed the city should look at the lower cost options first before jumping to the higher cost options. Striping the northbound lane of 112th Avenue NE would be a low-cost option and could indicate whether or not more is justified. From a due diligence standpoint, consideration should also be given to alternative routes. Mr. McDonald clarified that a full corridor analysis will not be included as part of the downtown transportation plan; it will simply identify alternatives to be given additional study.

Mr. McDonald said the initial modeling analysis of the impact of removing one roadway lane away from 112th Avenue NE indicates that the corridor level of service would be decreased. The modeling did not conclude that the reduction would be at a level that would be fatal to mobility. To just put in a bike lane in the northbound direction would require an additional five feet, which could be done without eliminating any travel lanes.

There was consensus that as a first step the most promising approach would be to create a northbound bike lane without eliminating any travel lanes.

With regard to bike facility design options for the Pedestrian Corridor, Mr. McDonald said ideas will be referred to the Downtown Livability Initiative, which will take a more in-depth perspective. Bike lanes on the Pedestrian Corridor are called for in the current plan. There is currently a lot of activity along the corridor that caters to wheeled users: the transit center gets a lot of bike use; the light rail station to come on in ten years will see even more bike users; the corridor connects to the Lake Washington Loop; and the parallel streets of NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street are not viable options for bicycle activity.

Bicycle and pedestrian access can be termed an economic development strategy for the Pedestrian Corridor. Bicycles are already using the corridor, and by accommodating them better accessibility for everyone will be improved.

Each segment of the Pedestrian Corridor has a different character. The segments of most concern relative to implementing bicycle components are the Garden Hill Climb and Transit Central. A preliminary recommendation has been developed to connect with Downtown Park via a wide sidewalk on the west side of Bellevue Way. To the east is NE 6th Street as plaza where the shared roadway environment encourages slow-moving traffic and easily accommodates bicycles. Things become more interesting beginning at the Compass Plaza because of the grade changes up through the Garden Hill Climb segment. At Transit Central there are two walkways, one on either side of the transit center. The one on the south is relatively narrow and is served by shops and restaurants with outside seating, whereas the one on the north side is much wider and is without shops or restaurants. The vision for the segment between 110th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE is for an off-street path on the south side of the road, which would connect to the off-street path along the extension of NE 6th Street across the freeway and connecting to 120th Avenue NE.

Mr. McDonald said the best approach will be to demarcate a route through Compass Plaza and

the Garden Hill Climb segment by using pavers and signage. He shared with the Commission a conceptual drawing of what it could look like. He noted that the main difficulty is the narrow steep chute immediately to the west of 108th Avenue NE. At that location there is a narrow ramp that is defined by railings. Improving the area for all users would require improving the ramp grade, widening the ramp at the pinch point, removing the railing on the north side where it is not actually needed, and extending and integrating the plaza in front of the bagel store.

9. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Lampe pointed out that at the last meeting Commissioner Bishop talked about weighing in with the Council on a few topics they have in front of them. He said he and Commissioner Bishop talked recently about specific ideas related to principles as new studies come up, such as the transportation master plan for which the principles were well-defined by the Council before the Commission even had a chance to offer comment in its role as advisor. On the legislative side, to the extent there are transportation-related topics that are being put forward by the Council, the Commission should also be allowed to offer comment. He suggested the Chair should talk with Mayor Lee about those ideas. Mr. Krawczyk said he would set up a meeting with the Mayor.

Commissioner Glass noted that several months ago the Commission talked about how the impact fee used to be under its purview. When the ordinance was changed, the Commission was cut out of the loop. He said it was his understanding the Commission was going to ask if the Council made the change without being fully aware of the fact that the Commission' role would be eliminated. Chair Simas said he would put that item on the list of things to discuss with Mayor Lee.

Commissioner Glass commented that certain intersections that now have the flashing yellow signals are difficult to get through. He suggested the Commission would benefit from having an update from staff on how the flashing yellow signals are working, and what input has been received from the public concerning them.

10. NEW BUSINESS – None

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Bruce Nurse with Kemper Development Company, 575 Bellevue Square, said he welcomed the focus on ped-bike issues in the downtown, but suggested that city staff should also be working on additional issues, including: sky bridges and where they might be constructed; underground street tunnels; sunken intersections with a cap pedestrians and bike riders can cross over in any direction; and some underground utilization of the Pedestrian Corridor. He allowed that some of the ideas have been tossed around before, but each needs to be ferreted out to see if it is feasible.

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 13, 2012

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Lampe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Glass and it carried unanimously.

13. REVIEW COMMISSION CALENDAR AND AGENDA

Mr. Krawczyk reviewed with the Commissioners the calendar and upcoming agenda items.

14. ADJOURNMENT

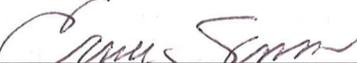
Chair Simas adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.



Secretary to the Transportation Commission



Date



Chairperson of the Transportation Commission



Date