

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES

February 23, 2017  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Zahn, Commissioners Bishop, Chirls, Lampe,  
Woosley, Wu

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner Larrivee

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Shuming Yan, Department of  
Transportation; Emil King, Department of Planning and  
Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Zahn who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Renay Bennett, president of the Bellecrest Community Association, asked the Commission to act on suggested policy changes for the downtown subarea. Staff has suggested that one of the policies be changed to read "Minimize growth of traffic on arterial streets in residential areas north, west and south of downtown by discouraging the use of local streets." The Commission was asked to change "local streets" to "neighborhood streets." "Local" is a classification in the city code and in the transportation policies and it conveys a sense of neighborliness. A policy calling for minimizing traffic only on local streets would take away from some of the collector arterials in the neighborhoods which also need protection from traffic. Using the term "neighborhood streets" instead would incorporate neighborhoods. The same change was recommended by the East Main CAC so that all neighborhoods can be protected and enjoy the same level of livability and safety. The Commission was also asked to consider not removing policy S-DT-129 which emphasizes the use of 114th Avenue SE as a primary arterial street between SE 8th Street and Main Street. What is happening in that area is not yet fully flushed out. The policy allows for funneling traffic in a way that keeps it out of the neighborhoods to the south of the downtown. The Bellecrest neighborhood is heavily impacted by traffic and help is needed to retain protective language in the Comprehensive Plan.

4 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Woosley. The motion was

seconded by Commissioner Lampe and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL,  
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Deputy City Manager Nathan McCommon said he has been with the city for only four months and is making an effort to meet with all of the city's boards and commissions. He said he worked for the last eleven years in Kansas City, Missouri.

6. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL

- A. January 12, 2017
- B. January 26, 2017

A motion to approve both sets of minutes was made by Commissioner Chirls. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wu.

Commissioner Bishop noted that reference was made on the second page of the January 26 minutes to "Commissioner Hilhorst." There was agreement it should be changed to read "Chair Zahn."

The motion carried unanimously.

7. STUDY SESSION

- A. Downtown Livability Initiative Draft Code Amendments

Strategic Planning Manager Emil King with the Department of Planning and Community Development said he has been serving as one of the project managers for the Downtown Livability Initiative. He said the work being done is focused on the Land Use Code provisions that specifically relate to the downtown subarea.

Mr. King said the downtown area has grown tremendously since 1980 at which time there were 10,600 jobs and 1000 residents. Currently there are 51,000 jobs and 12,500 residents, and the projection is that by 2030 there will be 70,300 jobs and 19,000 residents.

The 15-person Downtown Livability Initiative CAC that worked between 2013 and 2014 was co-chaired by former Transportation Commission Chair Ernie Simas and current Planning Commission member Aaron Laing. City board and commission members made up about half of the CAC, and the other half was made up of representatives of the business and residential communities. Their work included a Land Use Code audit that involved reviewing every element of the downtown code to determine what was working well, what was not working well, and areas that could be improved. There was a great deal of public outreach ranging from open houses to focus groups, walking tours, community meetings and a website. The work culminated in a final report that came out in October 2014.

Once the CAC's final report was released, the City Council spent three meetings reviewing it and providing specific direction to the Planning Commission for further review and refinement. Based on direction from the Council and the Planning Commission, staff worked to identify a set of early wins to be acted on in the short term; the early wins ordinance was adopted in March 2016. A public hearing on the draft Land Use Code is set before the Planning

Commission for March 8. The SEPA work has been completed and has been published on the city website. The Planning Commission will develop and forward a recommendation to the Council for action and implementation.

The code update focused on the downtown is only one part of the city's overall livability strategy. The code is important in that it dictates things like bulk and height, amenities and building design, but there is a host of other things the city along with the private sector do that relate to making the downtown and the city livable.

Mr. King said that in accord with the Comprehensive Plan, the city strives to plan for development in the mixed use and growth centers. By taking that approach, other areas are protected from too much growth. The downtown only represents about two percent of the city's land area.

Mr. King said he oversees the forecasting work done by Planning and Community Development. He noted that the city's growth forecasts are not created in a vacuum. Staff are continually working to make sure they sync with the adopted growth targets in the Countywide Planning Policies for each city. Information from the state Office of Financial Management is also incorporated, as is the market and jobs forecast data from the Puget Sound Regional Council for the four-county area. A land use forecast can be done for any year, but they generally are done for the decade years 2010, 2020, 2030 and so forth. The group also supports the TFP work, which has a different time horizon.

By 2030, there will be around 70,000 jobs in the downtown and some 19,000 residents. By 2035, close to 38 percent of all of the city's jobs will be in the downtown, up from 26 percent in 2000. From a population standpoint, in 2000 only 2.4 percent of all Bellevue residents lived in the downtown, but by 2035 the estimate is that downtown residents will make up closer to 14 percent of Bellevue's population.

Mr. King explained that the same amount of density, also referred to as floor area ratio (FAR), can be accommodated in different building heights. He shared with the Commission a graphic showing two buildings, both with an FAR of 4.0, expressed in a five-story building and in the ten-story building. In the former, the floor plates were much larger, whereas in the latter they were smaller, making the tower more slender.

Mr. King called attention to specific statements pulled from the final report of the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC and how they were addressed relative to livability. With regard to creating opportunity for more light and air between buildings by allowing more building height, it was noted that where additional FAR is not added, taller buildings are skinnier. The draft code includes a requirement for towers to be spaced 80 feet apart, an increase from the current 40 feet, and buildings that exceed the current height limits will be required to reduce their floor plates by ten percent and set aside ten percent of the site for open space.

Much of the downtown livability work takes into account the station area planning efforts. Much of the downtown already has densities that are supportive of transit. Many of the proposed density changes are within the area where the CAC and Planning Commission concluded that additional density would be appropriate and supportive of transit.

There are a number of different zoning districts in the downtown. The highest densities and tallest buildings are reserved for the DT-O1 district in the heart of the downtown, and they fall off toward the edges. The perimeter overlay districts that apply to the north, west and south

borders of the downtown sit on top of the underlying zoning and work to suppress height and FAR in proximity to the surrounding neighborhoods. Downtown Bellevue is unique in that from the time it was laid out there were and continue to be vibrant single family neighborhoods right up against the edges, and the perimeter overlay districts were put in place to protect them.

Mr. King showed the Commissioners a map indicating the areas of the downtown where the draft code changes will allow the maximum building heights to be increased for residential uses only. For the areas on the west and south sides of the downtown, both the CAC and the Planning Commission concluded building height should be allowed to increase from 55 feet to 70 feet without increasing the FAR. In the northwest corner of the downtown there is currently a 90-foot height limit, and the CAC and Planning Commission agreed that variable heights would be appropriate for multiple tower projects ranging from 176 feet to 265 feet. For most other areas of the downtown, the Planning Commission has recommended allowing taller buildings for both residential and non-residential uses; in the core, the proposal is to allow buildings to go up to 600 feet without an increase in the FAR.

The Commission was shown another map indicating the areas in which the draft changes include increases in both FAR and height. For the DT-MU, additional FAR is proposed to be allowed ~~only~~ for non-residential buildings, while in the ~~DT-MU and the DT-OLB~~, additional height and FAR is proposed to be allowed for both residential and non-residential buildings. The action will lead to the development of more office uses in the DT-MU but will not result in more development capacity overall because the proposal simply brings the office density up to match the residential density currently allowed. The proposal segments the A and B perimeter design districts and creates the new A-3 and B-3 zones which include a modest increase in the FAR from 3.5 to 5.0 and a height increase from 55 feet to 70 feet for residential.

and additional height for non-residential buildings

Mr. King said there are 43 Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ) within the downtown and there are land use forecasts for every one of them that breaks down the jobs, population and square footages in very fine detail. The zoning and TAZ data is used to determine where growth is likely to happen by 2030. If the proposed code changes are approved, more job growth can be expected by 2030 in the DT-OLB district and in the DT-MU. Fewer jobs and more residential can be expected in the core of the downtown by 2030. If approved, the estimate is that the proposal will result in 1.6 million square feet of additional development capacity in the DT-OLB.

The Commissioners were informed that the current code includes a placeholder for the idea that there is a great need for affordable housing in the downtown. The proposal made by staff is to include an exemption of FAR up to 1.0 for affordable housing. As envisioned, the exempted FAR would have a mix of market-rate and affordable units. The idea, however, has been deferred awaiting more direction from the affordable housing TAG and Council about the city's overall approach to affordable housing.

Commissioner Bishop asked if the 2035 growth projections assume an acceleration of the growth rate. Mr. King said those numbers came from working with the Puget Sound Regional Council. He said he would not assume that the growth between 2030 and 2035 is a straight line, but noted that the 2035 numbers do generally continue the rate of downtown growth. Staff continually tracks actual growth and compares it to the forecasts. The last time that was done it was found that the two were fairly well synced. Over the past decade or so, the downtown has seen the population grow by 500 to 700 people per year. Commissioner Bishop commented that historically the Puget Sound Regional Council has been accurate in regard to regional growth, but has not been as accurate in determining the specific areas in which growth would

occurred. The suburban communities have grown dramatically while the forecast was for Seattle to grow dramatically. Mr. King said Bellevue is recognized as a metropolitan city, and the downtown is an urban growth center. The city spends quite a bit of time working with and monitoring the work of the Puget Sound Regional Council. The organization does a good job of doing the homework and putting out forecasts, and in letting local professional planning staff review and verify their numbers. There have been instances in which Bellevue staff have provided feedback specific to Bellevue that has been adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council.

Commissioner Chirls asked if the concurrency metric for the projected growth is the peak period LOS that is generally used. Mr. King said concurrency is determined using a six-year model that typically includes projects that are in the permitted pipeline. Commissioner Chirls noted that job growth far exceeds population growth and suggested that what is not taken into account in the concurrency formula is the impact of jobs on residents. For example, the city does not allow construction to occur during peak hour transportation times, so construction has little or no impact on the LOS analyses. What does have an impact on the residents, however, is that during the hours of 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., many of those who work in the downtown go outside for lunch or to run errands, and while they are all crossing the street, unless there is an extra lane for cars to turn right, all the cars get backed up. The LOS during those hours is radically different from the LOS that is used for concurrency purposes for planning the downtown area. He also said he personally believed that there are not as many urban areas as one might think that are as mixed with a much smaller subset of residents as is downtown Bellevue. The situation needs to be looked at very differently from the standard concurrency LOS approach. To be fair, there were not all that many people living in the downtown area when the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC was formed, and no downtown resident was on the CAC. The city has done a disservice to the downtown subarea by not planning appropriately from a transportation perspective for the outcome as it currently exists, not to say what will exist in 2030. There is also no downtown resident on the Planning Commission, so things like changing amenities and additional FAR are being done in a manner that has not been comprehensively thought through.

Commissioner Woosley commented that street closure permits issued for construction projects also impact residents. He also noted that when the downtown came to be, a promise was made to all of the surrounding neighborhoods that there would not be any commercial creep. He stated that the concept of allowing for taller buildings without increasing the allowed FAR has the potential for more interesting building designs. The ten percent open space requirement will make for some nice public amenities at the ground level. He suggested consideration should be given to requiring pullouts for rideshare services within the open space areas. The biggest concern is not the 2030 snapshot in time, it is the impact of the full buildout of the downtown, particularly the trips that will be generated. He voiced concern about going forward with any kind of a density increase without knowing those numbers. It would be in the city's best interest to know how well the system will function at buildout under the current densities and the proposed 2030 densities.

Commissioner Wu asked how many affordable housing units can be expected to be developed in the downtown area. Mr. King said staff was literally waiting for direction from the Council on what to implement. Currently, the only bonus for affordable housing is one that applies citywide, and it entails receiving one bonus unit for every affordable unit. To date, one developer has used the bonus a couple of times. The market analysis has indicated there needs to be a two-to-one or three-to-one ratio to make the bonus attractive. Commissioner Wu said such units should be sited in areas that are well served by transit. The downtown generally is

transit friendly, but it will be most friendly in the areas closer to the transit stations. Mr. King said much of the downtown will be within a comfortable walk of either the downtown station or the East Main station.

Commissioner Lampe allowed that the plans for the BelRed corridor have been in place for some time, but now plans are being formulated for the Wilburton area. He asked if either or both of those areas have any impact on the projected rate of development of the core downtown area. Mr. King said the city made the case in 2009 with the Puget Sound Regional Council to change their original forecasts for the BelRed corridor. The case rested on the notion that the significant new growth opportunities around the light rail stations were not captured in the Puget Sound Regional Council's Eastside growth projections. To date, the city has not landed on one side or the other with regard to Wilburton. One argument is that any potential land use changes there will fall within the future control total for the city. If it is determined the area represents a significant growth opportunity, consideration will need to be given to how to adjust the regional forecast.

Commissioner Woosley commented that Bellevue simply does not have enough land to accommodate the majority of the planned growth in anything other than structured multifamily developments. There may be a good argument in favor of accelerating the construction of multifamily housing close in. Should the legislature solve the condominium liability issues, ownership opportunities will be created for multifamily as well as rentals, which could in turn attract even more of the regional market. The Puget Sound Regional Council has traditionally done a pretty good job of predicting demand, but there may be an upside demand that will need to be met sooner than the city has historically needed to accommodate it.

Commissioner Woosley noted that the upzone for the East Main area, while technically outside of the downtown proper, represents a significant increase to what amounts to downtown densities. He said he and Commissioner Bishop met recently with Ken Henry, WSDOT I-405 program manager, about accelerating the ramps that could be built to connect to the downtown at either a future NE 2nd Street or Main Street. He encouraged the city to pursue having those ramps built as soon as possible to serve growth in the downtown, Wilburton and BelRed.

Chair Zahn said earlier in the week she had opportunity to attend the regional economic and construction outlook event. The keynote speakers talked about how the millennials are choosing where they want to live and then seeking a job there. She asked if those who are electing to live in the downtown are following that approach, or if they are choosing to live in the downtown because they have work there. In trying to manage growth, it should be kept in mind that businesses will tend to locate where their workers are.

## B. DTP and DLI Transportation Analysis

Transportation Engineering Manager Shuming Yan noted that the Downtown Transportation Plan and Downtown Livability Initiative transportation studies took more than a year each to complete. The Downtown Transportation Plan was completed in 2013 and the Downtown Livability Initiative was analyzed in 2015. The Downtown Livability Initiative analysis was conducted to compare how transportation would perform under the livability scenario relative to the Downtown Transportation Plan.

Mr. Yan said the analysis took the typical approach of assuming the funded and planned CIP and TFP projects would be completed, along with projects from other jurisdictions, including Sound Transit and WSDOT. Both analyses used the same transportation network assumptions

and the same jobs/residents data projected for 2030. However, some of the projected job growth from the downtown core was reallocated to the downtown fringe, and some of the projected downtown population growth was reallocated to the downtown core to create a better mix. The model showed that the reallocation exercise improved traffic performance in the downtown. While the overall number of trips was unchanged, some of the trips became pedestrian trips instead of vehicle trips.

Commissioner Bishop asked if the number of internal trips increased between the Downtown Transportation Plan and the Downtown Livability Initiative analyses. Mr. Yan said that was the case. Commissioner Bishop commented that in developing the Downtown Transportation Plan, the Commission looked aggressively at transit, vehicle and walking trips, and the interaction of residences particularly in the transit nodes. He asked if an external assumption got built in or if the model simply showed the change in internal trips. Mr. Yan said the reallocation resulted in a different mix, with a higher concentration of residents in the downtown core, making it easier for people to travel to their jobs as pedestrians.

Commissioner Chirls commented that by increasing the FAR in the fringe area next to the freeway, the mix of jobs moved out of the downtown core. Commissioner Bishop said that would result in trips coming off the freeway not having to travel so far into the downtown. Commissioner Chirls said to the extent the developments are residential and not commercial, the assumption can be made that the residents are more likely to work in the downtown and able to walk to their jobs.

Commissioner Woosley questioned how an almost nine percent reduction in total vehicle delay could result from simply reallocating jobs and residences. Mr. Yan said while the travel demand model used is not a precise predictive tool, the results can be interpreted as the land use distribution under the DLI is expected to perform better than the DTP alternative. He further clarified that the redistribution did not transfer office space to residential space; the total amount of office space and total amount of residential space remained the same, only the locations for each were changed from block to block.

Chair Zahn asked staff to provide the Commission with information about trip generation data for an equal amount of office and residential development, and other assumptions that went into the baseline. She said providing the information offline would be fine.

Commissioner Chirls said it would appear that if the total number of jobs and total population numbers are unchanged in the reallocation, adding FAR in one area would mean taking it away from another. Commissioner Bishop pointed out that the analyses did not assume the full buildout of the downtown, rather only a certain level of development. It will only be in pushing past the modeled level of development toward the ultimate capacity of the downtown that the FAR tradeoffs will be relevant.

Chair Zahn commented that what was unclear was where the traffic pattern changes occurred that resulted in the nearly nine percent reduction in total vehicle delay.

Commissioner Chirls noted that all of the plans are based on a level of service formula that is based on peak period only and not any other times of day. Mr. Yan confirmed the statement and stressed that that is what the Traffic Standards Code prescribes.

Chair Zahn commented that the question of whether or not considering only at the morning or evening peak periods accurately represents the experience for someone living in the downtown

has come up several times recently. She suggested the question should be shared with the liaison. The Commission has not been tasked with addressing that point.

Commissioner Chirls said it was not clear to him exactly what the Commission was and was not tasked with doing. Chair Zahn said the staff follow established best practices in conducting traffic analyses, and that includes looking at the morning and evening peak periods; it does not include looking at traffic patterns outside of those times. Staff has followed the best practices in doing their work, and if the Commission wants to take a different approach, it will need to seek direction from the Council liaison.

Commissioner Bishop clarified that beyond just following best practices, the staff approach follows city code. To take a different approach will require changing the rules.

Commissioner Wu asked if the topic is tied to the multimodal LOS subject, or if it is separate from the concurrency standards. Chair Zahn said the topic is not tied to the issue of multimodal LOS. Mr. McDonald clarified that the Commission had previously recommended not changing the vehicle level of service standards in the multimodal LOS program.

Commissioner Chirls said the issue is related to livability more than anything else. The problem is that the issue crosses commission lines; it is a transportation issue relative to vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles, and it is a livability issue to the extent it affects residents more than commuters who do not live in the downtown area.

Mr. McDonald said the Downtown Transportation Plan recognized that in the downtown there needed to be mobility options that served everyone. The recommendation from the group suggested improvements relative to general purpose roadway capacity, high-occupancy vehicle roadway capacity, transit speed and reliability, bike system improvements, and pedestrian system improvements. All of those improvements were intended to address the evening peak period during which the most intensive demands on the system occur, but to also address the mobility and livability issues that everyone either living in or visiting the downtown experiences. The recommendation, which is currently being implemented, is an all-of-the-above strategy. The issue raised by Commissioner Chirls is something that was not lost on the Commission at the time, but it is being dealt with relative to construction and right-of-way management. The issue was raised during development of the Downtown Transportation Plan, but the Council had not directed the Commission to specifically address it. The Commission did the best job it could do given the scope of its assignment.

Commissioner Woosley said what the Commission is interested in is whether or not there are gains or losses, and if so by how much. If the Commission is going to be informing the Planning Commission and the City Council on the transportation impacts of the potential changes to the density of the downtown, including additional trip generation, additional information will be needed in order to make an informed decision. The assumptions include a NE 10th Street off-ramp from southbound I-405, but it is known that will not happen by 2030, and the NE 6th Street extension, which is also not yet funded. Other projects were also assumed in the modeling work. It can be expected that the level of vehicle delay would be even greater than what the modeling shows. Concurrency is based on the idea of matching up infrastructure with growth, but in the 20 years since the Growth Management Act has been in place, the city has gotten farther and farther behind in having adequate infrastructure, and congestion has continued to worsen, triggering both environmental and quality of life impacts. The focus is on the livability of the downtown, but it is clear there is still a ways to go toward having better information. The Commission should know what the traffic will be like at full



buildout under the current and proposed zoning, and should know what the level of delay is likely to be given that certain projects assumed in the model will not be in place by 2030.

Mr. Yan explained that the baseline has more conservative assumptions relative to transportation projects. If the projects get built, the average vehicle delay will improve to 48 seconds, but if they do not get built, the average vehicle delay will be 56 seconds.

Commissioner Lampe pointed out from the information presented that the average vehicle delay is projected to nearly double between 2010 and 2030. That is something that should be emphasized to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Woosley said he would prefer to see the baseline scenario the likely scenario.

Commissioner Chirls reiterated that the evening peak period focus is not friendly to downtown residents. He said he would love to have Councilmember Wallace present to clarify whether or not the Council is only interested in commuters rather than residents. Residents may in fact be seeing 120-second delays in the middle of the day because of pedestrian traffic as well as vehicle traffic at intersections. He said he would like the Council to give clear direction to consider doing an analysis of level of service at different hours of the day.

Chair Zahn said she raised the issue with Councilmember Wallace a month ago following a similar conversation at the Commission level. She allowed that neither she nor staff have since followed up on the issue.

Commissioner Wu suggested the issue of mobility should relate to all day regardless of the standards. There is no reason to focus on just a two-hour time period in the morning or afternoon. Commissioner Chirls agreed. He said if there were only jobs in the downtown and no residents, there would be no issue at all.

Mr. McDonald said the work done by Mr. Yan was focused on comparing the Downtown Transportation Plan and the Downtown Livability Initiative scenarios. What is important is how well the system functions under the Downtown Livability Initiative scenario relative to the Downtown Transportation Plan scenario. What the modeling work shows is that the Downtown Livability Initiative scenario represents an improvement.

Commissioner Woosley agreed that the data presented shows an improvement under the Downtown Livability Initiative scenario over the Downtown Transportation Plan scenario. However, the opposite effect can be anticipated should the impacts on the transit system at full buildout be modeled. The upzones that would get added in will generate more trips by residents, workers and visitors to the downtown. That is information the Commission should see and the city ought to consider. A snapshot in time is interesting but not all that informative when it comes to determining what kind of FAR there should be in the downtown, or what type of infrastructure capacity increases will be needed to accommodate the additional trips caused by the increase in density. The approach taken relative to the Eastgate corridor sets a good example for what should be done relative to the Downtown Livability Initiative scenario.

Commissioner Wu advocated for having more transit services and more protected bike lanes.

Mr. McDonald said he would push back as strongly as professionally possible against the notion of doing a buildout transportation analysis. The further out in time, the fuzzier and less meaningful the outcomes become simply because it cannot be known with any degree of

certainty what the precise assumptions will be. The price of gas is a big factor in determining mode choice, but no one has a clue what the price will be in 2045, for instance. It also cannot be known what transit services will be available, and indeed it cannot even be said what year full buildout will occur.

Commissioner Bishop said the whole notion of a half diamond interchange in downtown Bellevue has been on the table for 20 years. In the last five years the project has been specifically rejected by Councilmembers and members of the Commission. The project, however, would be incredibly important to the future operations of downtown Bellevue. In the decade of the 1970s, I-405 was built through downtown Bellevue and two crossings were included, Main Street and NE 8th Street. In the decade of the 1980s the NE 4th Street crossing was built, then in the 1990s NE 12th street was built, and in the 2000s, NE 6th Street was built. Most recently the braided ramps associated with NE 10th Street were added. Each project has made significant contributions to access to I-405. The 2030 plan includes the southbound off-ramp to NE 10th Street, and that will dramatically change the distribution of traffic flow in the downtown. The city should not lose the vision that additional improvements will be needed going forward. Putting a half diamond to I-405 to and from the south on either NE 2nd Street or Main Street will also dramatically change traffic flow in the downtown.

Chair Zahn said had heard nothing from the staff about not being visionary in terms of pushing for projects. What was said was that from a traffic analysis standpoint, time should not be spent delving into a lot of detail for unknown future years. If the move nationally to improve infrastructure goes forward, Washington state may be better poised to receive funding due to the fact that it has in place a state transportation package.

Commissioner Wu asked if another modeling analysis would be required to add projects as part of the vision. Commissioner Bishop allowed that the TFP process accomplishes that. Every time the TFP is updated and projects are added to it, an analysis is done as part of the environmental impact statement.

### C. Downtown Transportation Plan Policies

A motion to recommend approval of the Downtown Transportation Plan policies was made by Commissioner Lampe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chirls.

Commissioner Wu suggested adding a new policy stating that mobility is for all users all day. Mr. McDonald said the standards that are adopted in the code must be met, but the recognition that mobility happens for all purposes all times of day would make for an interesting policy. He proposed to return with recommended policy language to capture this concept, as opposed to drafting policy on the fly at the meeting..

Commissioner Chirls voiced his support for the suggestion made by Commissioner Wu. He suggested staff should first acknowledge the standard industry assumption of level of service and how it focused in particular on vehicles during the evening peak hours. Mr. McDonald said he would draft some language to that effect.

Commissioner Woosley said it could be true that the level of service is worse during the lunch hour at a particular intersection and he suggested that instead of assuming that the evening peak congestion will be the worst during for each intersection, data should be collected to show make that point. Another option would be to establish a different level of service for different times of the day.

Commissioner Bishop said he was nervous about the conversation because there is no data to back up what has been claimed by Commissioner Chirls. He said he has enough history in the transportation arena to say with certainty that there is no level of service standard that works for the peak hours that does not also work during the off-peak hours. There may be different pedestrians during the day, but certainly during the evening peak hours when all of the employees are running to their transit stops or their cars, they are out on the streets interfering with the traffic flow in numbers that are very probably higher than during the middle of the day.

Chair Zahn proposed reaching out to the Council liaison to reiterate that the concern has been raised.

Commissioner Wu called attention to the downtown streets narrative section and suggested that Bellevue Way is one of the most successful multimodal streets. It is wide, has a median with landscaping, it provides access to multiple entrances, and allows for a steady throughput of traffic volumes. At the same time, there are many pedestrians who are comfortable using the street. She said she did not understand why Bellevue Way should be called out as an auto-priority street in the same way as 148th Avenue and NE 8th Street. Commissioner Bishop said the designation came about as part of a long discussion during development of the Downtown Transportation Plan. The Commission identified the logical north-south and east-west auto-oriented streets. Clearly 112th Avenue NE and Bellevue Way fell into that category. Bellevue Way runs from SR-520 to I-90 and is possibly the most important auto street in the entire system. That does not discount the idea that it has an extra wide sidewalk between NE 6th Street and NE 4th Street to accommodate pedestrians. The plan calls for an additional four feet of sidewalk on the west side to facilitate pedestrian connections. Bellevue Way has had an auto-priority designation for a very long time.

Mr. McDonald agreed and explained that what the Commission changed relative to Bellevue Way was the designation "auto-focused" to "auto-priority." The thinking was that the new term expanded the function of the street somewhat to include the kind of pedestrian facilities envisioned by Commissioner Wu. The auto-priority designation does not preclude or discourage the development of pedestrian infrastructure.

Commissioner Wu allowed that it may not matter relative to Bellevue Way given the plans for the Grand Connection which will make the pedestrian environment much better. Philosophically, however, the speed and volume of cars should be facilitated on auto-priority streets.

Commissioner Wu said from her limited understanding of the Transportation Management Association, it is the kind of organization the city would want to partner with. However, the policy language calling for supporting the organization does not include any context. More general language favoring partnerships with organizations that support transportation demand management would be better in the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Woosley agreed it would be better to avoid referencing specific organizations by name, using generic terms instead.

Mr. McDonald pointed out that the horse has already left the barn given that the policy was moved to the Transportation Element in 2015 and is part of the larger transportation demand management chapter.

Calling attention to the issue of downtown curbside uses, Commissioner Wu suggested incorporating language to encourage or regulate ridesharing services. She said more and more loose drop-offs and pick-ups are being made by Uber and Lyft, and it is likely there will be even more ridesharing services in the future.

Commissioner Woosley agreed that there should be a policy to accommodate the anticipated demand for that type of service. It could be done by requiring space to be provided as part of the ten percent open space requirement for taller buildings, or by encouraging, incenting or requiring them in some other way.

Commissioner Wu said she would argue against dictating any particular solution but would support a policy calling for encouraging and regulating rideshare services. Commissioner Chirls agreed with the need to accommodate the use, but pointed out that the issue really belongs to the Planning Commission given that accommodating curbside uses is a building and site design issue.

Mr. McDonald said the Commission recommended, and the staff are now implementing, integrating curbside pick-up and drop-off areas into the development conditions of new projects. Where pick-ups and drop-offs occur in a travel lane, the issue is one of enforcement not policy.

Commissioner Woosley said he would like to see policy language that encourages accommodating pick-up and drop-off locations that will keep the activity from happening on through lanes.

Commissioner Bishop commented that where there is on-street parking, creating pullouts is much easier to accomplish. Seattle restricts on-street parking specifically to accommodate bus, taxi and rideshare services. In downtown Bellevue, however, there is very little on-street parking and it would be a mistake to create a policy that would simply be ignored. Stopping in a travel lane is indeed an enforcement issue.

Mr. McDonald explained that most of the on-street parking spaces in Bellevue are managed for two-hour increments of time, though some are managed as pick-up and drop-off zones with much shorter time limits. Enforcement is carried out through a contract. Changing two-hour on-street parking to short-term parking could be done, but the decision to do so is made administratively and is based on the demand at the location in question. Policy language is not required.

Chair Zahn noted that there is already policy language related to loading and unloading areas. She suggested staff should review the language to determine if an additional word or two should be added to address the issue in question. Mr. McDonald pointed out that the Commission recommended adding two new policies, one calling for the integration of on-site loading space and/or creating designated curbside loading space through development review. The second calls for integrating time-limited curbside space for passenger pick-up and drop-off through development review.

Commissioner Wu said services such as Uber and Lyft are being used more and more, and the city should do all it can to get ahead of the technologies instead of falling behind.

A motion to extend the meeting by half an hour to 9:30 p.m. was by Commissioner Woosley.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lampe and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Zahn asked if there is a policy in place that relates to advanced transportation technologies. Mr. McDonald said there is and that it was adopted in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update as part of the Transportation Element.

Commissioner Woosley reiterated his desire to see the policy language regarding pedestrian overpasses to reflect what is being built as well as what is envisioned, and to provide for some additional flexibility. Mr. McDonald reminded him that the Council makes the decisions for where pedestrian overpasses are allowed.

With regard to policy S-DT-127, Commissioner Woosley stressed the need to call out the planned but unfunded connections with I-405 and SR-520. By calling them out, the more likely it will be that the city will be able to find the funding to build them.

Commissioner Woosley said his comments regarding regional and local downtown transit mobility were an attempt to be consistent. Given that the policy language specifically calls out East Link, it should also call out ST3, bus rapid transit and light rail between Kirkland and Issaquah that likely will run through downtown Bellevue.

Turning to the issue of multimodal transit speed and reliability, Commissioner Woosley questioned the statement that claims prioritization will improve overall mobility. He said it is likely that will happen in certain cases, particularly on transit-priority streets, but rather than assuming something will happen, steps should be taken to provide proof.

Commissioner Woosley said there is a clear need to move freight in and around the city. Freight tends to be a stepchild that gets left out of consideration. It is an important component of comprehensive transportation planning, however, and should be looked at.

Commissioner Woosley said fiscal equity is needed more than ever for transit service, both King County Metro and Sound Transit, to ensure that Bellevue will get as much service and infrastructure as it pays for. The subarea equity policy, under which all the revenues raised in the East King County subarea would stay in the area, was lost with ST3. That will end up costing Bellevue about \$27 million per year. There should be a policy that encourages regaining that equity. The city has long tried to get more service from King County Metro under the argument that Bellevue pays out about two dollars for every one dollar it receives in services.

Commissioner Wu said she participated as part of the King County transit advisory committee. She said the need for transit in Seattle was discussed often. The few representatives from the Eastside tried to make the case for equity. She said having a policy in place would help the city argue in favor of getting the services it pays for.

Commissioner Bishop said he sat on the King County Metro service guidelines committee for a year. The group looked at things such as if service cuts had to be made, where would they be made, and if service increases were possible, where should they be implemented. The Eastside lost in the exercise given the current focus on current transit densities. He said he supports the notion of equity but did not know if policy was the right place to highlight it. Mr. McDonald commented that the concept is both laudable and should be supported. The Downtown Transportation Plan, however, is probably not the right vehicle for sending the message. The vehicles for sending the message are the Transportation Element, which advocates for transit

service to support the growth in Bellevue, and the Transit Master Plan, which describes and defines how services should be allocated around the city.

Commissioner Woosley said his intent in raising the issue was to find a way to restore what past policies called for, namely subarea equity. If the Downtown Transportation Plan is not the right place for the policy language, the issue should be put in the right place as quickly as possible.

Mr. McDonald noted that the Commission had recommended two new policies with respect to transit service in the downtown. Policy TR-138.1 calls for advocating to the transit agencies to develop a Frequent Transit Network in accord with the Transit Master Plan, and policy TR-138.2 calls for advocating with transit agencies for incremental enhancements to downtown transit services to support the projected 2030 growth.

With regard to the request made by the public with respect to substituting “neighborhood streets” for “local streets” in policy S-DT-128, Mr. McDonald explained that the term “local streets” is not currently in the downtown subarea plan. The Commission added it as a policy recommendation. He called attention to the staff recommendation outlined in the packet and the staff recommendation to essentially restore the original language except for the addition of “for regional trips” at the end of the first sentence. The original policy did not include any reference to “neighborhood streets.”

Commissioner Woosley noted that there are arterial streets that are appropriate for regional traffic. The Bellevue Way South expansion is certainly one example. He said whatever language is used, it should be consistent with the concept of adding capacity on Bellevue Way South. Mr. McDonald pointed out that the policy as proposed does that by calling for minimizing growth on arterial streets and by encouraging the use of freeway facilities for regional trips.

Chair Zahn voiced support for the staff proposal and said she particularly liked the fact that it was housed in positive language. The Commissioners concurred.

Chair Zahn noted that the request had also been made to reinstate policy S-DT-129, which was set for deletion. Mr. McDonald said the policy talks about specific improvements that were to be made. In fact, those improvements have been completed, which is why the Commission had proposed repealing the policy. The functioning of 114th Avenue SE as an arterial will not in any way be affected by removing the policy.

Commissioner Bishop agreed that removal of the policy will not denigrate the arterial status of 114th Avenue SE. Mr. McDonald added that the section of the roadway that is addressed in the downtown subarea plan is not even in the downtown.

Commissioner Woosley suggested it would be helpful to understand how the capacity of 114th Avenue SE might be impacted by either the widening of I-405 or the redevelopment of the East Main station area. Some of the roadway’s current capacity may be necessary to accommodate the full buildout of the I-405 master plan. Mr. McDonald said it is possible the bike lanes on the roadway will need to go away to accommodate the widening of I-405.

There was agreement to concur with the recommendation of the staff to delete the policy.

Mr. McDonald noted that the motion on the floor was to recommend approval of the policies

with the additional direction to staff that came out of the conversation.

Commissioner Woosley said he would like to see the final language before voting on the motion.

There was agreement to table the motion until the next meeting.

8. OLD BUSINESS - None

9. NEW BUSINESS - None

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Patrick Bannon, president of the Bellevue Downtown Association and the Transportation Management Association, said he served as a member of the Downtown Livability Initiative CAC. He clarified that the CAC did in fact include a downtown resident. Comments by and recommendations from downtown residents played a significant part in the overall conversation. Looking at all-day measurements in considering levels of service was not addressed by the CAC. There is a focus group report from the Downtown Livability Initiative from early 2013 that has hundreds of comments from downtown residents.

Mr. Bruce Nurse, vice president of Kemper Development Company, said most of his work involves transportation at all levels of government. He said he heard from an Eastside Transportation Association member that a person involved with the Uber operation recently in a meeting in San Francisco said that city's reaction to pick-up and drop-off actions occurring on streets is a very large ticket. He suggested looking at other cities to see what solutions they have chosen to implement. In December there were articles in the *New York Post* which were very critical about the policies of the current and immediate past mayor of New York City concerning implementation of an approach that involved ticketing less and allowing the streets to become very congested; the claim is that the approach would reduce the number of people coming into the downtown area. He said there are some four places associated with the Kemper Development Company properties that could accommodate off-street pick-up and drop-off activities. New development should seriously think about including in and out places.

11. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Chirls informed the Commission that Mercer Island has filed suit against Sound Transit in part because of the closure of the South Bellevue park and ride and the fact that that will impact the park and ride on Mercer Island.

Chair Zahn reported that she attended the recent Human Services Commission public hearing on housing and human services issues. One speaker from Hero House talked about transportation as a challenge related to housing. His specific remarks had to do with inadequate public bus schedules, buses that run late, and buses that do not appear at all. As people cannot afford to live where they work, they rely more on public transportation. Having buses that run late or do not show up at all heavily impacts those who must rely on public transportation.

Commissioner Woosley reported that the King County Metro 550 bus has been observed running the red light at Main Street and Bellevue Way. He also noted that the Eastside Transportation Association recently received a report on the I-405 master plan and the tolling revenues. He said there are several projects contemplated that are not yet funded.

12. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. McDonald informed the Commission that the Washington Bike Summit was scheduled for a date in March in Olympia.

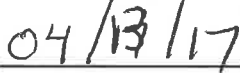
13. COMMISSION CALENDAR

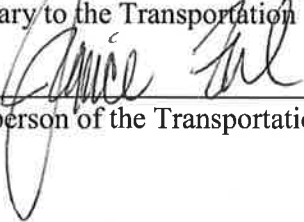
Mr. McDonald briefly reviewed the Commission calendar and agenda items.

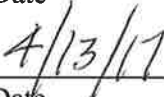
14. ADJOURN

Chair Zahn adjourned the meeting at 9:38 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