

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES

March 12, 2015  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Mark Poch, Kyle Potuzak, Kristi Oosterveen, Mike Ingram, Jason Bentosino, Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Lampe who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Larrivee, who arrived at 6:49 p.m., and Commissioner Bishop, who arrived at 7:40 p.m.

3. STAFF REPORTS

Senior Planner Kevin McDonald offered to provide the Commissioners with links to technical reports and projects of interest in other cities. There was agreement to have staff put together a package of links on a weekly basis.

With regard to the Downtown Implementation Plan, Mr. McDonald informed the Commissioners that recently two electrical vehicle charging stations were installed, one on 106th Avenue NE near Compass Plaza and one on 110th Avenue NE near the library. The installations represent an implementation of policy.

The Commissioners were informed that construction is set to begin on March 16 at Main Street and 108th Avenue NE to install the southbound bike lane and to enhance the landscape median along 108th Avenue NE to the north of Main Street. The entire street will be shut down to accommodate getting the work done sooner.

Wayfinding for bicycles along 108th Avenue SE between the downtown and the I-90 trail has been completed, an action that also implements policy from the Downtown Transportation Plan.

Bike and pedestrian counters have been installed as part of the pedestrian/bicycle implementation initiative, one on the SR-520 trail and one on the I-90 trail. On March 7 the

counter on the I-90 trail registered 1400 bikes; on March 8 the count was 1300. The counts on the SR-520 trail for the same days ran closer to 650. Monitoring will continue over time and changes will be tracked as things change, like the weather or the addition of other facilities.

Commissioner Simas asked if Bellevue staff have reviewed the newly announced Move Seattle plan to see if any of the elements might be a good fit for Bellevue. Mr. McDonald said he has a hard copy of his desk and Senior transportation planner Franz Loewenherz does as well. The projects in the plan are not new, they are packaged from their various modal master plans in the effort to move the various projects toward construction in a way that is comprehensive.

Commissioner Simas observed that the plan mentions bicycles, pedestrians and cars on an equal footing, and that the plan puts a large emphasis on transit. Mr. McDonald agreed to provide the Commission with a fuller report on the plan at a future meeting.

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

Councilmember Lee said he always appreciates it when the Commission or individual Commission members address the Council. It is always good for the Council to be updated with regard to the work being done by the Commission and the process being made. He said at the Council retreat there was an agreement reached to appoint youth members to city boards and commissions.

Councilmember Lee said recently at a National League of Cities meeting the idea of using parking meters as electric car charging stations was raised. He said he was intrigued by the notion. He allowed that he was not advocating for parking meters and would in fact wait to hear the Commission's input on that issue.

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS - None

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Harpo Gill, a resident of the Northtowne area, submitted to the Commission a letter and highlighted a few points. He said the Northtowne community is concerned about the traffic flow on Bellevue Way between NE 12th Street and SR-520. There are many kids who use the corridor for going to and coming home from school, and there are also a lot of seniors from the neighborhood who walk in the area. The only crosswalks are those at NE 17th Street, NE 24th Street, and NE 30th Street. The problem is they are spaced too far apart, and lighting for the intersections should be improved. Up to 20 percent of the vehicles are simply going through the crosswalks after the light turns red. Traffic speeds have increased following the completion of the interchange at SR-520. According to police records, there has been a 66 percent increase in the number of violations. The Northtowne community would like to see a combination of more enforcement, better lighting of the crosswalks, and a general review of the Bellevue Way corridor.

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

8. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

## A. LED Streetlight Conversion Project

Traffic Engineering Manager Mark Poch said a LED streetlight conversion project is under way in the city. LED technology for streetlights burst onto the scene in 2008 and the city since then has forayed into testing it in small way with a focus on how well the technology works, how the maintenance crews react to it, and how the citizens react to it. While LED streetlights save energy, there is a cost in converting the existing streetlights. There are some grants and rebates available to help with the conversion. Bellevue is not the first city in the state to make the conversion but it is one of the first. Ultimately the LED revolution may end up applying countrywide.

Senior Transportation Engineer Kyle Potuzak explained that one major revenue source for the conversion project is an energy efficiency grant from the state Department of Commerce in the amount of \$600,000. There are two types of public streetlights in the city: those owned and maintained by Puget Sound Energy, which total about 5600; and those owned and maintained by the city, which total about 3100. PSE's streetlights are generally located in residential areas and the city pays a flat rate or tariff for them that covers the cost of energy, maintenance and replacement. PSE already has about 280 LED streetlights in place that have been installed through pilot projects. There is a process by which residents can request a new streetlight and where they meet certain requirements an LED light is installed. All new streetlights installed in the city are typically LEDs. The streetlights owned and maintained by the city are primarily located along arterials. They run off of metered power and there is a mix of units that are new, near the middle of their useful lives, and nearing the end of their useful lives. Bellevue currently has about 170 LED streetlights installed in public rights-of-way.

The current project will convert half of the streetlights in the city to LED. Most of them will be those owned and maintained by PSE. The changeover will correspond to lower energy usage, lower energy costs, and reduced cost for maintenance for the city. LEDs also have much longer lives. High-pressure sodium (HPS) lamps must be changed about every four years, whereas LED lamps will not need to be touched again for about 15 years beyond minor maintenance like possible cleaning. There are also environmental benefits in that where less energy is used, there is less pollution resulting from less energy being created. The LED fixtures to be installed are all dark sky compliant which means more light will end up down on the ground and less will be emitted to the atmosphere. No mercury is used in the production of LED lighting. PSE will be recycling all of the fixtures that get replaced unless they are relatively new in which case they may get used elsewhere.

Mr. Potuzak said one of the main differences between LED and HPS is the color of the light; LEDs put off a much whiter light that helps the human eye better distinguish details. LED technology also decreases light trespass, which means the light can more easily be specifically programmed and manufactured to achieve a desired distribution pattern.

Commissioner Larrivee asked if there have been any studies done on the effect on drivers moving from incandescent to LED lighting along a street. Mr. Potuzak said the intent is to make sure all of the lights along a stretch are the same type. He said in his neighborhood in Seattle there are HSP and LED lights on the same utility pole. He said he was not aware of any studies on how drivers might be impacted.

Commissioner Larrivee said his greater concern is the fact that many streets in the city have a general lack of streetlights, or at least lights that are spread quite far apart. Given that LED

lighting is more focused, the result could be more darkness at night between the fixtures. He asked if consideration has been given to increasing the number of streetlight fixtures in such areas. Mr. Potuzak said in general the LED fixtures that will replace the HPS fixtures have the same light pattern in terms of the roadway, though it will have less spillover into adjacent windows. Changes to designs will be made based on public feedback as the project moves forward.

Mr. Poch said there will always be a little bit of spillover from the roadway fixtures. Generally the city has counted on that to light sidewalks. The fixtures located along the arterials will have distribution patterns based on computer modeling and will need to meet a certain light level and uniformity, but that will only be for the arterials. The exception is cul de sacs where the light from the HPS fixtures currently in place does not fit the shape. A different distribution pattern will be utilized to get the light where it needs to be.

Commissioner Zahn commented that the park and ride off Exit 9 on I-405 can be very scary after dark. Lighting for both the first and second ramp could stand to be made better in order to improve pedestrian safety.

In addition to the cost savings associated with converting to LED streetlights, there is a rebate offered by PSE. The rebate will represent about \$250,000 for the project.

Mr. Potuzak said there are 176 city-owned streetlights that will be converted to LED, mostly along 148th Avenue NE between Main Street and Bel-Red Road. The streetlights in that corridor are about as old as the road itself and they are reaching the end of their useful lives. Some freeway undercrossings will be addressed as well as part of the project, including 140th Avenue NE under SR-520 and SE 118th Avenue SE/Lake Washington Boulevard crosses under I-90. All of the city-owned LED lighting that will be installed can be connected to a future streetlight management system to allow for energy monitoring, maintenance alerts, and the ability to do adaptive lighting.

The LED conversion project is projected to save the city \$173,000 annually. Electricity usage will shrink by 1.2 million KWH which translates to a reduction of 760 metric tons of carbon emissions. The project is consistent with the city's environmental stewardship initiative and will have a very short payback period.

Major projects and changes in technology always generate concerns. The concerns raised in association with the pilot projects have been centered on the color of the light and glare from LED fixtures. HPS lighting has been around for a long time and people are used to the orange-yellow glow it produces. LED lighting comes from point sources rather than a globe so there can be more glare when looking up into the light. The technology has improved over the last couple of years, however, to where that is less of an issue. The white light emitted by the LEDs better illuminates signage.

So far over 235 streetlights have been installed as part of the project. To date seven comments have been received, four of which were negative. Of the negative comments, one was in regard to color and the other three complained of either too little or too much light.

Mr. Potuzak said a project website has been developed as part of getting the word out. An article was also published in *It's Your City* and both press releases and social media are being used. The *Bellevue Reporter* picked up the story back in January and a media event was put together to coincide with kicking off the first phase of the project.

Mr. Potuzak said the total cost for the project is about \$1.2 million. The Council approved the budget as part of the CIP in December 2014. Subtracting out the grant and rebate funds, the net cost to the city will be close to \$600,000. With a projected annual savings of \$173,000, the payback for the project is roughly three and a half years.

Answering a question asked by Chair Lampe, Mr. Poch said PSE must have enough energy cost savings to pay for the replacement, all of which gets worked into the tariff. Where the energy reduction will be on the order of 50 percent, the tariff is being reduced by only 30 percent to account for maintenance and replacement.

Mr. Potuzak said construction began in late February and is already through two phases. The project is anticipated to be completed in 2016, though the vast majority of the work will be done in 2015. There is no plan for replacing all of the city's lights. The life cycle of existing HPS lights will be taken into account, and lights that fail likely will be replaced with LEDs. It saves a lot of money for city crews to do the installations rather than hiring a contractor. Given that city crews can only handle so many installations per year, it makes sense to stagger the work. It has been suggested that the \$173,000 in annual cost savings should be rolled into replacing city-owned lights.

With regard to adaptive lighting, Mr. Potuzak said the street lights are able to adapt to changing conditions, primarily related to time of day, if they are connected to a management system. In the early morning hours when there are few pedestrians and few vehicles on the roads, it may be safe to dim the lights to realize extra energy savings. There are a lot of people working to develop standards and their work is still developing. Bellevue is embarking on a street light management system proof of concept project this year, on 148th Avenue between Main Street and SE 8th Street.

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Answering a question asked by Commissioner Larrivee, Mr. Poch noted that the current

streetlights operate on photo cells that turn them on and off based on the level of darkness.

Commissioner Chirls asked if consideration has been given to converting PSE-owned lights to city-owned lights. Mr. Potuzak said that certain would be possible but may not be cost effective given that new infrastructure would be required. Mr. Poch added that it could require doubling the number of poles given that the PSE poles would not be going away, unless the overhead wires are undergrounded.

#### B. 2016-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Capital Facilities Planning & Programming Administrator Kristi Oosterveen explained that the six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is updated annually. It usually encompasses the final six years of the Capital Investment Program (CIP) after an adoption year. The document must be approved by the City Council and submitted to the state and PSRC by the end of June.

The Commissioners were reminded that projects in the TIP fall into one of four sections: I, CIP projects funded in the 2016-2021 timeframe; II, TFP projects; III, other unfunded local projects; and IV regional or projects led by outside agencies in which the city may choose to participate financially. The TIP is not revenue constrained and includes anything and everything the city would do if the money were available. Projects in the TIP may be considered for various granting programs.

Ms. Oosterveen said 15 new projects were proposed for inclusion in the TIP. Three of them are newly funded projects that are in the CIP, and 12 are new projects that are proposed to be put into Section III as the. One of the 12 is from the recently completed Transit Master Plan. Additionally, five projects are proposed to be removed, three from Section I that will be substantially completed by the end of the year; one from Section II that is no longer deemed necessary due to other project implementation; and one in Section III that is also no longer deemed necessary due to other project implementation. Six projects are proposed to be transferred from one section to another: four Section I projects are proposed to be moved to Section II; and two in Section II are proposed to be moved into Section I.

Chair Lampe called attention to one of the projects proposed to be removed, the East Link MOU commitments, and noted that the MOU extends beyond 2015. Ms. Oosterveen said the dollar amounts shown in the CIP plan do not extend beyond 2015. There will certainly be additional expenditures in the coming years but the amounts are not yet known. The current agreement ends in 2015. Jason Bentosino, Transportation Fiscal Manager said staff and the Council are in active discussions with Sound Transit about potential amendments to the MOU. What is in the adopted CIP will be essentially completed by the end of 2015.

Commissioner Bishop suggested it would make sense to include in the TIP a placeholder for future years. Mr. Bentosino replied that with active discussions regarding potential amendments to the MOU, staff concluded it would be better to leave them out of the TIP rather than to speculate. Planning Implementation Manager Eric Miller added that many of the commitments under discussion are in fact embedded in existing CIP projects that are also on the TIP list, including Spring Boulevard Zone 1.

Commissioner Larrivee asked how any commitments that emerge from the discussions that have not yet been identified, but which will fall within the six-year time frame, will be addressed. Commissioner Zahn said it looked to her as though additional commitments could

fall under project 82, East Link light rail transit. Ms. Oosterveen agreed that would be a good place to put them.

Ms. Oosterveen explained that the schedule originally envisioned was based on the hope that some updated financial figures would be available for the Commission's review. Because those figures are not yet in hand, she asked the Commission to comment on whether or not the proposed April 9 date for the public hearing will need to be pushed back to early May. She noted that a clean version of the document will be produced for the public hearing and it will include columns showing grant dollars as part of the project costs.

Commissioner Simas suggested hearing from the public earlier would be better than later. That would allow time on the schedule to review the comments made before finalizing the document.

Commissioner Larrivee concurred that the April 9 public hearing date should be retained on the schedule along with an agenda item to discuss the comments and the document. If the Commission is comfortable, it could approve the document at that meeting. If more time is needed, it could be brought back to the table in May. Ms. Oosterveen said staff could be ready for either eventuality.

A motion to set the public hearing for April 9 was made by Commissioner Bishop. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Zahn and it carried unanimously.

Commissioner Bishop noted that the West Lake Sammamish Parkway project had been divided into two TIP projects. The CIP version identified as New, R-183, has \$8 million attached to it and the project description is for a pre-design study and start of the final design. He asked if that much money is needed for those two tasks. Ms. Oosterveen said the project description has yet to be updated.

Commissioner Bishop said the project description for the second project, #32, TFP-078, has been changed to indicate from the north city limits to SE 34th Street. Ms. Oosterveen said that project description will be revised as well to include more information about the phases.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bishop, Ms. Oosterveen said the Burlington Northern/Sante Fe corridor project is in the CIP with a \$1 million placeholder. It is not, however, shown as a transportation CIP project.

Ms. Oosterveen stressed that the projects on the list are not shown in priority order.

### C. 2016-2027 Transportation Facilities Plan

Ms. Oosterveen reported that the Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) open house held prior to the Commission meeting was well attended. Attendees were asked to fill out comment cards on the various projects, and a hard copy of the survey that is currently available online was made available. Maps and project lists were posted around the room and people were asked to place red on the projects they do not favor and green dots on projects they like. Computers were available showing the new interactive web map which allows people to click on individual projects, read the descriptions, and leave a comment.

Senior Transportation Planner Mike Ingram shared with the Commissioners the roadway and intersection project scoring. He allowed that staff had had only a little time to review them and

said there may need to be a few adjustments made.

The Commission was reminded that the 51 projects on the roadway and intersection list were drawn from existing projects lists, projects that previously did not make the cut, new projects from the Transit Master Plan, and new projects from the TIP process. He noted that the evaluation criteria were tweaked somewhat by changing the level of service (LOS) and Safety criteria percentages.

For the most part, the top projects are already in the CIP. The one that scored well but is not in the CIP is TFP-250 which involves intersection improvements along 148th Avenue NE at NE 20th Street, NE 24th Street, and Bel-Red Road. The project scored well primarily because of the increased value given to LOS, and a slight revision to the project description to reflect changes that came out of the Transit Master Plan. Also, TFP-252, the Bellevue College transit connection project, did well under the new criteria. The new Factoria Boulevard exit expansion project benefits LOS, transit and pedestrians and bicycles and thus it scored very well.

Commissioner Bishop said he was somewhat surprised that TFP-252 did not get the maximum points for plan consistency and outside funding. Ms. Oosterveen explained that the project does not show up in Vision 2040, which is one of the criteria. It does show up in the Transit Master Plan, but it did not score high relative to grant eligibility.

Mr. Miller added that the city will be submitting the project to the Puget Sound Regional Council for inclusion in the Vision 2040 plan.

Mr. Ingram called attention to project BTL-2, the 148th Avenue NE/NE 8th Street intersection, and noted the project involves adding some left-turn lanes. The project did not score well enough in the last cycle to rise above the line. This time around, because of the adjustments to the LOS percentage, as well as an added transit element, the project scored much better.

Commissioner Larrivee observed that BTL-1 scored very high in safety but not very well in the other categories. He said he was troubled by the fact that a high safety value project could end up below the line because of poorly it scores in other categories.

Commenting on TIP-1, 148th Avenue SE HOV lane implementation, Commissioner Bishop observed that it is the first TIP project on the list. Ms. Oosterveen said there were only four TIP projects to consider.

Mr. Ingram commented that BTL-8, the new road connection through Ross Plaza, scored relatively well for a minor street. The good score can be attributed to the fact that the project adds connectivity and because of the potential for relieving pressure on 148th Avenue NE.

With regard to BTL-14, Mr. Ingram pointed out a typo in the project description. He said the project extends to SE 63rd Street. The project involves the last gravel road in Bellevue and scored as well as it did because it fills a gap in the pedestrian/bicycle network. For the purposes of evaluating pedestrian/bicycle connectivity in roadway/intersection projects, the land uses are not taken into account.

Ms. Oosterveen referred to BTL-12 and explained that the project previously scored high. The implementation of the SCATS system, however, improved things generally in the area to the point where the project is no longer needed.



TIP-3 the subsurface arterial project did not score well either and several at the open house generated several negative comments. Mr. Ingram allowed that the project is difficult to score given that its parameters are unknown. He noted that the zero given to LOS likely should be higher.

Mr. Ingram informed the Commission that a staff group has been set up to develop a staff-recommended prioritized project list in advance of the next Commission meeting. By May it should be possible to determine where the cut-off line will fall.

Ms. Oosterveen briefly updated the Commission with regard to the ongoing and upcoming public outreach activities.

Jason Bentosino, distributed to the Commissioners a high-level summary of the preliminary revenue forecast for the TFP. He noted that the preliminary projection is for \$106 million available for unfunded existing TFP and candidate projects. He explained the revenue sources dedicated to transportation. About 38 percent of the total unrestricted CIP funds are allocated to transportation projects.

The projected revenues for the 12-year TFP period total \$477 million. The amount already programmed in the CIP is \$317 million. The unconstrained funding, however, gets used up very quickly. In the current TFP, the unfunded portion of existing CIP projects is estimated to total \$105 million.

Commissioner Simas said one thing the Commission can do is send bigger dollars to the Council with a suggestion for them to increase revenues. As such the Commission is not necessarily constrained by the \$477 million, and if worthwhile projects are identified that would require funding beyond that number, they should be highlighted for the Council. Councilmember Lee has time and again admonished the Commission to think big and outside the box, and not to hesitate to send to the Council a suggestion to generate more revenues for transportation projects where there is a true need to do so.

Commissioner Bishop asked if there are other extraordinarily large expenditures in the CIP. Mr. Bentosino said the current CIP includes funds for a downtown fire station. Going forward it is likely there will be fluctuations in the 38 percent for transportation projects. It simply is not possible to presume what actions the Council will take relative to CIP funding in future years.

Commissioner Zahn commented that in the near future as more construction projects come online the bidding process will be impacted. With more work overall, there will be fewer bidders for each project and that could artificially inflate pricing. Commissioner Bishop agreed but pointed out that the uptick in construction activity will also bring in more revenues to the city.

Ms. Oosterveen said the funding line will be drawn based on the projected revenues. It will then be up to the Commission to decide whether or not to make some tweaks.

Ms. Oosterveen said the TFP will be on the agenda again on April 9.

#### D. Transportation Element Final Policy Amendments

Mr. McDonald informed the Commission that the Comprehensive Plan is moving steadily towards adoption ahead of the June 30 state-mandated deadline. The Planning Commission has been reviewing the various elements and has been hearing from the public through a variety of means. A public hearing was held on March 4 that was very well attended, and the comments relative to the Transportation Element were largely related to safety and connectivity for non-motorized transportation projects in specific locations. The public comments were in line with the Transportation Commission's prior policy recommendations.

Mr. McDonald said staff are also currently focused on working through the Transportation Element policies with an eye on consistency with state requirements. The same is being done by other department staff for each of the Comprehensive Plan elements. He said his memo highlighted some minor differences between the policies recommended by the Commission and the specific requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA).

The state presumes that the Comprehensive Plans adopted by jurisdictions are valid, but there is a process of challenging local policies through the state Growth Management Hearings Board. There is therefore a need to make sure local policies can withstand potential challenges by assuring that all components of the GMA are addressed.

With regard to Policy TR-103, Mr. McDonald said the GMA calls for a broad policy about financing for mobility projects and for identifying the source of that funding. In order to comply with that requirement, the staff recommendation was to revise the policy to read "Maintain financing capability to meet the city's adopted mobility targets through a mix of funding sources, as identified in the TFP and the CIP...."

Mr. McDonald said the GMA also directs local jurisdictions to plan for disasters. He said staff's review of the Transportation Element found nothing specific with respect to mobility in the event of a catastrophe. He recommended the addition of a new policy reading "Design, maintain and protect the transportation system to be resilient to disaster." He explained that "resilient" refers to redundancies in the system to permit getting around.

Commissioner Zahn said she liked the essence of the proposed policy but was somewhat lost in exactly what "maintain" and "protect" the transportation system means relative to disaster preparedness. Mr. McDonald allowed that the proposed wording was taken almost verbatim from the RCW.

Commissioner Chirls suggested the proposed policy language would suffice to meet the requirements of the GMA. However, if the intent is to go to the next level and truly address disaster preparedness, much more will be needed.

Commissioner Simas said once policies are written and published, it becomes necessary to live up to them. The proposed policy language could lead to changes in the way systems are constructed, such as using a thicker layer of asphalt and constructing much stronger bridges.

Commissioner Zahn agreed and pointed out that while the city has plenty of roads that could be used to get around blockages caused by a disaster, the question is whether or not the redundancy will facilitate getting to key locations such as hospitals. There is a difference

between having a critical transportation network and transportation systems in general. She said she assumed the city has disaster routes mapped out that could be referenced as being in need of specific protections. Mr. McDonald said the city does have a disaster plan and conducts regular exercises in order to be prepared for a disaster. He suggested the policy could include explanatory language to clarify the intent of maintaining access to emergency facilities and important community locations.

Commissioner Simas asked if the requirement of the GMA relative to disaster planning is covered elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan at a higher level. Mr. McDonald said the review done by staff uncovered the fact that the disaster issue is not covered by policy in the Comprehensive Plan. He said he did not know if the issue is covered by other city documentation.

Commissioner Larrivee said he was okay with including the proposed policy language in the Transportation Element but suggested there should be a future discussion about what disaster planning means to the overall city.

Mr. McDonald said the proposed policy provides support for existing programs and gives direction to continue that work. It does not really prescribe anything. The master planning work for infrastructure and utilities all take their direction from the overall policy and then go on to describe and refine and to add implementation strategies in separate documents. The language is consistent with the GMA and backfills work the city is already doing.

With regard to policy TR-4, Mr. McDonald said the focus is on ensuring infrastructure that provides options for all modes of travel. The GMA requires tying together the provision of different modes of travel and acknowledging different mobility needs for people in the community.

A motion to accept all three policy revisions was made by Commissioner Bishop. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Simas and it carried unanimously.

Mr. McDonald said the Planning Commission at its meeting on March 11 and reached a consensus of opinion to repeal Policy TR-11 which serves to support transportation demand management. The Planning Commission objected to the policy on the grounds that it expresses a disincentive for people to drive their personal cars for commute trips. The Transportation Commission recommended inclusion of the policy, which is already housed in the current Transportation Element, though the language was modified somewhat. Mr. McDonald suggested the Transportation Commission should develop a response to the Planning Commission.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Bishop, Mr. McDonald explained that the narrative that goes along with the policies is adapted from the narrative in the existing Comprehensive Plan, from the memos written by staff on the specific topics, and is a product

of the consultant who attempted to make sure the language of the entire Comprehensive Plan reads as a single voice.

Commissioner Bishop said he had taken the opportunity to carefully read through the entire Transportation Element, including the narrative, and came away being extremely uncomfortable with the tone that clearly seeks to lead the city to an anti-car position. There is a need for policies that will enhance transit, bicycle and pedestrian systems, but none of that should be done at the expense of capacity systems. "Mobility" and "multimodal" show up repeatedly and often in the policies and the narrative along with calls to reduce SOV, VMT and auto-dependency, and to repurpose lanes for other uses. It is clear the Transportation Element is anti-car. The fact is cars carry 88 percent of all trips in the city; sidewalks carry eight percent; buses carry four percent; and bicycles carry 0.2 percent. Policy TR-11 is an aggressive anti-car policy. There is no policy that defines what "mobility" or "multimodal" means though there are some definitions in the glossary. The city's biggest transportation issue is congestion and "congestion relief" is hardly used in any policy or in the narrative.

Commissioner Chirls said the attack on single-occupant vehicles is based on the assumption that it will reduce congestion. Commissioner Bishop said that is a fallacy. The narrative certainly makes that assumption, but that does not make it true. There is a clear critical need for bus transit. Policy TR.X12 specifically calls for repurposing travel lanes for uses such as parking, transit or pedestrian and bicycle facilities where excess vehicle capacity exists and/or to optimize person throughput along a corridor. That is aimed specifically at allowing a degradation of road capacity for the purpose of multimodal.

Chair Lampe pointed out that the policy is clear that repurposing a vehicle lane applies only where there is excess vehicle capacity. Commissioner Bishop said the and/or phrase qualifies that.

Commissioner Bishop said a policy is needed to specifically define what is meant by multimodal mobility.

Commissioner Larrivee pointed out that the Commission had plenty of time to work through and review the policies before passing them on. He said the policies are what they are and added that he is comfortable with them.

Commissioner Simas voiced support for eliminating Policy TR-11. He said so long as the playing fields are equal, capitalistic economics will tend to work things out. If employers want to subsidize parking for their employees, they should be allowed to do so. The likelihood is that in the future most employees are not going to want to drive their cars to work anyway, so it makes no sense to incent employers to avoid giving their employees a parking subsidy. As for the rest of the policies in the Transportation Element, it falls under the guise of the city's philosophy to create more transit, more modal opportunities for the young, the elderly and the disabled, as well as the able-bodied employees who do not want to drive. With increased

density comes an environment where people want to walk and leave their cars behind. He said he would make no changes to the element.

Chair Lampe explained that the Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to the Council, but the Planning Commission is the conduit by which it will get to the Council. Ultimately the Council will decide.

Commissioner Chirls agreed with Commissioner Larrivee. The demographic changes that are occurring, particularly the greater density in the downtown area, will in the future require fewer cars and more mobility options. Clearly there will need to be fewer single-occupant vehicles. Policy TR-11, however, should be eliminated. It says nothing about how it would be accomplished and is impractical on its face.

Commissioner Zahn concurred. It is easy to look at existing policy and massage the words, but often what is needed is to take a step back and look at whether or not each policy is really necessary. Policy TR-11 is not necessary and should be eliminated. Overall, however, the policies in the Transportation Element are on track and do not seek to phase out cars over time. Additionally, what is meant by multimodal mobility is made very clear in a big blue box on the introduction page so it cannot be argued that the term is not defined.

Mr. Ingram explained that Policy TR-11 is focused on commute trips. In terms of how people make mode choices, the terms under which parking is available is the biggest single factor. That has been shown to be true both nationally and in Bellevue. Charging for parking is alone associated with a 20 percent reduction in the drive-alone rate. Where parking is free and readily available, commuters most often will chose to drive. The whole reason for getting involved in transportation demand management is to reduce the number of vehicles on the network at peak times. Employers do not generally have in-house expertise on how to run an organized commute program, and that is why the city and county over the years have worked closely with employers to offer a mix of carrots and sticks.

Commissioner Bishop argued that Policy TR-11 is not needed in order to carry out the transportation demand management programs that are in place.

A motion to eliminate Policy TR-11 was made by Commissioner Simas. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chirls.

Commissioner Zahn noted that Policy TR-X3 is specific to discouraging commuters from driving alone. That policy and others cover what is covered in Policy TR-11.

Commissioner Chirls commented that Policy TR-11 is overly specific and would be difficult to implement.

The motion carried 4-1, with Commissioner Tanaka voting against, and Commissioner Larrivee abstaining.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that the last sentence of the introduction on page 46 of the Transportation Element should read "The following list shows some of the relevant plans that implement the Transportation Element."

Commissioner Bishop called attention to Figure TR-4, trip density forecast for 2035, and said he would like to see the daily person trips by MMA show the overall total of 2,539,000. He then said he had an issue with that number. The same total for 2012 was 1.2 million, and 1.75 million in 2030 according to the Transit Master Plan documents, an increase of 550,000 over 18 years. As shown, the increase would be almost 800,000 more in only five years. The modeling group should confirm the numbers in the table. Mr. McDonald agreed to verify the numbers and to include a total.

Commissioner Bishop referred to the paragraph at the top of page 9 and argued that in fact Bellevue does not rely on high-capacity transit throughout the day. The truth is that the light rail projections provided by Sound Transit are very small compared to the overall number of trips. The real reliance is on the roadway system. He proposed removing the entire paragraph. Mr. McDonald suggested revising the paragraph to have it talk about high-capacity transit as a component of the options people are increasingly using, and moving away from referencing the concept of relying on high-capacity transit.

#### 9. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Bishop reported that the meeting at which the Council receiving information about the 116th Avenue NE bikeway, the Council made a specific request to work on standards for converting lanes. Mr. McDonald said adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will create a universe of things to work on. Staff is aware of the direction given by the Council.

#### 10. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Larrivee said he would like the Commission at a future meeting to discuss how to get more helpful feedback from the community. With technology the opportunity exists to allow people to point out what projects they like or do not like, but it should also be able to ask people how they would spend available transportation dollars. He said he also would like the Commission to have a deeper discussion around crosswalk dynamics and best engineering practices all with an eye on improving crosswalk safety.

Commissioner Bishop reported that he has been appointed to the King County executive's Metro task force on how to change the service guidelines for how to implement or remove service. In all, 31 persons have been appointed to the task force, including Councilmember Chelminiak. The group has already had its first meeting.

#### 11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

12. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. December 11, 2014
- B. February 12, 2015

A motion to approve the December 11, 2014, and the February 12, 2015, minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Chirls. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Simas and it carried unanimously.

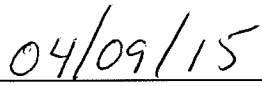
13. REVIEW COMMISSION CALENDAR AND AGENDA

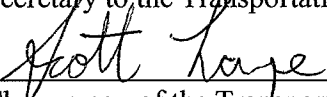
Mr. McDonald reviewed with the Commission the calendar and upcoming agenda items.

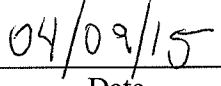
14. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lampe adjourned the meeting at 10:33 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary to the Transportation Commission

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date