

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, September 20, 2018
TIME: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 a.m.
PLACE: Bellevue Downtown Association | Fifth Floor Conference Room
Co-Chairs: Amy Carlson & Susan Stead

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome and Introductions**
- 2. BDA Staff: Process, Plans, and Uses**
 - a. Overview of the strategy's history and how it's been used in the past.
 - b. *Member Feedback with Prompt:* What do you want the strategy to accomplish?
How should it be used?
- 3. City Transportation Priorities and Vision:** An overview of the challenges facing Bellevue, and a look at the initiatives to improve mobility, access and connectivity.
 - a. Dave Berg, Transportation Director
- 4. Downtown Transportation Plan** presentation of the policy's scope, objectives, and projects list. Members will learn about the City's comprehensive mobility strategy to support Downtown growth to 2030, and beyond.
 - a. Kevin McDonald, Principal Transportation Planner
- 5. City Staff Q&A**

ATTACHMENTS

- BDA Downtown Access Strategy Update | Three-Meeting Series Approach
- BDA Downtown Access Strategy
- Downtown Transportation Plan Overview
- Downtown Transportation Plan Background & Introduction
- Council 2018-2020 Transportation & Mobility Priorities

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Updating the BDA Downtown Access Strategy
Three-Meeting Approach

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVE

The BDA [Downtown Access Strategy](#) was adopted by the Board of Directors in 2011 to serve as a guiding document for advocacy efforts regarding mobility issues. Since then, population and job growth has increased trips, City and regional mobility initiatives have been implemented and new technologies have emerged. In 2016, the BDA Board adopted the [2017-2021 Strategic Plan](#) which identified updating the Downtown Access Strategy as a key initiative to respond to these changes. The BDA Transportation Committee is tasked with evaluating mobility challenges, identifying investment priorities, and drafting a recommendation for an updated Downtown Access Strategy.

Meeting #1: Level Setting & Learning

Thursday, September 20, 2018 | Noon - 1:30pm | Bellevue Downtown Association

- Introduce Downtown Access Strategy scope and objective
- BDA Staff: Process, Plans, and Uses
- City Staff: High-level overview of the policy and project approach to improving downtown mobility

Meeting #2: Show & Tell + Work Session

Tuesday, October 16, 2018 | Noon - 1:30pm | Bellevue Downtown Association

- Member Show & Tell: Members are invited (and granted time) to present their findings/research on Downtown mobility priorities
- Member Discussion & Feedback: Identify key draft points or changes for the Downtown Access Strategy

Interim Between Meetings 2 & 3:

BDA staff will draft an updated Downtown Access Strategy based on Committee Member feedback.

Meeting #3: Finalize a Recommendation

Thursday, November 15, 2018 | Noon - 1:30pm | Bellevue Downtown Association

- BDA Staff: Present a draft updated version of the Downtown Access Strategy
- Committee Member Discussion & Feedback: Committee members will review and gather consensus on a final recommendation to be transmitted to the BDA Board of Directors

DOWNTOWN ACCESS STRATEGY

Bellevue Downtown Association | Adopted 2011

Improving mobility is a key factor to Downtown Bellevue's success as a thriving retail destination, a center for knowledge workers and innovative companies, and a vibrant residential community.

The Bellevue Downtown Association believes successful transportation and land use plans should be guided by the following strategy.

1. **Enable and serve growth (jobs, housing, retail) downtown.** Regional and local plans call for continued growth downtown, resulting in increases to daily trips. A successful transportation network will help stimulate development, attract jobs, residents and visitors. Transportation and land use policies should align with proper funding to maximize efficiencies in the transportation network.
2. **Optimize traffic flow.** Continue to prioritize strategic roadway capacity and technology investments to address critical chokepoints, improve traffic operations (to, from, within downtown) and minimize delays for all modes.
3. **Optimize light rail implementation.** Work affirmatively to implement East Link light rail pursuant to the Bellevue/Sound Transit MOU provisions, with special attention to mitigating impacts and assisting downtown businesses and residents during construction.
4. **Maintain the safety, quality and capacity of existing facilities.** Downtown's limited roadways and arterial connections to regional facilities must be preserved. Maintaining what we have is less expensive than playing catch up.
5. **Establish priorities for the pedestrian environment and non-motorized access.** Much of downtown relies on inadequate non-motorized access. Design and investments should reinforce a compact, walkable, well-connected downtown.
6. **Achieve mode-share goals.** Downtown roadways are constrained (superblocks, limited ROW) and resources are limited. As congestion levels and drive-alone travel costs grow, demand for reliable options (transit, vanpools, rideshare) will rise. Transit service and infrastructure should anticipate and respond to demand.
7. **Strive in all cases to reduce costs and environmental impacts.** Bellevue continues to support this principle by enabling and serving growth downtown.
8. **Minimize traffic, property and business impacts due to construction.** Downtown residents, businesses and customers require adequate notice and planning assistance to avoid or minimize disruptions.



DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION PLAN OVERVIEW

In the 2011-2012 budget, the City Council approved capital and operating funding to support an update to the Downtown Transportation Plan, and directed the Transportation Commission to develop a comprehensive mobility strategy to support Downtown growth to 2030, and beyond. The Commission recommendations for transportation system improvements will accommodate the motorized and non-motorized trips generated by a forecast increase of 28,000 jobs and 12,000 residents—representing approximately 75 percent of the planned employment growth in the city, and over 50 percent of the planned residential growth between 2010 and 2030.

The Commission’s task, as the City Council defined it, was to prepare a plan to provide mobility options for people to get around to, from and within Downtown Bellevue. Council provided a set of planning principles to guide the Commission’s work and to shape the community expectations. From this perspective the Commission prepared a suite of viable travel options that are compatible

with each other and that together will support Downtown vitality and livability. Improvements must be made across all modes. The economic engine of Downtown Bellevue will be strengthened with a transportation strategy that pays focused attention to pedestrians, bicycles and transit while acknowledging that efficient vehicle travel will continue to be critically important. Downtown will become even more attractive and accessible as a place to work, to shop and to call home as well-planned multimodal transportation enhancements are implemented.

Transportation Department staff and the Commission worked closely with the Downtown community to understand the issues and to develop responsive mobility strategies. The Commission met 24 times on the subject and developed a good understanding of the transportation modeling data, as well as the many qualitative measures of mobility, all of which help inform their recommendations.



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1. BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

Adopted in 2004 after the comprehensive work on the Downtown Implementation Plan, the Downtown Subarea Plan contains policies that guide the physical development of Downtown Bellevue and identifies transportation projects to accommodate the forecast travel demand through 2020. Transportation policies and projects are collectively known as the Downtown Transportation Plan. This update of the Downtown Transportation Plan acknowledges changed circumstances since 2004, and considers land use and transportation system changes anticipated to 2030. Recommendations for Downtown transportation policies and projects are integrated with the Downtown Livability Initiative—the land use and urban design components of the Downtown Subarea Plan—in a comprehensive package of Subarea Plan amendments due for Council consideration and approval in 2016.

The City Council designated the Transportation Commission to develop a comprehensive slate of transportation policies and projects to address mobility to, from and within Downtown. Downtown mobility is based on the premise that everyone should be able to get around in Downtown

Bellevue safely and comfortably, a concept that requires a balancing of the needs of vehicle drivers, transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists. Reasonably foreseeable roadway capacity projects in and around Downtown will provide an adequate vehicular level-of-service in 2030. Improvements are recommended to better accommodate the diverse needs of an increasing number of people who want to comfortably and safely walk or ride their bicycles in Downtown. Modifications to transit service and facilities will help make riding transit an even more attractive option than it is today.

The multimodal mobility strategy will provide access for private vehicles and will accommodate the emerging demand for pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities. A multimodal approach to mobility considers both quantitative and qualitative measures that hone in on the types of projects that best match the needs of the community. Transportation system improvements are intended to support mobility for the 70,300 employees and 19,000 residents that are forecast for 2030, plus the visitors who help make Downtown Bellevue a vibrant urban center.



The multimodal strategy is not new, and prior investments have resulted in the vibrant and mobile Downtown Bellevue of today. Yet new policies and projects are needed to help shape the Downtown Bellevue of the future, a future in which walking is the logical option for short trips and people can make longer trips by car, transit or bicycle. Downtown traffic volume is not increasing, even as land continues to develop. People in greater numbers are choosing to walk, bicycle and ride the bus to get around to/from and within Downtown. Mobility options provide choices and help enhance Downtown livability.

COUNCIL PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Planning principles approved by Bellevue City Council February 6, 2012 guided the Transportation Commission's work and established the reasonable expectations in the community for the types of policies and projects that would emerge. These principles are as follows:

1. Plan for multiple modes of travel within and to and from Downtown Bellevue

Develop an innovative multimodal transportation strategy for Downtown Bellevue that updates the existing Downtown Subarea Plan project list. The recommended strategy should consider and incorporate the emerging and anticipated mobility needs of motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, taxi patrons and carpool/vanpool riders, and support the transport, parking and loading needs of employers, residents and businesses.

2. Accommodate the anticipated travel demands from the 2030 land use forecast

Ensure that the planned transportation system will accommodate the 2030 forecast for Downtown residential and employment growth.

3. Advance the adopted vision for Downtown Bellevue

Ensure that the Downtown transportation system advances and supports the land use and urban design vision for Downtown Bellevue - articulated in the Downtown Subarea Plan as a vibrant, livable, accessible, and memorable mixed use Urban Center.

4. Recognize changes in the regional and local transportation and land use environment

Incorporate local and regional transportation projects and plans that have been approved and/or implemented since the Downtown Subarea Plan was adopted in 2004. Transportation system changes include East Link, SR 520 expansion and tolling, improvements to I-90 and I-405, and the Bellevue Mobility and Infrastructure Initiative. Planning changes include the updated Bel-Red Subarea Plan, the Wilburton Subarea Plan and the Eastgate/I-90 Corridor Study.



5. Integrate City Council direction

As potential Downtown transportation projects are identified, incorporate City Council direction on regional transportation facilities, such as the Downtown alignment for East Link and the I-405 Master Plan.

6. Provide for comprehensive public involvement

Ensure that the process to update the Downtown Transportation Plan invites broad and inclusive public involvement that engages the diverse Downtown commercial and residential communities, nearby residential neighborhoods, and other community stakeholders.

7. Minimize traffic impacts on neighborhoods

Consider measures as needed to protect Downtown residents and nearby residential neighborhoods from significant adverse impacts from traffic and commuter parking.

8. Involve regional transportation and planning partners

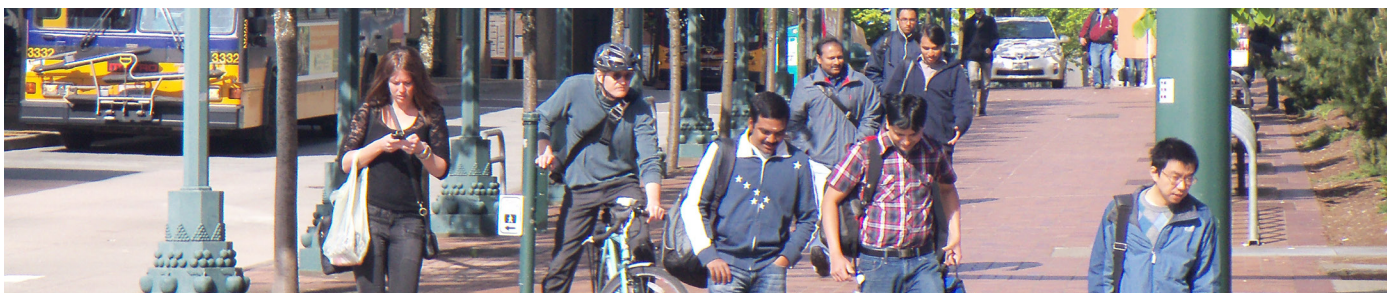
Coordinate planning for the Downtown Bellevue transportation system with regional transportation and planning partners, such as the Puget Sound Regional Council, Washington State Department of Transportation, Sound Transit, and King County Metro, and work to ensure Downtown projects and plans are compatible with each other and are consistent in support of mobility and economic development in Downtown Bellevue.

9. Leverage funding from outside sources to implement projects

Identify transportation system projects that effectively leverage grant funding opportunities. These types of projects will achieve multiple mobility objectives, support economic vitality and residential development, and will sustain Downtown Bellevue's regional status as a Metropolitan City and Urban Center.

10. Utilize measures of effectiveness to evaluate potential projects

Use both quantitative and qualitative measures of effectiveness to evaluate project ideas relative to each other and to community objectives. Consider the cost of a project relative to its benefit to mobility as an important metric, in addition to measures such as improved safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, management of traffic congestion, and the efficient use of the available right-of-way.



IMPLEMENTATION

In the 2015/2016 budget, the City Council allocated \$5 million for the period 2015 through 2021 to implement the Downtown Transportation Plan and to provide “exceptional access” to the Downtown Bellevue Light Rail Station, anticipated to open for service in 2023. Project types are identified in the Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit sections of this report. Downtown Subarea Plan policies provide guidance for investments, standards and programs that address Downtown mobility and support livability.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Council designated the Transportation Commission to be its advisors for the Downtown Transportation Plan Update. On a monthly basis, the Commission worked with staff on both the big picture of Downtown mobility and on the individual components that make up a comprehensive multimodal mobility strategy. The Commission inquired deeply into the fundamental transportation modeling assumptions and several iterations of model output until they were satisfied that the long-range forecasts provided a good analysis of the expected vehicular level-of-service. For other modes that lacked specific metrics and standards, the Commission methodically reviewed the opportunities to improve the Downtown environment for people who walk, ride a bicycle or ride transit, keeping in mind at all times that a multimodal approach requires balancing, prioritization and trade-offs.

Community Outreach and Engagement Summary

Beginning in the summer of 2011 staff engaged the community in dialogues and activities to understand the issues and opportunities related to Downtown mobility. In addition, staff regularly provided periodic status reports on the Downtown Transportation Plan to community organizations and maintained a project web site (<http://www.bellevuewa.gov/downtown-transportation-plan-update.htm>). A summary report, “Transportation Issues Scoping Report, January 2012” ([http://www.bellevuewa.gov/pdf/Transportation/Scoping_Report\(1\).pdf](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/pdf/Transportation/Scoping_Report(1).pdf)) documented the community involvement to date that identified the mobility issues that the Commission addressed. Significant community involvement events are described briefly below:

Downtown Bicycle Mobility Tours

In September of 2011, staff led, with the support of the Bellevue Downtown Association, several bicycle tours of Downtown Bellevue and beyond. A tour targeted toward Downtown residents provided opportunity for dialog on bicycle facilities and parking that would support bicycle mobility within Downtown. Three separate tours focused on bicycle commuters who rode with staff along routes through nearby neighborhoods to the I-90 Trail/Mountains to Sound Greenway and to two access points for the SR 520 Trail. Input from these tours helped inform the Commission’s recommendation for Downtown bicycle facilities and solidify the city’s long-term support for the bicycle parking program.



Feet First Walking Audits

Later in the Fall of 2011, the Seattle-based pedestrian advocacy organization Feet First worked with staff to lead Downtown walking tours or “audits.” Feet First documented public comments, photographed the events, and provided recommendations in a Downtown Bellevue Walking Audit Report that the Commission reviewed and that informed many of the Commission’s recommendations for pedestrian facilities. Walking audits were designed keeping in mind the specific needs of Downtown residents and Downtown workers and they covered different routes accordingly. The Feet First report noted that while the sidewalk environment is generally good, the crosswalks at intersections could be improved, mid-block crossings could be added to enhance pedestrian safety and mobility, and through-block connections could be made more visible and accessible.

Community “Open House” Events

An open house on November 1, 2011 highlighted the specific mobility topic areas, Roadways, Transit, Pedestrian, and Bicycle. Community comments directed toward each mode are factored into mobility assessments and are reflected in project and policy recommendations. Downtown mobility was a key topic at the Downtown Livability Initiative open house held on November 29, 2012. At the Spring Transportation EXPO held on April 24, 2013 the Downtown Transportation Plan Update exhibits highlighted preliminary recommendations, and staff answered questions and to gathered additional input.

Downtown Transportation Plan Updates to Stakeholder Organizations

Staff provided updates and fielded questions at meetings of organizations that have a significant interest in Downtown mobility. These include the Bellevue Downtown Association, the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, the Building Owners and Managers Association, the Eastside Transportation Association, representatives of the hospitals in the Medical District, and individual Downtown businesses.

Community and Professional Organizations

Staff provided information and discussed the Downtown Transportation Plan with the Bellevue Network on Aging and its affiliated community partnership; the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative. Staff also provided presentations to the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Institute of Transportation Engineers.

City Council

With input from the Transportation Commission, the City Council adopted a set of 11 planning principles on February 6, 2012. Staff provided a management brief in July of 2012 and in March of 2013, and the Transportation Commission transmitted a final recommendation on October 7, 2013. At that time, Council provided direction to implement the Plan recommendations.

Transportation Commission

Following direction from Council at the October 7, 2013 meeting, the Transportation Commission reviewed the adopted Downtown Subarea Plan policies and determined whether the policy should be retained, amended or repealed. Conditions for a recommendation to amend or repeal a policy included policy language that was determined to be outdated, redundant, superseded by more recent planning, or the policy had been fully implemented. Recommended Subarea Plan transportation policies will fill gaps identified through the Downtown Transportation Plan update. Transportation policies will be integrated with policies addressing land use and urban design developed through the Downtown Livability Initiative.



SUSTAINABILITY

As a mixed-use, multimodal urban center, Downtown Bellevue has a lot going for it with regard to sustainability. From a purely transportation perspective, this is a setting that lends itself to transit riding for long trips, bicycling for medium trips, and walking for short trips. For those who choose to drive, the environmental impact may be less because shorter trips result in fewer vehicle miles traveled and fewer greenhouse gas emissions. Further analysis may focus on factors such as vehicle miles traveled (VMT), greenhouse gas emissions, VMT and trends in Downtown trips, Downtown livability and personal health implications.

DOWNTOWN MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION COMPONENTS

Four ways of getting around in Downtown are at the core of the multimodal mobility strategy: driving on roadways in private vehicles, riding transit, moving about as a pedestrian, and riding bicycles. Staff and the Transportation Commission used projected 2030 land use and travel demand and considered community comments to identify issues and opportunities related to the mobility needs of Downtown residents, workers and visitors, and subsequently developed policy recommendations and project concepts to address them. Through this process the Commission uncovered some significant mobility gaps, some pleasant surprises and some issues that were referred for further analysis to the Downtown Livability Initiative.



Transportation and Mobility

City Council Vision Priorities 2018-20 (Updated May 7, 2018)

Getting into, around and through Bellevue is a given. Transportation is both reliable and predictable. Mode choices are abundant and safe.

Bellevue is well connected to the rest of the region and its activities via roads and transit. Bellevue's commercial centers are bustling, but can be reliably traversed by their employees and customers even during commute hours and holidays. People come to Bellevue for entertainment and shopping because it is convenient to get around.

Adequate regional road capacity handles a high volume of demand. Regional trips are accommodated on regional roads, thus limiting the impacts to neighborhoods from cut-through traffic. Roads are well designed and maintained and are managed to minimize congestion and keep people moving even at peak periods. A state-of-the-art intelligent transportation system moves people through the city with a minimum of wait times and frustration. Those who choose to drive can find convenient parking. Visitors and those who do not drive enjoy ample public transportation with seamless, reliable connections through a wide variety of services including local transit, circulator buses, taxis and ride-sharing services. Walking and biking is safe and enjoyable, and pedestrians are comfortable and safe.

3-Year Priorities

3. Continue to execute our transportation capital plans for future growth and mobility of the city. Use the funding provided by the Neighborhood Safety Connectivity and Congestion Levy to improve the safety, transportation and quality of life in neighborhoods.
4. Advocate with the state Department of Transportation and regional agencies for acceleration of the I-405 Corridor Program, completion of SR 520, including Bellevue projects (i.e. NE 6th, 124th NE Interchange, braided ramps, Coal Creek Parkway).
5. Continue to fund, design and build projects within the Downtown Transportation Plan, Wilburton Connection and BelRed.
6. Continue the oversight of light rail construction and ensure that we implement an effective strategy for construction mitigation for neighborhoods, traffic and business.