

Date: March 28, 2019

To: Chair Wu and Members of the Transportation Commission
Councilmember Lee, Council Liaison to the Transportation Commission

From: Victor Bishop, Commissioner
Todd Woosley, Commissioner

Subject: Downtown Demonstration Bikeway Assessment & Proposed Next Steps

At its March 28, 2019 meeting, staff seeks Commission endorsement to retain the 108th Ave. NE Demonstration Bikeway and to incorporate rapid-build bicycle facilities on Main Street between 108th Ave. NE and Bellevue Way.

Based upon the information contained in the Agenda Memo and information provided in various City documents, we preliminarily intend to vote “No” on each of the requests. The following discussion presents our rationale:

108th Ave. NE Demonstration Bikeway Project

- **There are no significant safety benefits identified**
- **There is no significant increase in bicycle usage on 108th Ave. NE related to the demonstration bikeway project**
- **Bus operations have been negatively impacted**
- **The insignificant increase in bike trips does not warrant the loss of mobility for other travel modes**

Safety Outcomes

1. No serious nor fatal injuries were reported for the short 5-month data period, an expected outcome as pedestrian and bicycle collisions are extremely rare and the exposure rate per the reported bicycle data would not produce significant data.
2. One commenter in the report indicated a non-injury bicycle collision that resulted in a bicycle spill after the end of the data collection period. Again, this is not statistically significant.
3. Traffic safety evaluations are based on reported collision reports, not anecdotal perceptions of individual users. The self-selected survey of perceptions by various users is interesting, but not significant in the discussion.

Operational Outcomes

1. Per the Bellevue Kirkland Redmond (BKR) Travel Forecast Model data provided for the Downtown Transportation Plan Update, 2013, total daily person trips to, from and within Downtown are expected to grow from 333,500 in 2010 (the then base year) to 531,000 in 2030, an increase of 197,500 daily trips in 20 years, a nearly 60% increase in daily weekday person trips.

Per the bicycle count data provided for the demonstration project in Appendix 5 of the Technical Appendix of the Downtown Bikeway Demonstration Assessment, average non-holiday weekday bicycle trips on 108th Ave. NE increased from 95 trips/day in May-June to 126 trips/day, or 31 daily additional trips on 108th Ave. NE in June-October 2018. This represents 0.01% of the daily person trips in downtown in 2010.

The Agenda memo reports that 16% of the 27,905 Bicycle Share trips over six months (25 bike share trips/day) traveled along on 108th Ave. NE. Therefore, the additional bike trips on 108th Ave. NE during the demonstration project may well be predominately associated with the bike share pilot project rather than related to the bike lane demonstration project.

Thus, the increase in bicycle trips on 108th Ave. NE is insignificant, and all further analysis of bicycle data is rendered moot with respect to evaluation of the bikeway project.

The 2017 traffic volume count on 108th Ave. NE is 11,400 AWDT south of NE 8th St. The 126 total bicycle trips represent 1.1% of the daily trips on the street. The new bicycle trips that can be attributed to the demonstration project (6 additional trips) represents 0.05% of the street volume.

2. 108th Ave. NE is the designated north-south transit route through Downtown. It has multiple bus stops and is the access to the Transit Center. The report on the bus operations is mixed. New signal phasing and timing (unrelated to the demonstration lane) provided some bus benefits, however, other bus operations were more complex.

Conclusion

Given the above outcomes, the bike lane demonstration on 108th Ave. NE did not meet its un-identified metrics of increased safety, increased person throughput, nor increased bicycle usage downtown. This calls into question whether the bike lane should remain in place. We think not.

We recommend the demonstration bikeway on 108th Ave. NE be removed, and the pre-existing vehicle travel lanes be re-established.

Main Street Bikeway Project

We believe the Main Street Bikeway Project must be rejected. The timing is not appropriate given the apparent impact on the capacity of Main Street and the dynamic nature of land use and major transportation project implementation currently funded and/or being considered.

Bishop-Woosley memo to Commission, March 28, 2019, 108th Ave. NE Bikeway Demo and Main St. Bikeway Project

1. Main Street between Bellevue Way and 112th Ave. is a longstanding five lane arterial through Downtown, connecting Lake Washington Blvd. in Medina and West Bellevue to the Wilburton Subarea crossing I-405.
2. Vulcan Real Estate has announced plans for a three tower 877,000 square foot office project with ground level retail that fronts on Main St., 106th Ave. NE and NE 2nd St. The first phase will have 925 below-grade parking stalls included. This just one of the many expected major development projects expected in Downtown as a result of our dynamic city and the major up-zone of Downtown recently approved by the City Council. This is no time to be reducing the capacity of our street system for system mobility.
3. Not reported by staff in this analysis, but reported by staff in the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Concurrency Update Report, produced on Dec. 31 of each year based on the prior year data, the Level of Service calculations at the intersection of Bellevue Way/Main St. increased dramatically when the eastbound dedicated through bike lane on Main St. was added and the curb eastbound vehicle lane was converted from a through-right turn lane to a right turn lane only to accommodate the bike lane.

Report Year	Level of Service v/c	Letter Grade
2016	0.74	C
2017	0.74	C
2018	0.96	E+

The large increase in v/c, the official metric for concurrency, suggests the significant difference between the 0.74 v/c calculation (LOS C) for 2017 and 0.96 (LOS E+) is the installation of the eastbound bike lane and removal of the second eastbound through vehicle lane plus some modest development completion.

This is very significant and a real-life example of the dramatic impact of the removal of a vehicle travel lane at a critical intersection. This diminishment of the LOS impacts the traffic flow and delay on Bellevue Way through the north-south corridor as much as or more than Main St. To our knowledge, this has not been evaluated.

4. The evaluation provided by staff of comparing traffic operations on Main St. after the above lane removal to Alternative 1 and 2 with additional lane removal in areas that are not impacted by the traffic signal at Bellevue Way is erroneous and moot. After deteriorating an intersection from LOS C to E+, changing the downstream lane configuration is insignificant to the downstream flow, as it is controlled by the upstream traffic signal.
5. NE 2nd Street has long been planned as a 5 lane arterial from Bellevue Way to 116th Ave. NE crossing I-405 with a new bridge and a half diamond interchange to and from the south at I-405. This long planned arterial access to Downtown now is in serious question given the current state of the real estate development on the east side of I-405 in the NE 2nd St. vicinity. This makes Main St. the most likely location for the access to I-405 from the southern portion of Downtown. Having a Priority Bicycle Corridor cross I-405 on Main St. with half-diamond freeway access ramps creates a conflict between drivers, freight movers and bicyclists.

6. The Wilburton Subarea Planning Study has not been reviewed by the Planning Commission nor the City Council. The Draft Environmental Impact Study based on the Citizen's Advisory Council has not been published as a Final EIS. Therefore, we do not know what the official plan for the Wilburton Subarea will be.
7. The City Council has identified the Grand Connection which crosses I-405 in the vicinity of the Pedestrian Corridor on NE 6th St. as a long-range vision. This would be a logical bicycle crossing of I-405.
8. WSDOT's plan for the Main Street bridge over I-405 is to remove and replace it starting in the 3rd or 4th Q, 2019, with overall project completion in 2024. Therefore, the Main St. corridor will not be available during the construction period as a safe bicycle corridor.
9. WSDOT has indicated that their plans for the new Main St. bridge will be forward compatible with a decision by the city to access Downtown at either Main St. or at NE 2nd St.
10. The City Council has budgeted a 2019 transportation study with WSDOT to evaluate alternatives for crossing I-405 and access to the southern portion of Downtown. That evaluation is scheduled for the 2nd and 3rd Q of 2019. It will advance our knowledge base for access to Downtown.
11. The 2009 Pedestrian & Bicycle Transportation Plan Report identified five east-west Bicycle Priority Corridors with one on the north side of Downtown and one on the south side of Downtown. The Plan goal established in 2009 was to complete two East-West Corridors within 10 years.

Corridor EW-1 (the 520 Trail) is complete. Corridor EW-4 (the Mountain-to-Sound Greenway) has a significant CIP project funded to cross Factorial Blvd. which, with on-street bicycle lanes on SE 36th St. and Eastgate Way SE using the pedestrian/bicycle bridge across I-90 at 150th Ave. SE and the I-90 Trail on the north side of I-90 will virtually complete the corridor in Bellevue. Corridor EW-2 (the Downtown-Overlake Connection) has a dedicated multiuse trail on the NE 12th St. bridge over I-405 and the BelRed Corridor projects are establishing the trail through the Spring District and the BelRed subarea.

There is no need to pre-emptively remove vehicle travel lanes in Downtown on Main St. to meet the aspirational goals of the 2009 Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan.

Conclusion

Pre-emptively removing a vehicle lane on Main St. to accommodate few if any additional bicycle trips (no projection of new bicycle trips is provided) is pre-mature and an action we will not support.

We respectfully request the Commission defer its decision on the Main St. Bikeway Project until the traffic analysis identified in item 10 above is complete and clear metrics are established by the City Council identifying when vehicle travel lanes may be re-purposed for bikeways.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on this critically important decision.