

# NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY PROPOSED BALLOT MEASURES

## FIRE FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

### Background

Beginning in 2014, the Bellevue City Council has had an ongoing discussion about the city's ability to fund the long list of capital projects needed to better serve the entire community. Despite current initiatives to prioritize and strengthen Bellevue's infrastructure, forecast data shows a significant funding gap. The Bellevue City Council is presently considering two measures which would appear on the November 2016 ballot. These measures would fund important transportation and fire facility projects.

### Financial Considerations for Property Owners

The City of Bellevue's Property Tax rate has decreased for the past five years. The 2016 rate is 94 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value (\$601/year for a median Bellevue home). The City of Bellevue currently has the lowest rate of Washington cities with a population greater than 20,000. An average property tax bill in Bellevue sends only 11 cents of every dollar to the city to fund municipal services; the remaining 89 cents goes to King County, schools, and other jurisdictions.

The approximate cost of both potential measures to the average home owner would be **\$160/year**, with \$80 allocated to Fire Facilities and \$80 for transportation improvements.

### FIRE FACILITIES

City policies prioritize the ability to provide critical services to the community through continuous fire and emergency operations during earthquakes, power outages, and other emergency events. The Fire Department has 10 facilities to maintain, each with unique and special conditions required to operate these facilities 24 hours per day.

In 2014, the Bellevue Fire Department developed a master plan to address deficiencies in its fire facilities and to finance the improvements. This proposed ballot measure would fund many projects in the master plan.



*Present facilities do not accommodate modern fire apparatus in vital stations.*

#### Some current challenges and deficiencies identified in the master plan:

- Average fire station is nearly 38 years old.
- None of the fire stations meet current seismic code as an essential facility.
  - Fire station mechanical systems are past their projected life.
- Fire Station bays are too small for today's larger and heavier fire trucks.
  - Downtown is growing rapidly and needs its own fire station.

#### Overarching Goals include:

- Improve and maintain service levels across the city for the next 30 years
- Implement seismic improvements to all fire stations
- Provide improvements in areas of training and technology

#### Examples of projects that are under consideration:

- Build a downtown fire station
- Rebuild/remodel major support stations (4&6)
- Add seismic protection to existing fire stations



## TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Department faces a backlog of neighborhood safety, connectivity, sidewalk, bicycle, technology, congestion relief, and maintenance projects. New sustained funding will be needed to reduce this backlog and build new neighborhood projects. The types of projects proposed are intended to better connect people to schools, parks, transit and other services. Supplementing safety and maintenance programs with additional revenue would accelerate traffic safety improvements and move the city towards a safer transportation system.



*School walking conditions on 128<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE*

### **Current safety challenges for Bellevue Transportation:**

- Collisions involving pedestrians were 85% higher in 2015 compared with 2010.
- Backlog of over 30 high-priority neighborhood sidewalk projects, as identified by community members. At current funding levels, implementation could take more than 30 years.
- Safer walkways near schools. For instance, 77% of the streets in the Chinook Middle School walk area don't have a sidewalk or pathway.
  - A backlog of 55 pedestrian crossings improvements.
- Funding shortfall for 52 projects providing 57 miles of new or upgraded bike facilities citywide.
  - Backlog of 35 traffic calming projects in neighborhoods.
  - Backlog of 12 school traffic improvement projects.

### **Overarching Goals include:**

- Improve neighborhood safety by reducing vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian collisions
- New Sidewalks/Trails: Sidewalks that provide walking access to neighborhoods, schools, parks, shopping and other local neighborhood destinations
- New Bike Facilities
- Sidewalk and Trail Maintenance Enhancement
- Enhancing Technology for Safety and Traffic Management
- Reduce neighborhood congestion

### **Examples of projects under consideration:**

- New sidewalk on 128<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE to improve school and park access – see picture above
- New downtown midblock crosswalks with pedestrian-activated flashing lights
- New bike facilities on 108<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE, from Main St. to NE 12<sup>th</sup> St.
- Traffic calming project - Woodridge
- Repair I-90 trail, from Eastgate to Sunset
- Implement new Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) projects
- Increase street sweeping frequencies in all Bellevue neighborhoods

### **Next Steps**

The City Council will decide as early as July 25<sup>th</sup> whether to place these measures on the November 2016 ballot.

