

2024-2033 Bellevue TDM Plan: Public Input

From March 1 to May 15, 2024, Bellevue TDM conducted an online open house via the city's Engaging Bellevue platform. The draft 2024-2033 TDM Plan was hosted on the platform for review and included several guided questions and opportunities for the public to offer comments, suggestions and questions for Bellevue TDM staff. Bellevue TDM staff categorized the input into six themes. There were additional comments that were out-of-scope for Bellevue TDM and fell outside of these categories. The in-scope input was used to refine some of the Plan's strategies and work program elements and was shared with relevant city departments and external agency partners. The out-of-scope input was shared as well. Below is a brief description of Bellevue TDM, followed by the identified input themes with responses from Bellevue TDM staff. The public input process garnered a total of 56 comments and ideas. Again, thank you for your valuable participation!

Bellevue TDM Program Background: The City of Bellevue Transportation Demand Management program (Bellevue TDM) encourages the use of sustainable modes including transit, carpooling, vanpooling, walking, and biking, as well as telework and compressed work weeks. Through the Choose Your Way Bellevue (CYWB) website and mobile app, Bellevue TDM encourages Bellevue employers, property managers, workers, residents and students to switch to sustainable travel options. Program elements include aiding employers in developing and maintaining Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) programs at their worksites; aiding large development projects in developing and maintaining Transportation Management Programs (TMPs) to mitigate travel demand associated with those project sites; Bellevue SchoolPool, a collaborative program that encourages families and students to explore sustainable transportation options for their commute to and from school; and CYWB Rewards, an online trip logging, rewards and ridematching system. Bellevue TDM also offers personalized trip planning assistance, employer and property manager mini-grants of up to \$10,000 for sustainable commute-related one-time capital projects; rebates for employee transit passes; and worksite transportation fairs to promote sustainable transportation options available to employees.

The TDM Plan aims to help make Bellevue's respective transportation planning and land use planning visions feasible. By replacing drive-alone trips with sustainable mode trips, space can be freed up on the transportation network, and a more multi-modal Bellevue can be realized; one that is safer, healthier, less congested, more vibrant, and more economically thriving.

To learn more about how you can travel sustainably in Bellevue and to learn how to log your sustainable trips and receive rewards, please visit Choose Your Way Bellevue for more information:

<https://chooseyourwaybellevue.org/commuters>.

Public Input Themes:

1. Pedestrian travel and safety (20 comments):

Many respondents mentioned the need to provide a safe and more convenient walking environment in Bellevue for pedestrians. Several respondents mentioned the need to improve crosswalk signals that prioritize pedestrians over cars; implement traffic calming measures (reduce speed limits) to reduce vehicle speeds; and educate all roadway users on how to travel safely with different modes of travel. Pedestrians feel that they are second-class citizens compared to car drivers and find it difficult to walk through Bellevue due to large superblocks and unsafe conditions primarily due to car driver behaviors. They feel that people are incentivized to use cars due to things like traffic

signals prioritizing left-turns before pedestrians can cross, which disincentivizes pedestrians from using the space to get where they need to go. One respondent said it feels like the city is prioritizing car movement efficiency over their pedestrian safety. Much of this input focused on the need for intersection improvements and several respondents indicated areas (corridors) where improvements should be made:

The following are streets most often cited as needing improved pedestrian accommodation:

- Bel-Red Road
- Bellevue Way*
- W. Lake Sammamish Pkwy SE
- Neighborhood streets around downtown (e.g., 110th Pl SE)
- 130th and 132nd Aves NE

The following are intersections/crosswalks most often cited as needing improvements:

- NE 2nd St and 106th Ave NE
- More pedestrian crosswalks along Bellevue Way NE
- NE 10th St & 156th Ave by Crossroads
- NE 13th St & 156th Ave by Crossroads
- NE 9th St & 108th Ave downtown

*Bellevue Way received the most comments. One respondent indicated that “Bellevue Way through downtown should be a Complete Street like 108th Ave, with bike lanes, narrow car lanes, and pedestrian crossings.”

2. Improved bike infrastructure and safety (20 comments):

Similar to the pedestrian input received, respondents want to feel safe in Bellevue when they ride bikes. By building better bike infrastructure, the city can help keep cyclists safe, primarily through building out its dedicated bike lane network (e.g., Bike Bellevue) and improving bike traffic signals at intersections. Additional comments included the need to improve east-west bicycle travel; create secure areas to park bikes; better connect bike lanes/infrastructure to transit (2 Line); and a desire to reduce vehicle traffic lanes and convert some to bike lanes. Bikes are often encroaching in the pedestrian space because it's unsafe to ride in the road given that when the cars are traveling at high speeds, drivers may not be paying attention or giving adequate passing space. Some respondents reference the Bike Bellevue initiative and would like to see it fully implemented. One respondent stated: “Implement Bike Bellevue to provide more opportunities to safely access businesses and the city on bike. It's almost impossible to connect to transit via bike because there are no connected routes or safe infrastructure. A complete bike network would provide this for many in Bellevue.”

Furthermore, respondents indicated that Bellevue needs more separated and protected bike lanes to protect bicyclists from fast-moving cars. There are several busy streets where both pedestrians and bicyclists are traveling along these busy streets without any separation between the road and peds/bikes – The respondent sentiment suggested implementing quick, short-term treatments until the infrastructure catches up with the demand (e.g., Bike Bellevue).

Corridors that need bicycle treatments according to respondents:

- Main St downtown
- Bellevue Way NE
- W Lake Sammamish Pkwy SE
- Neighborhood streets around downtown (e.g., 110th Pl SE)
- 130th and 132nd Aves NE
- 156th Ave NE

3. Improved transit (rail/bus) (14 comments):

Respondents indicate that transit in Bellevue is too slow, inconvenient, and doesn't bring them where they need to go, like work, shopping, community centers and recreational opportunities. If it takes a person 45-60 minutes on transit compared to 30-45 minutes by car, many will choose the faster option. The typical respondent message was that transit needs to be competitive with cars. Many indicated that for them to use transit would require multiple transfers, long and gratuitous bus route travel, and long travel times that are not feasible. Several indicated that there needs to be more robust transit service with greater frequencies – Bellevue needs more than just one RapidRide service. One respondent explained that they want to travel by transit, but do not have bus or light rail options where they live; could drive to a park and ride but that it would be most likely full; and are stressed driving on a freeway onramp in Eastgate where there are often car collisions.

Another respondent explains the transit deficiencies in and around Bellevue:

“The B line from downtown Bellevue to OTC [Overlake Transit Center] takes half an hour and forget about going to the airport which takes 50+ minutes on the bus vs. 20 min in a car. If we added occasional express/nonstop service between hubs in the network, public transit would be so much more useful and actually be competitive with a personal car albeit require just a bit of forethought. If a nonstop service existed, I would definitely wait for the next light rail service between downtown Bellevue and say Seattle vs. taking my car or paying the ~\$40 it costs on rideshare to get into the city these days.”

Others mentioned the need to connect bike lanes/infrastructure to the 2 Line; and demonstrated support for bus only lanes; transit signal priority; and more direct bus routes.

4. More microtransit/micromobility options (6 comments):

Respondents want more “Bellhop, please!” While respondents like the Bellhop service, they want more of it so they do not have long wait times; want to use it to access the transit networks; want more microtransit options like King County Metro’s MetroFlex service; and would like to see a bike/scooter share program that is located near transit stops/facilities like the City of Seattle does. Providing these services in Bellevue will help people better access transit and get them where they need to go without having to use a car and must be expanded to serve more areas in Bellevue.

5. Paid parking/disincentives (3 comments):

Respondents acknowledged that driving solo in Bellevue has been made easy by roadway and parking design. One respondent stated: “Our city is basically a big sign that says, ‘Please Drive Alone!’” The respondent added that, “One of the biggest incentives to driving alone in Bellevue is that there is cheap parking everywhere; the city should add a goal to make the cost of parking accurately reflect its true cost – reflecting the fact that the city wants to discourage solo driving. In addition, there should be car-free streets that basically say, ‘Please walk or bike.’”

6. Rules of the road for all users (2 comments):

Two respondents indicated that all users of the road need to better understand the rules they must follow so that all remain safe. Drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians need to be educated on what the social norms and rules of the road are, especially as we all share the same infrastructure. Users of the system need to understand things like safe distances between modes (e.g., cars and bikes), intersection etiquette/rules, and rules pertaining to bicycle sidewalk use. One idea was to have more wayfinding signage/brochures that clearly indicates travel options, directions and rules for all users. One of the two respondents expressed the need for bicyclists to yield to pedestrians, especially in high-traffic areas like crosswalks.

Bellevue TDM Response:

We would like to thank all those who took the time to review the draft 2024-2033 TDM Plan and provide comments, answer questions, and offer suggestions. The above-mentioned themed responses, while valuable, fall outside the scope of TDM program work. TDM is the practice of educating and encouraging workers and residents to use sustainable transportation modes over solo-driving. TDM efforts aim to help preserve citywide mobility and help mitigate climate change and environmental degradation by getting more travelers using sustainable modes like transit, carpool/vanpool, biking and walking, as well as having options to telework and choose flexible work schedules. Bellevue TDM conducts this work by engaging with Bellevue employers and their employees, property managers, residents, students, and visitors to offers assistance, incentives, and resources to help them travel sustainably.

The above-mentioned comments will be provided by Bellevue TDM staff to the appropriate city departments and teams, as well as to the appropriate external agencies like transit providers King County Metro and Sound Transit. The input provided is important for those responsible entities so that they are more aware of the public’s concerns and suggestions and can consider this input when making planning decisions. Bellevue TDM’s sharing of respondent input with its partner agencies aligns with its prioritization of greater collaboration and coordination as reflected in 2024-2033 TDM Plan strategies 6-2 and 6-3:

6-2 Enhanced Facilities/Amenities Coordination (All audiences) Consider exploration of concepts and coordination with other city or transit agency staff to enhance non-drive-alone mode facilities and amenities, particularly at key geographic locations for non-drive-alone travel, such as transit centers or transfer points. Work toward enhancing these locations with information resources and amenities for utilizing alternative modes, including enhancements such as exceptional real-time information, transit, bike parking, bike sharing, carsharing, drop-off/pickup spots, enhanced

wayfinding, and even centers for telework or coworking. This activity also may include planning and coordination to facilitate the addition of secure bicycle parking and/or other transportation amenities at the Bellevue Transit Center. Other locations may be explored if feasible and warranted.

6-3 Internal and External Coordination (All audiences) Coordination and collaboration with other city staff, transit agencies, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and other agencies will be needed for upcoming projects such as the Sound Transit Stride BRT and high-occupancy and express toll lanes on I-405; Eastrail multi-use trail corridor and the launch of the next phase of the 2 Line light rail service in 2025 (the full line connecting Mercer Island and Seattle). This work can include maintaining communication and collaboration with other city departments to ensure opportunities to share TDM messaging and sustainable transportation related infrastructure project and programming messaging are taken advantage of on an ongoing basis. Related work can include coordination on TDM education and incentivization planning and implementation related to infrastructure projects. The collaboration could potentially include Bellevue TDM advocating for the provision of transit service and/or bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and for other non-drive-alone modes where the TDM function has particular insight or ability that makes this role beneficial.

Regarding the comments about the need for paid parking/disincentives, the Bellevue 2024-2033 TDM Plan prioritizes the need to continue working with employers and property managers on worksite/development site parking management strategies. Parking management strategies have been shown to be the most effective solution to reduce solo driving to/from worksites. Parking demand has been altered by the pandemic, a reality that will be considered when working with employers in Bellevue on parking management. Within Strategy 4-3, Bellevue TDM incorporates the need to address parking management and explore innovative ideas such as encouraging employers and employees to move away from monthly parking passes and towards more flexible options such as daily parking. The strategy components are:

4-3 Parking Management (Audience: Employers/Property Managers) - Pursue parking management in the following ways:

- Encourage employers to not subsidize parking or if they are going to do so, to also offer the same subsidy as a cashout instead and/or to subsidize sustainable commute modes at the same or higher level.
- Encourage employers and property managers to provide preferential carpool and vanpool parking.
- Encourage and incentivize employers and property managers to allow employees/tenants to pay for parking on a daily basis without penalty as compared to monthly parking. Strategize how to get developers/property managers/employers to promote daily parking options and to subsidize sustainable mode commuting instead of or in addition to parking; emphasize where employers can save costs through parking management.

Regarding comments received about the need for more micromobility/microtransit options, bringing more of these services to Bellevue (e.g., Bellhop microtransit) is out of scope for Bellevue TDM. However, we have included in the Bellevue 2024-2033 TDM Plan a strategy that calls for the need to educate stakeholders on the benefits of micromobility/microtransit services in Bellevue and promote these services when made available. The expansion of micromobility and microtransit

options in Bellevue would help expand transit's reach by providing first/last mile connections. See strategy below:

3-7 Shared Micromobility and Microtransit (All audiences) *Proactively build awareness among stakeholders regarding the value of micromobility (i.e., bikeshare and scooter share) and microtransit (i.e. Bellhop) options in Bellevue particularly as it relates to providing first/last mile connections, filling a typical transit network gap. In addition to the promotion of existing services, when and if micromobility and microtransit options expand in Bellevue, Bellevue TDM will promote these options to individuals, businesses (for their employees), and property managers (for their tenants).*

Lastly, respondents mentioned the need for more and improved transit services. Thanks to the recent arrival of Sound Transit's 2 Line starter service and with more transit services on the way to Bellevue, options are only getting better! Sound Transit will be introducing Stride bus rapid transit service and King County Metro will be implementing the K Line RapidRide service in the coming years. One respondent expressed the desire to see more "car-free" streets and the city's Grand Connection program will do just that. The Grand Connection program is a series of projects that will improve the pedestrian experience from Meydenbauer Bay Park through downtown Bellevue across I-405 to Eastrail. The Grand Connection will basically say: "Please, walk and bike."