

CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

February 20, 2020
7:00 P.M.

Shoreline City Hall
Council Chamber

Commissioners Present

Chair Montero
Vice Chair Mork
Commissioner Craft
Commissioner Davis
Commissioner Lin
Commissioner Malek
Commissioner Maul

Staff Present

Nora Gierloff, Planning Manager, Planning and Community Development
Nora Daley-Peng, Senior Transportation Planner
Carla Hoekzema, Planning Commission Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Montero called the regular meeting of the Shoreline Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call by Ms. Hoekzema the following Commissioners were present: Chair Montero, Vice Chair Mork, and Commissioners Craft, Davis, Lin, Malek and Maul.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of February 6, 2020 were accepted as presented.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no general public comments.

STUDY ITEM: 185th STREET MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR STRATEGY

Ms. Daley-Peng advised that the goal of the 185th Street Multimodal Corridor Strategy was to create a vision for the 185th Street Corridor that is future focused and supports the needs of all users (i.e. drivers,

pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders and transit riders and operators). The 185th Street Corridor is composed of three streets: N/NE 185th Street, 10th Avenue NE and NE 180th Street. The corridor was defined during the 185th Station Subarea planning process, with the intent to connect the Aurora Corridor and the North City Business District with the new transportation hub (light rail station) that will be opened in 2024.

Ms. Daley-Peng said the process was kicked off with an outreach series in the fall of 2018 that included a bike tour, walking tour, community drop-in meetings, open house, stakeholder meetings and online surveys. The feedback was used to develop draft options for the three streets, as well as evaluation criteria to compare the options. The options and criteria were presented to the City Council and the public in the spring of 2019. The recommended Preferred Option was presented to and accepted by the City Council in July of 2019. Staff spent the remainder of the summer and early fall refining the Preferred Option, which was adopted by the City Council in October of 2019. Currently, staff is working to package the final report that will be published in about a month.

Ms. Daley-Peng explained that the corridor has distinct characteristics throughout, and no one size fits all. The team's approach was to divide the corridor into five segments and develop typical mid-block cross sections for each one. She walked the Commission through the preferred options for each of the corridor segments:

- **Segment A – NE 185th Street (between Fremont Avenue N and Midvale Avenue NE).** Many of the improvements on Aurora Avenue turn the corner at this intersection and set up the lane configuration for how the street can operate today and into the future. Early on, the team took an approach of not making any changes inside the curb-to-curb roadway. However, as the project evolved and they received community feedback, it was pointed out that they needed to take a look at how to outfit the pedestrian and bicycle network better. It is a missing link to the vision of a complete street. The preferred option provides a bike path that would be level with and adjacent to the sidewalk. The spaces would be separated, and room would also be provided to accommodate the standard amenity zone and trees.

Chair Montero noted that there are two lights between between Aurora Avenue and Midvale Avenue NE. He asked how the street would transition from four lanes to six. Ms. Daley-Peng responded that, just west of Fred Meyer, the number of lanes drops from 5 (4 travel lanes and 1 center turn lane) to four. The entire Midvale intersection would have to be rebuilt to accommodate the transition.

Commissioner Craft asked if the City has a diagram to illustrate the proposed channelization. Ms. Daley-Peng said the study did not include an engineering/channelization plan, but the idea is to address lane changes at the intersections. Testing was done related to lane changes and intersection treatments (signalized and roundabouts) were modeled. It was determined that either treatment would support the type of volumes anticipated in the future. However, she anticipates saturation in terms of automobile capacity. Design and engineering for each of the segments will be done in phases moving forward.

Ms. Daley-Peng advised that there is a pull-down plan for each of the sections, which enables you to see, in illustrative form, what the lanes, bike paths, etc. will look like. There is also a separate chapter for the intersections, themselves.

- **Segment B – N/NE 185th Street (between Midvale Avenue N to 5th Avenue NE).** The configuration for this cross section would accommodate four lanes (2 travel lanes and 2 outside Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes) for frequent bus service and vehicles making right turns. The plan utilizes an asymmetrical approach to the eventual preferred option by holding the north curb to preserve mature trees where possible. The south side of the street is predominantly where the powerlines are located, and aggressive pruning of the trees has been required. The intent is to create a street for the future that provides all of the benefits of a lush green canopy. The bike lanes would be moved from the street to a sidewalk level bike path, and extra wide sidewalks would create a flex zone for amenities such as sidewalk cafes.

Commissioner Craft asked if the trees on the south side of the street would be removed. Ms. Daley-Peng answered that the trees would need to be removed to create space for the bike path, sidewalk and flex zone.

- **Segment C – NE 185th Street (between 5th Avenue NE to 10th Avenue NE).** Sound Transit will do a significant amount of the improvements in this segment to get ready for light rail. The configuration will be three lanes (2 travel lanes, and a center turn lane), buffered bike lanes, and enhanced pedestrian zones.
- **Segment D – 10th Avenue NE (between NE 185th Street to NE 180th Street).** The volumes on this street are lower than NE 185th Street, but they are looking at the corridor for multimodal travel. Part of King County Metro’s long-range plan (Metro Connects) is to establish a route that mirrors the Z configuration of NE 185th Street to 10th Avenue NE, NE 180th Street up to North City, and then beyond to Lake Forest Park. It is important for the development of this cross section that the lanes be at least 11 feet wide to support buses moving through the space. Through outreach, they also learned that having separation from vehicles for bikes was important, and buffered bike lanes will be provided. An asymmetrical approach was also used for this street to respond to the different zoning districts. The west side of the street is zoned MUR-70” and the east side is zoned for MUR-35’. On-street parking will be provided on the west side to support ground-floor retail and/or visitor parking. An 8-foot flex zone and amenity zone would also be provided on both sides of the street.

Chair Montero commented that most of the bicycle traffic actually goes north and cuts around Perkins Lane. Ms. Daley-Peng said they looked north and south beyond the project segment and made recommendations for the 2020 Engineering and Design Manual update. The recommendation was to extend buffered bike lanes on 10th Avenue NE all the way to Perkins Avenue, NE 175th Street, and NE 195th Street. They recommended a shared-use path on the west side of the street north of NE 195th Street as part of the alignment of the Trail Along the Rail. When development projects come in for approval, the Engineering and Design Manual will help guide the required frontage improvements and dedications.

- **Segment E – 180th Street (between 10th Avenue NE and 15th Avenue NE).** The right-of-way on this street is more constrained (60 feet). There is a hill environment, and the current bicycle facilities are sharrows. The goal is to provide more protection, at least on the uphill side, for cyclists via a buffered bike lane. On the downhill side, they were able to fit in an extra wide 6-foot bike lane and still provide 11-foot travel lanes to support both buses and cars. Amenity zones would be located on both sides of the street. This segment of the City is rapidly redeveloping, and they worked hard to accommodate what has recently been constructed and is currently being constructed.

Ms. Daley-Peng observed that Shoreline’s population continues to grow, and they need park space for people to enjoy. The team identified four opportunity sites along the corridor for better multimodal connections, placemaking and enhanced open space. The sites include:

- **Opportunity Site 1** is the corner open lot behind Spiro’s, which recently received a beautiful gateway mural.
- **Opportunity Site 2** is an empty lot on the south side of NE 185th Street near the Ashworth Intersection. Some King County Conservation Funds were received for some property acquisition.
- **Opportunity Site 3** is a trail concept for the Trail Along the Rail that roughly runs parallel to the future light rail.
- **Opportunity Site 4** is already Rotary Park, but the concept is to expand.

Commissioner Maul asked if Opportunity Site 2 is owned by King County. Ms. Daley-Peng clarified that the City received King County Conservation Funding to purchase the land, with an agreement that 85% of the land must fit within the definition of open space in perpetuity. However, it can be used as public space.

Ms. Daley-Peng summarized that this is a significant project, and currently, the City has no funding for implementation. The most effective near-term strategy will be setting the vision and aligning incremental redevelopment of frontage improvements so the amenity zones, curbs, bike paths and sidewalks that are built moving forward are consistent with the vision. The City will coordinate with transit agencies (Sound Transit, Community Transit, and Metro) on both near-term improvements such as bus stops and long-term transit planning. Both Metro and Community Transit plan to make connections to the light rail station from the day it opens.

Ms. Daley-Peng summarized that the project delivery approach has been broken into three phases: near-term (now and 5 years out), mid-term (5 to 10 years) and long-term (10+ years). With adoption of the preferred option, changes will soon be made to the Engineering and Design Manual. Staff will continue to work with transit agencies to move the near-term improvements forward. The one physical part of the project that might be able to move forward in the next five years is the Meridian Avenue intersection design, which is one of the City’s designated growth projects and can be funded via a larger pot of money the City receives from traffic impact fees. The mid-term projects could include segment improvements,

intersection improvements, etc. The City will be looking for partnerships and grant funding to stretch the dollars and set the City up for construction of each of the segments in 10 years.

Commissioner Lin observed that, as proposed, NE 185th Street past Fremont Avenue would be narrowed down from six to three lanes. Ms. Daley-Peng responded that Segment A does not propose any changes to the configuration from curb-to-curb. The current situation is what is needed to work today and into the future. Until another study has been done for NE 185th Street from Fremont Avenue heading west, the roadway will continue to operate as it does today. The intent is to make improvements outside of the curb-to-curb, expanding the pedestrian and bicycle area of the right-of-way.

Commissioner Davis pointed out that development would continue to occur near intersections where the transitions will happen, but it will take quite a while for the intersections to be redeveloped. She asked if new development would have to adhere to the new standards in the Engineering Design Manual to accommodate City work that will come at a later date. Ms. Daley-Peng said the idea is to make sure the curb is in the right location and to work through right-of-way dedication to make the pedestrian, bicycle and amenity zone improvements at some point in the future. Commissioner Davis summarized that new development would not be required to provide the bike lanes as part of a project, but they would be required to provide the wider sidewalk segments. The City would have to add the bike lanes and roadway changes at a later time. Ms. Daley-Peng clarified that the approach would be to maintain the bike lanes on NE 185th Street until the City is able to complete the project. However, through incremental redevelopment, the City will ask for a 12-foot dedication, which would be wide enough to build an amenity zone, bike path and sidewalk.

Commissioner Malek asked if staff has had any dialogue with groups such as developers of the Paceline Project. Their entire design concept centers around being able to commute via bicycle, and a 10-year timeline for implementation might not work for them. He suspects that other developers might want to follow suit. Ms. Daley-Peng said several stakeholder meetings were held, including two, well-attended sessions with active developers in Shoreline. She is not sure that representatives from Paceline were present at those meetings, but she has talked to one of the owners. They are very interested in understanding the City's bike network now and into the future. Developers might end up setting the pace for implementation, and having a plan is very important in order to coordinate the efforts of developers with the City's vision.

Commissioner Maul observed that the light rail station will open in 4 years, and the current plan has a 10-year implementation plan. However, it does not include anything about widening the bridge that causes the bottleneck. Unless the bridge is addressed, it will become a significant deterrent. Ms. Daley-Peng said there has been a lot of conversation about widening the bridge, going back to the City negotiating with Sound Transit on mitigation. The City and Sound Transit agreed that the bridge was seismically fit and should not be widened. The current 3-lane configuration is enough to support the transit trips, but the roadway would fail today's standards for auto trip level of service. A bridge wider than Aurora would be needed to continue to move cars the way they do today. The goal is to balance all modes of transportation and maintain a neighborhood corridor character.

Commissioner Maul observed that the neighborhoods will be further away from the light rail stations, and he does not anticipate there will be a neighborhood feel as you approach the bridge. It seems like the plan attempts to make the current system fit what is existing and not really planning for the future.

Commissioner Mork recalled that a number of citizens have commented to the Commission regarding 5th Avenue NE and how it isn't currently working. She asked how the plan would impact traffic on this street. Ms. Daley-Peng said the initial plan called for Segment B to be N/NE 185th Street between Midvale Avenue and 2nd Avenue NE, which is where Sound Transit's mitigation starts. However, based on public feedback and high-level traffic modeling, they learned that a lot of trips come on and off of 5th Avenue, especially west of the bridge. To address this, the 4-lane configuration in Segment B was extended all the way to just before the bridge so that the volumes could be received on 5th Avenue NE. There is less volume on 5th Avenue NE east of the bridge, but it will be closed for more than a year while it is realigned by Sound Transit to fit both the train tracks and the Trail Along the Rail. There is a plan in place to reroute traffic to 10th Avenue NE while that leg of 5th Avenue NE is closed, and Sound Transit will build a temporary urban compact roundabout to manage traffic through the intersection.

Chair Montero asked if the Trail Along the Rail would be completed at the same time as the Sound Transit project. Ms. Daley-Peng answered that Sound Transit would build the shared-use path on the segment on 5th Avenue NE between NE 180th Street up to NE 185th Street as part of reconstructing the street. Sound Transit will also build a shared-use path along the perimeter of the station on both NE 185th Street and 8th Avenue NE. This equates to nearly 10 blocks of shared-use path.

Chair Montero said the only funding source he sees in the plan is for the segment between Meridian and NE 185th Street. He assumes that Segment C will be primarily funded by Sound Transit. Ms. Daley-Peng agreed that Sound Transit would fund about 80% of the work for Segment C, and the idea is that the City would fill in the gaps. This year will be the first time that the plan will be incorporated into the Transportation Improvement Plan, which is presented to the City Council for review and approval each spring. She anticipates that some parts of the plan's implementation will be moved into the Capital Improvement Plan, and the City will start looking for grant opportunities.

Commissioner Craft asked the total cost of implementing Segments A, B, D and E. Ms. Daley-Peng answered that the total cost to implement all of the segments is \$80 million. Commissioner Craft asked about the cost of bridge replacement, and Ms. Daley-Peng didn't have an answer. Commissioner Craft commented that the value proposition of spending \$80 million on something that doesn't get you all the way there doesn't seem to be a good use of funding. He suggested it would be wise for the City to take a hard look at spending an extra \$30 to \$40 million to buttress or additionally reinforce the bridge so it can be expanded. In the long term, that would be a much better idea than trying to shoehorn a concept, at the cost of \$80 million, into something they know is set up to provide a level of service that would be detrimental to the overall operational efficiency of the station.

Ms. Daley-Peng said they need to have a conversation about how the City is evolving. Rather than continuing to encourage auto trips for dense, mixed-use areas around the station, they need to move to a multimodal level of service and start talking about mobility trips. This conversation will occur as part of the Transportation Master Plan update. Chair Craft summarized that the idea is to make vehicular transportation so unpalatable that people choose other modes of transportation. It would be outstanding

to create a carbon free environment, but for the next 30 years, he predicts there will still be a ton of vehicles that need to channel through each day. He suggested that they need to create the capacity, recognizing it could be reduced in the future if it's no longer needed.

Commissioner Malek asked if there are other high-density areas where this model functions or is the City doing something completely new and forward thinking. Ms. Daley-Peng said they have studied models from Bellevue, Kenmore, Olympia, and Bellingham. These communities have adopted multimodal level of service, but there are a lot of different ways to address it. It will be a process of discussing and weighing options.

STUDY ITEM: FINLAND MOBILITY FELLOWSHIP

Ms. Daley-Peng commented that one of her roles as the City's Transportation Planner is to foster the City's transformation from an auto-oriented suburb to a people-centered community that offers a diverse set of transportation options. The Jennings Randolph International Fellowship allowed her an opportunity to learn firsthand about Helsinki, Finland's mobility system and bring that experience back to the City. Through her research, she learned about three intertwined aspects of Helsinki's mobility plan:

- **Policy Transformations.** Finland's population is roughly 5.5 million, which is the size of some of the United State's metro regions. Helsinki's population is about .5 million. Because they are small, they are also nimble. They offer a high quality of life, which attracts talent. Finland was just named the happiest country in the world for the second year in a row. Anne Berner, Finland's former Transport and Communications Minister, had a business woman's background, and she didn't care about being reelected. Instead, she wanted to spearhead policy changes to encourage seamless mobility services between public and private transportation enterprises. The City of Helsinki set a goal that, by 2030, they would be the world's most attractive and knowledgeable city for experimentation and innovation. The policy transformation needed to meet the goal included rewriting laws that would promote trip data, sharing between public and private enterprises and supporting micro-mobility trips (ride hailing, bike share, autonomous transport). These national policies set the table for Finland's smart mobility menu.

Helsinki Central Railway Station is the backbone of the City's transportation system. It opened in 1919 and is still a beehive of activity that is used by about 400,000 people per day. It offers a lot of fast, affordable options for people to make local trips. She learned that building mobility options off of a strong public transport hub is absolutely key. They have the rail, and the lighter weight options on the surface spring off of it.

Helsinki has an open space network (Green Fingers, Blue Palm) that has been in place for more than 100 years. There are six greenbelts that extend from the harbor up and fan out through the City. These parkways provide greenery and ways for people to move via jogging, biking, walking, car, tram, etc. Together they create a network of open spaces and pathways that allow people to play and move comfortably throughout the city.

In Helsinki's city center, 36% of the trips are made by walking and 11% by biking. In Shoreline and many other cities in the United states, only about 2% of the trips are made by walking. This

is a testimony to the success of Helsinki's great pedestrian and bicycle network. It is also a result of Helsinki's City Bikes Program that launched in 2016 and attracted more bicycle users through shared convenience. She met with Oskari Kaupinmaki, Helsinki's Bicycle Traffic Project Coordinator, who stressed that when you make good bicycling infrastructure, you get a better pedestrian environment, as well, and it's safer for everyone. She and Mr. Kaupinmaki biked on the mile-long Baana, which opened in 2016. It is a converted railroad line into a pedestrian and bicycle trail that connects the downtown with the western harbor. It is heavily used and already needs to be expanded. Mr. Kaupinmaki shared some ideas that could be utilized in Shoreline.

Helsinki has been able to increase bike ridership by soliciting ideas from the public such as, more secure bicycle parking, more extensive and connective bike networks, safer bike trails through more separation from vehicles, well-maintained bicycle facilities, especially in the winter, and better detours around construction.

- **Innovation.** The widespread use of smart phones and the rise of a sharing economy has shifted personal choices from ownership to shared usership. Using a GPS-interfaced app on smart phones, customers have a menu of travel options at their fingertips, including pricing information, real-time pickup locations and the ability to pay per trip or set up a monthly travel pass. She met with representatives from a startup company (Whim) and downloaded and successfully used their app while she was in Helsinki to purchase tickets for metro, bus, City Bikes and a ferry ride. She shared how the Whim platform works and its philosophy of putting the consumer first. Whim continues to create and expand to provide more and more options for its users.
- **Network.** She took a day trip to Espoo, and met with Johanna Nyberg, the Head of City Traffic and Project Manager for City Bikes in Espoo. Espoo has a lot in common with Shoreline, and she wanted to see if the offerings she saw in Helsinki would be scalable to a smaller community like Shoreline. One of Ms. Nyberg's mottos is to provide direct pedestrian and bicycle access from stations from every direction. Espoo, like Shoreline, built and opened five metro stations, with a new line into Helsinki. Ms. Nyberg was part of the pedestrian and bicycle network planning around the stations. She also felt strongly that bicycle and pedestrian access should be maintained throughout construction. She uses data she receives from City Bike users to inform how to rebalance and add more bike stations.

Ms. Daley-Peng commented that Shoreline is part of one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. In the next 30 years, the region is expected to grow more than 40%. The goal is to grow but at the same time keep the cities likeable and loveable. She suggested the answer might lie in how they synergize growth with transportation choices. Two light rail stations will open in Shoreline in just four years, and the timing couldn't be better for the City to shape the future for multimodal transportation within the community and beyond. Shoreline has already put a few policies in place to move in that direction.

Chair Montero asked if the City Bike Program offers both standard and e-bikes, and Ms. Daley-Peng answered standard only. Chair Montero asked if there is also a lot of motorcycle and/or scooter traffic in Helsinki. Ms. Daley-Peng said she didn't see a lot of motorcycle traffic, but there are some electric scooters. They are having problems with people competing for space on the sidewalks, too. Chair

Montero asked if helmets are provided or if people have to use their own. Ms. Daley-Peng said helmets are optional, and she brought her own.

Vice Chair Mork asked about the terrain in Helsinki. Ms. Daley-Peng said there are some hills, but the terrain is quite gentle. Vice Chair Mork asked if people of every age group use the bicycles. Ms. Daley-Peng said she mostly saw business people biking in Helsinki, and City Bikes are limited to people who are 16 years and older.

Chair Montero asked if the open space network is mostly recreational or if it also provides transportation between cities and districts. Ms. Daley-Peng said a lot are boulevards that support cars and buses, but sometimes they branch off into just pedestrian and bicycle paths through beautiful, green spaces. They also have lovely parkways along the waterfront and hop overs to some of the islands. Chair Montero asked if the section along the railroad is similar to what Shoreline is doing with its Rails to Trails Project. Ms. Daley-Peng answered affirmatively.

Commissioner Lin asked if Espoo has extensive bike and pedestrian trails like Helsinki. Ms. Daley-Peng said her impression is that there aren't as many. Like Shoreline, there are places that don't have sidewalks. She noticed that people were very compliant to the rules, and drivers yield to buses, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Chair Montero observed that conversations about cars versus pedestrians/bicyclists can be controversial in Shoreline. He asked if this attitude is prevalent in Helsinki, too. Ms. Daley-Peng said Helsinki has some of the same struggles that exist in cities in the United States. There are still plenty of cars and traffic jams, and they don't believe they will ever reach the point of being a car-free city. However, Helsinki is working to position itself to be a global city and attract international talent. They see quality of life, pedestrian pathways, parkways, bicycle paths, saunas, etc. as economic benefits, and the government is leading the change.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no committee reports or Commissioner announcements.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

Ms. Gierloff said the March 5th agenda will be a continued work session on proposed Development Code amendments related to professional offices in R-8 and R-12 zones.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.



William Montero
Chair, Planning Commission



Carla Hoekzema
Clerk, Planning Commission