

CITY OF SHORELINE

SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING (Via Zoom)

February 17, 2022
7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present

Chair Pam Sager
Vice Chair Julius Rwamashongye
Commissioner Jack Malek
Commissioner Janelle Callahan
Commissioner Andy Galuska
Commissioner Mei-shiou Lin

Staff Present

Nora Daley-Peng, Sr. Transportation Planner
Kendra Dedinsky, Traffic Engineer
Rachael Markle, Planning Director
Andrew Bauer, Planning Manager
Nytasha Walters, Transportation Services Manager
Julie Ainsworth-Taylor, Assistant City Attorney
Carla Hoekzema, Planning Commission Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Ms. Hoekzema called the roll.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was accepted as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of February 3, 2022 were accepted as presented.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

STUDY ITEM: TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE: AUTO LEVEL OF SERVICE APPROACH

Senior Transportation Planner Nora Daley-Peng introduced this item regarding Auto Level of Service options that define the adequacy of general-purpose vehicles' capacity and flow on the city's arterials. She briefly discussed the purpose of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP), the project timeline, the City's multimodal approach, and Multi Modal Level of Service (MMLOS) policy considerations. Traffic Engineer Kendra Dedinsky continued the presentation, which was staff's third presentation regarding the Transportation Master Plan (TMP). She discussed what Level of Service (LOS) is, how it is measured, the existing auto policy, and menu of intersection LOS options.

Options:

1. Individual Intersection Approach (status quo) – Continue measuring delay at individual intersections on arterials with universal LOS D standard.

Pros: Simple to oversee and consistent across City; ensures relatively low vehicle delay across the City.

Cons: Requires the highest number of mitigation projects resulting in high costs to developers and the City; conflicts with other modal goals/priority networks.

- 2a. District Approach by Zoning Designation – Continue measuring delay at individual intersections on arterials but vary allowable LOS by area type: Commercial/High Density Zoning and Residential Zoning.

Pros: maintains simplicity in development reviews; more context sensitive: helps avoid building infrastructure that is inappropriate in a denser land use setting; lower cost than the current status quo.

Cons: Must be carefully crafted to avoid feeling arbitrary; can potentially lead to “edge issues”; zoning may change, causing inconsistencies or the need to update LOS standards and associated growth projects; could provide for less mitigation in commercial pockets that lack robust transportation options such as Richmond Beach.

- 2b. Revised District Approach by Centers (preferred) – Continue measuring delay at individual intersections on arterials but vary allowable LOS by area type: Candidate Countywide Centers (148th Station area, 185th Station area, Shoreline Place and Town Center) and state routes; and the rest of the city.

Pros: Maintains simplicity in development reviews as the measure applies to individual intersections; most context sensitive option – lower cost, helps avoid building infrastructure that is inappropriate in denser settings, but still requires mitigations in areas with less robust transportation choices.

Cons: Can potentially lead to “edge issues” but fewer than with option 2a.

3. Districts & Corridors Averaging Approach – Continue measuring delay at intersections on arterials but vary allowable LOS by area type: Residential and Commercial/High Density. Measure volume-weighted average along corridors which would allow for a higher level of delay. This is a more complex option. Kent is an example of a city that does this.

Pros: Provides flexibility in siting intersection capacity improvements; helps avoid building infrastructure that is inappropriate in denser settings. Potentially matches the “driver experience” – it’s a delay along a route, not at a single location.

Cons: Adds complexity to development analysis and review; must be carefully crafted to avoid feeling arbitrary; can potentially lead to “edge issues”, allows significantly more vehicle delay than current standard.

She reviewed a chart showing a comparison of intersection LOS options. Staff and the consultant believe that Option 2b rises to the top in terms of balancing competing citywide needs. This is the preferred option. Option 1 promotes vehicle capacity but that is at a high cost to growth, development, walkability and bikeability. Option 2a strikes a better balance but has some concerns. Option 3 frees up capital for walkability and bikeability but could be perceived as a poor fit for some areas of the City that lack transportation options.

Questions/Comments:

Commissioner Galuska asked for clarification about where the impacts would be measured for a project – would they look at impacts in the Candidate Countywide Centers or projects within the Centers? Ms. Dedinsky replied that it would be both. Developers in any part of the city pay per-trip fees to mitigate failures wherever they occur. At a localized level staff also reviews a project’s impact on a specific intersection surrounding a project. The project’s impact would be reviewed against whatever level of service has been set around an area. Staff would look both at systemic and localized impacts. This is how the City currently approaches this and most likely how they will continue to approach it. Commissioner Galuska asked: If there is a proposed project in the Richmond Beach area, and it had a traffic impact at the intersection of 104 and 99, under 2B would they look at the intersection under Level E because it’s in the Countywide Center or does the project have to be in the Countywide Center? Ms. Dedinsky replied that all projects would have to meet the Countywide Center intent. She commented that this would help somewhat to incentivize growth in the Countywide Centers as opposed to outside the Centers.

Modeling: Ms. Dedinsky continued the presentation and reviewed models of existing and projected PM levels of service around the City. She summarized the modeling results and impacts based on the various options.

Vice Chair Rwamashongye asked: When you changed the LOS from D to E, did you also do a study to see what benefits or changes in the pedestrian crossing time would be at those intersections? Ms. Dedinsky replied there are not any high-level modeling tools to do that in the engineering industry. She agrees that this is incredibly important to consider. Widening intersections results in a tradeoff in pedestrians and bicyclists travel time in addition to safety. She noted that improving vehicle capacity is

always at the expense of pedestrians. She commented they could include a high-level table of what this might look like.

Vice Chair Rwamashongye asked: Since this is a 20-year plan and climate change is very important, did you consider idle times and emissions at the intersections? Ms. Dedinsky acknowledged that idle times do increase emissions, but she has seen that increasing vehicle capacity ultimately invites more people to drive which clogs up the intersections. Ms. Daley-Peng added that staff is planning on coming back to the Commission in March to talk about the prioritization and performance process for these projects. They are measuring what they want to prioritize the projects that will help the City get to a better future. She commented that the City is doing a Climate Action Plan update in tandem with the TMP update. They are aware that approximately 56% of the City's greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation emissions. She will be coming back to the Commission with a more in-depth conversation about this.

Vice Chair Rwamashongye commented that the impacts to freight transport also need to be considered. The cost of goods and services might go up because of delays in transportation, and that cost gets transferred to the consumer. Ms. Dedinsky agreed that this is a factor, but it is not particularly significant from an economic perspective. She did not think it would be noticeable enough to be passed on to the consumer. She spoke to the importance of juggling competing priorities. She acknowledged that staff is focusing on the walkability part of the equation because most of the feedback they have received from the public has to do the high priority on sidewalks, walkability, etc. This is one reason that staff prefers Option 2b because it balances vehicle mobility with pedestrian access.

Supplementing Intersection LOS: Volume/Capacity The calculation of the (V/C) Ratio = Peak hour traffic volume in peak direction/theoretical capacity in peak hour direction. The current standard is V/C of .90 or lower on principal and minor arterials. Three options are being considered.

Options:

1. Continue using V/C Ratio of .90 or lower for principal/minor arterials (Status Quo).

Pros: Provides a non-intersection-based metric for principal and minor arterials

Cons: Simplistic methodology prescribes one solution to mitigate impacts (typically roadway widening) which conflicts with modal priorities in growth areas. Adhering to .9 standard in areas of growth may be cost prohibitive given necessary ROW acquisition to accomplish widening. This would add complexity to development review and is not an industry standard.

2. No supplemental measure, remove V/C measure altogether.

Pros: This option removes a metric that is not routinely applied as an industry standard. Simplifies development review. Does not force a solution of widening corridors to achieve the standard. Avoids building infrastructure that is inappropriate in a setting.

Cons: Removes a non-intersection-based metric for principal and minor arterials.

3. Refined V/C ratio for principal/minor arterials – district approach by Centers (Preferred). This would have a V/C ratio of 1.1 or lower for principal/minor arterials in Candidate Countywide Centers and along state routes. There would be a V/C ratio of .90 or lower for principal/minor arterials everywhere else. This option consistently relates to intersection LOS.

Pros: Provides non-intersection-based metric for principal and minor arterials. More context sensitive: helps avoid building infrastructure that is inappropriate in a setting. Consistent with intersection LOS standard.

Cons: Prescribes one solution to mitigate impacts (typically roadway widening). Adds complexity to development review and is not an industry standard.

Ms. Dedinsky reviewed 2044 intersection project impacts of each option. She summarized that staff believes the district approach by Centers appears to be the best balance for the City. It maintains a fairly good level of delay but provides a level of context sensitivity that is absent today. It puts areas in the Centers as LOS E or a V/C ratio of 1.1 for segments. Everywhere else maintains the same standards. Ms. Daley-Peng reviewed next steps. Staff will be returning to the Planning Commission in March to share the TMP's process for prioritizing process and performance measures. They will be coming again in April to review the draft modal plans and share an overview of activities and events planned for Outreach Series 3. Outreach Series 3 is planned to launch in mid-April. Staff will be sharing the results with the public of what they have learned so far in the outreach efforts. They will also be reviewing draft modal plans and the draft prioritization process and asking for feedback from the public.

Comments and Questions:

Commissioner Malek asked for clarification about the V/C results (2044) map. Ms. Dedinsky explained it was the PM peak traffic count divided by the theoretical capacity for that road. Commissioner Malek asked if ADT threshold was an alternative to V/C. Ms. Dedinsky replied that it could be; it is used in Snohomish County. V/C is quite similar and is consistent with past practices in the City. Commissioner Malek explained that using ADT over V/C was quite contentious in the Richmond Beach/Point Wells area.

Commissioner Galuska commented that WSDOT has adopted a threshold standard of .9 V/C for their rights of way. He asked if the State would enforce that in the WSDOT jurisdictions in the City. Ms. Dedinsky replied they don't enforce it on state highways in cities of a certain size.

Commissioner Callahan asked about the problem of cut-through traffic to avoid congestion and delays. Ms. Dedinsky explained that the modeling does not do a good job of trying to gauge these impacts. She also noted that if they try to anticipate how much traffic might be diverted onto local streets, it waters down the numbers for the intersections. This is problematic because they are trying to get a picture of how the intersections would function if all the trips went there. Staff wants to use the numbers for the total number of trips to get appropriate mitigation. She explained that to some degree the volume on local streets can be self-limiting because of factors such as narrow lanes, narrow streets, and on-street-parking. Also, there is not clear data that shows increasing traffic on a local street by 10 or 15% makes it

inherently less safe. Commissioner Callahan asked about the process available if people are concerned about the traffic on their streets. Ms. Dedinsky replied that residents can always come to the City if they have concerns about anything. When that happens, the City looks at collision and safety data in that area to determine if any changes are warranted.

Vice Chair Rwamashongye thanked staff for the excellent presentation. He stated that he likes to walk so this impacts his perspective of the options.

Commissioner Lin also complimented staff on the presentation. She commented on the positive financial impact of reducing the number of intersections that need to be addressed as a result of modifying the LOS standards. She then asked if the edge effect is calculated where there are boundaries with other jurisdictions. Ms. Dedinsky replied that the model used generally takes that into account as well as all the large regional projects that are happening; however, a LOS analysis was not done for border intersections that are not the City's.

Commissioner Malek asked how they could learn more about the Evanston school study regarding mobility hubs. He also referred to the bridge going over 185th to the light rail station where they anticipated quite a chokepoint and asked if this would be part of the presentation next time. Ms. Dedinsky replied that they wouldn't get into detail with that, but it is incorporated into the travel demand model in the analysis. It is showing higher delay there, and under the current standard it would fail. Staff is showing preference for exempting that 185th Street area from a V/C ratio of .9 to allow it to go up to 1.1 because in the future they want to discourage growth there from being auto dependent. Ms. Daley-Peng added that there is a link for the shared link mobility study on the City's webpage which she will share with the Commission. She will be discussing this more when she comes back in March for the TMP update.

Chair Sager agreed that this was a great presentation. She is also very happy to hear that they touched a bit about pedestrians and safety. Her main concern is that when traffic increases sometimes people have less patience; this includes not only drivers, but pedestrians, bicyclists, scooters, etc. This can result in an increase in injuries and accidents.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

The March 3 meeting was cancelled, and the next meeting is March 17.

ADJOURNMENT

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



Pam Sager
Chair, Planning Commission



Carla Hoekzema
Clerk, Planning Commission