

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

February 9, 2015  
6:00 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Balducci, Deputy Mayor Wallace, and Councilmembers Chelminiak, Lee, Robertson, Robinson, and Stokes

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m., with Mayor Balducci presiding.

2. Oral Communications

Mayor Balducci noted that, under the Council's adopted rules, the total time for oral communications is limited to 20 minutes. However, three community organizations requested a total of 15 minutes to address the Energize Eastside project. Councilmembers agreed to allowing a total of 35 minutes for oral communications.

- (a) Aaron Smith and Nishu Jain announced the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Soup 4 Simpson Day to be held in honor of Hunter Simpson, who died of cancer shortly after graduating from Bellevue High School. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, March 4, 12:30 p.m. at Bellevue High School. Hunter was active with the New Horizons organization which provides food and shelter for at-risk and homeless youth.
- (b) John Haynes, Executive Director of PACE (Performing Arts Center Eastside), recalled that the Council approved a resolution one year earlier indicating the City's commitment to work with PACE to advance public and private efforts to establish the Tateuchi Center. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was approved in May and, since that time, the City and PACE have worked together to clarify the need, benefit, and sustainability of Tateuchi Center on behalf of its residents and businesses. Mr. Haynes thanked City Manager Brad Miyake, Chris Salomone (Director of Planning and Community Development), the Arts Commission, and Arts Specialist Mary Pat Byrne for their work. Mr. Haynes said this collaborative process has refined and improved the project plan.

- (c) Cathi Hatch, Vice Chair of the PACE Board and Chair of the governance committee, spoke to the public benefit of the Tateuchi Center project. She said the Board is expanding from 25 members to 50 members to enhance fundraising efforts. Ms. Hatch said the Tateuchi Center will provide community events, acclaimed performers, options for engaging the diverse population, and significant arts education and outreach. She urged moving forward and asked the Council to support this project with the largest contribution possible.
- (d) Bill Hirt reiterated his ongoing request that the City rescind its approval of the East Link project shoreline permit. He expressed concerns regarding noise impacts to the Mercer Slough Park. He said cross-lake commuters have endured years of congestion due to Sound Transit's refusal to add fourth lanes to the outer roadway 15 years ago. He said Sound Transit has not considered two-way bus lanes on I-90, which would be less expensive and provide greater capacity than light rail. Mr. Hirt opined that Sound Transit has not been truthful.
- (e) Linda Granfors, a Kirkland resident employed at Overlake Hospital Medical Center, spoke on behalf of employees of the hospital who use the employee garage across 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue from the hospital. She described nearly being hit by a car that ran the red light at the crosswalk. She said she spoke to a police officer after the event and indicated that employees are requesting a pedestrian skybridge. The officer suggested she speak to the Council. Ms. Granfors said she is not the only employee who has had close calls with traffic.

Mayor Balducci asked the City Manager to follow up and report back to the Council. She asked Ms. Granfors to give her contact information to staff.

- (f) Loretta Lopez, President of the Bridle Trails Community Club, and two other citizen representatives provided a presentation on Puget Sound Energy's Energize Eastside project. Ms. Lopez said Bridle Trails' residents and the Coalition of Eastside Neighborhoods for Sensible Energy (CENSE) believe there are alternatives to PSE's plans for the project that are less costly and less harmful to residents, the City's infrastructure, and the environment. She presented a summary of 27 years of data from Seattle City Light, which indicates a slight decrease in electricity demand over the years. Seattle conservatively projects a 0.8 percent increase in demand per year, and it is reasonable to expect that Bellevue's demand will be similar. She said PSE's most recent planning document studied energy alternatives. However, the information is contained in an appendix and is not referenced in the main text of the report. PSE is not implementing any of the alternatives. Ms. Lopez said the City's independent consultant for the Electrical Reliability Study projected a one-percent annual increase in Bellevue's energy demand. This matches the rate of population growth predicted by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). Puget Sound Energy's forecast shows an annual average growth in demand of 1.7 percent.

- (g) Jane Kim, representing the Somerset Community Association, said PSE hired a consultant to study alternative energy solutions. The firm found 56 megawatts of cost-effective savings using electrical efficiencies, distributed generation, and demand-side resources. The report is available on PSE's web site. Taking the report's savings into account, energy capacity will not become an issue for 15 years. Ms. Kim suggested that PSE postpone its project until at least 2030. She said that, according to the Vice President of Transmission Planning for the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Energize Eastside is part of a regional transmission plan developed by PSE, BPA and Seattle City Light to provide load for the Eastside and Seattle, and to contribute to broad regional grid reliability. Ms. Kim said an alternative to the Energize Eastside project is for the BPA to build a redundant transmission line to Canada.
  
- (h) Sally McCray, representing CENSE, said the Eastside gets one quarter of its electricity from a coal plant in Montana which is the highest emitter of carbon dioxide and mercury in the west, and the 8<sup>th</sup> dirtiest power plant in the nation. She said it is inevitable that the plant will be shut down in the future, and experts state that the capacity will be replaced by new power plants that use natural gas. If located near the Eastside, a natural gas plant would improve overall reliability, reduce transmission losses, and save money. It would also make Energize Eastside unnecessary. Ms. McCray said PSE makes most of its profits by building infrastructure. State laws enacted 100 years ago encouraged power companies to build infrastructure to meet citizens' needs. Unlike other states, Washington has not updated its laws to provide incentives for alternative technologies. As a regulated monopoly, PSE is guaranteed a return of at least 10 percent on the \$200 million Energize Eastside project. Ms. McCray said the Australian hedge fund that owns PSE is set to sell its holdings within the next three years. A large infrastructure project will increase PSE's resale value and increase profits for the fund's investors. Ms. McCray highlighted annual fines imposed on PSE over the past eight years for overcharging customers. Last year, PSE was ordered to return \$35 million to customers for overcharging them. In December, PSE said its Energize Eastside Community Advisory Group (CAG) endorsed the project. However, no member of the CAG signed the report in support, and eight of 20 members signed a dissenting report. PSE has not provided data requested by the CAG and residents. Ms. McCray said the community needs a strong response and leadership from elected officials.

Mayor Balducci said the City has invested \$100,000 in an independent study of the need for the Energize Eastside project.

Councilmember Robinson requested an electronic file of the presentation. City Clerk Myrna Basich said the presentation is a large file that will be posted for Council access.

- (i) Joe Rosmann reported on residents' efforts in recent weeks related to the work of City staff and the Light Rail Permitting Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) on the East Link project permitting and mitigation issues. Light rail trains will be running nearly 24 hours per day through Bellevue, adding up to nearly 225 individual train trips per day. Mr. Rosmann said the noise impacts will be considerable. He submitted a two-page summary

prepared by the World Health Organization of thousands of noise studies over the past 20 years. Sound Transit trains will generate 80-100 decibel levels in some areas, which is above the federal allowable standard of 70 dB, averaged over a 24-hour period. Mr. Rosmann said the health effects of noise include hypertension and heart disease, stress problems, and learning disabilities among children. He said the Light Rail Permitting CAC met last week. His understanding is that the Committee and City staff have not yet been given the results of Sound Transit's 90-percent engineering studies.

- (j) Alex Zimmerman said he is running for Seattle City Council. He reiterated his ongoing request that Bellevue's City Manager meet with citizens on a monthly basis. He questioned when the Council will start acting like normal, civilized people.

### 3. Study Session

- (a) Council Business and New Initiatives

Councilmember Chelminiak said he sent an email about the regional transportation group that will begin meeting soon. He cannot serve on that committee but believes it would be beneficial to have a Bellevue representative. Mayor Balducci said Councilmember Stokes has volunteered to serve on that group.

- (b) Resolution No. 8878 authorizing execution of a professional services agreement with VIA Architecture, Incorporated (VIA), in the amount of \$155,000 to provide technical expertise and services to assist the City in the preparation of the East Main Station Area Plan.

City Manager Brad Miyake introduced Resolution No. 8878 which authorizes the execution of a professional services agreement with VIA Architecture to provide technical expertise and assistance to City staff in preparing the East Main Station Area Plan.

Mike Kattermann, Senior Planner, said this agreement is related to the City's planning for the area around the light rail East Main Station, but it does not involve the station design work that is being completed by Sound Transit. The City's East Main Station Area Planning Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has met four times and staff is beginning a visioning process with them. Issues to be addressed include the redevelopment potential on the east side of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of Main Street; neighborhood access/traffic issues; and multimodal access to and from the station.

Mayor Balducci said this type of item would normally be on a Regular Session Consent Calendar. However, staff would like to move forward with the work as soon as possible.

- Deputy Mayor Wallace moved to approve Resolution No. 8878, and Councilmember Chelminiak seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

(c) Tateuchi Center Feasibility Study Briefing

City Manager Brad Miyake recalled that the City signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Performing Arts Center Eastside (PACE) one year ago to initiate a collaborative process to study the feasibility of the center. The purpose of tonight's agenda item is a presentation by the City's consultant and the opportunity for the Council to ask questions and provide feedback.

Chris Salomone, Director of Planning and Community Development, introduced Mary Pat Byrne, Arts Specialist, and consultants Steven Bronfenbrenner (B Squared Consulting) and Karen Reed.

Mr. Salomone said PACE was established in 2002 with the goal of establishing a privately-funded performing arts center. Since that time, approximately \$65 million has been raised, including a naming gift from the Tateuchi Foundation. The project changed to a private-public partnership as PACE requested and received funding from the City, County and State. The City invested \$2 million in 2010 in exchange for an ownership interest in the designs and certain programming commitments to broaden community access.

In 2013, PACE came to the City requesting a new commitment of public capital funding to re-energize the capital campaign. Based on that request, Council directed staff in 2014 to develop an MOU between the City and PACE to explore the funding challenge and the project's feasibility. Mr. Salomone noted that PACE is expanding its Board membership to enhance its community outreach efforts. The additional need for capital funding is significant, and the following items have been identified to improve the viability of the project: 1) replace the cabaret with an education center to engage more of the community, 2) place a strong emphasis on programs produced by PACE (PACE Presents), and 3) identify an ongoing operating subsidy.

Mr. Salomone highlighted B Squared's experience with performing arts centers including the San Francisco Ballet and Opera House, Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville, and the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner said the core elements of the project scope of work were to assess audience demand, evaluate the availability of programming for the Center, develop an updated Financial and Operating Model, and consider key factors for success. The assessment was conducted from November 2014 to January 2015. Activities included progress meetings with the project committee, constituent interviews, utilization and market demand assessment, in-depth review of PACE's Financial and Operating Plan, and preparation of the Draft Project Report. He noted that the full report will be provided to the Council.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner described updated capital requirements and available funding. Total capital funding required is \$198 million for a 2017 groundbreaking, and the remaining capital funding need is \$138 million. He said the project needs to be re-permitted, which is an additional cost.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner described the project timeline, with pre-construction starting in late 2016, and construction targeted for early 2017 through mid-2019. He said it is critical for a performing arts center to open with a fall season. Private-sector fundraising continues toward the remaining \$138 million goal. If the City decides to offer funding, Mr. Bronfenbrenner suggested that the City issue a Statement of Support to PACE which includes “A Call to the Community” urging community support.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner presented key findings on program utilization demand. Regional organizations (e.g., Seattle Symphony and Pacific Northwest Ballet) will offer sustained programming, and PACE Presents will be a core element of the center’s utilization and programming.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner described the market assessment completed by the consultants to characterize the regional market segments and characteristics. He said the demographics and market segmentation of the region are remarkably favorable to the consumption of culture and entertainment. The Bellevue market is among the top four regional markets for measures such as household income, wealth, education, and philanthropy.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner said there is a strong link between socio-economic status and the propensity to consume arts and entertainment. Studies indicate that satellite city venues are proving to be successful and in high demand. Examples include the Green Music Center, Strathmore Hall Complex, Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, Los Angeles area venues, and college and university campuses. Key factors in their success include proximity, convenience, free parking, beautiful facilities, and high quality performances.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner said the Center’s Concert Hall and Education Center are not competitive with the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center but rather complement that venue. He said the Tateuchi Center’s attendance and participation rates are forecast for each user group and type, for both rentals and presentation programs. The center will have 2,000 seats.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner described B Squared Consulting’s detailed assessment of PACE’s preliminary Financial and Operating Model. The consultants concluded that the model is ambitious but achievable and feasible. He described the Pace Presents component of the center's business which includes classical, popular, jazz, and folk music; ballet and dance; musicals and theater; spoken word/comedy; and education/family events.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner commented on the percentage of the budget from gifts and grants compared to other centers, and showed that the consultants are making a conservative projection for the Tateuchi Center.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner said the original design of the space included a cabaret and PACE has been studying whether that is a desirable component. It carries a significant risk associated with alcohol and food service, conflicts with other uses, and tends to be a dark space during the day. PACE would like to open the building up to the outside. A cabaret is also thought to duplicate private facility amenities. The benefits of an education center instead of the cabaret are increased

and diversified utilization, consistent daytime programming, participation of students of all ages, reduced capital and operating costs, and enhanced fundraising capacity. Mr. Bronfenbrenner said the consultants determined that the education center reduces costs and increases revenue.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner commented on the economic impact of a performing arts center in three primary areas: one-time construction expenditures on labor and materials; ongoing attendee spending on tickets, dining, and other nearby activities; and the ongoing expenditures for payroll, goods and services. Mr. Bronfenbrenner said the Center's business model depends on an annual operating subsidy.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner summarized potential benefits to the City including direct economic impact, indirect economic impact, community engagement and activities, sustainable venue and programming, and education programs.

As next steps, Mr. Salomone said staff would like to come back to the Council in March with alternatives, issues, and positive and negative aspects of moving forward with this campaign. If Council chooses to proceed, the City will need to define the requirements for public benefit and engage in community outreach and involvement. PACE will report its fundraising progress in the fall, and a final decision is anticipated for the fall of 2016.

Responding to Mayor Balducci, Mr. Salomone confirmed that the City is investigating the funding options and has been working with the bond counsel, legal counsel, and the City's legal and financial staff. He said the full package of information will be available for the Council in March.

Councilmember Robinson thanked the consultant for the presentation. She requested information on the State Constitution's requirements regarding the measure of public benefit and the City's investment principles related to this project. Ms. Byrne said she will provide the information.

Councilmember Robertson observed that there is not a plan for a resident performing group. Mr. Bronfenbrenner said that is not included in the short-term plan. However, it would be a good goal to develop relationships with organizations that would like to become resident groups. These arrangements can help sustain the viability of the center.

Councilmember Robertson said she would like staff to present a range of investment options for the Council to consider during the next discussion. She is excited about the project. She thanked the PACE Board, consultants, and City staff for their hard work.

Councilmember Stokes thanked staff and the consultants for highlighting the different decision paths and risks. He is enthusiastic about the project. He understands that, in addition to traditional performances (i.e., ballet, symphony), part of the center's purpose is to broaden the cultural impact in the community. Mr. Bronfenbrenner said the center will have all of those aspects, with the only limitation being what can fit within a 2,000-seat hall.

Councilmember Lee said it is important to define the goals and purpose for the center. He acknowledged that the objective is not strictly a financial decision. He would like the consultant to advise the Council based on the successes and failures of other centers. He would like the consultant to help the Council understand the potential magnitude and consequences related to the center's need for an ongoing subsidy.

Mr. Bronfenbrenner said he will provide more information. He noted that a center's strategy will shift over time as it matures.

Deputy Mayor Wallace questioned how much of the capital reflected in the presentation is cash versus pledged amounts. Mr. Bronfenbrenner said he will provide more detailed financial information.

Responding to Mr. Wallace, Mr. Bronfenbrenner said PACE Presents is the variety of programming to be contracted by the Center's management, which is typically referred to as house presentation.

Mr. Wallace noted that the market assessment identifies a broader market region than Bellevue. Responding to Mr. Wallace, Mr. Bronfenbrenner said the potential for contributions from other public agencies has been discussed. However, that has not been specifically analyzed within the scope of this contract effort. Mr. Wallace suggested it would be appropriate for the County and State to contribute funding.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Wallace, Mr. Bronfenbrenner said much more detailed financial information is available for review. In further response, Mr. Bronfenbrenner said the plan does not include any assumption regarding debt to contribute toward the capital campaign. However, it is a possibility to be considered.

Responding to Mr. Wallace, Mr. Bronfenbrenner said Issaquah's Village Theatre is a highly successful regional facility. Mr. Wallace expressed concern regarding the need for an ongoing subsidy for the Tateuchi Center.

Ms. Byrne said Village Theatre has two venues: Issaquah and Everett. The theatre benefits from a tax on movie theater tickets in Issaquah as well.

Mayor Balducci said she is pleased to have reached this milestone in the process. She thanked Mr. Haynes, PACE Board members, community organizations, and citizens for their involvement and support. She looks forward to the Council receiving all of the findings and information prepared during the past year in order to reach a decision for the City's next step.

Responding to Ms. Balducci, Mr. Bronfenbrenner said partnerships and collaborations will be critical to the center's success and will build the momentum and vibrancy for the facility. He said it is important to engage in those efforts now as the facility and programming are being conceived.

At 8:07 p.m., Mayor Balducci declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:18 p.m.

(d) Bellevue Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Initiative

Mr. Miyake introduced discussion of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Initiative.

Transportation Director Dave Berg said the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan provides policies regarding the building and maintenance of a network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Franz Loewenherz, Senior Planner, said the 2009 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan established the City's vision and objectives; assessed gaps in the network; and established performance targets. Key targets established in the plan were to define east-west and north-south bicycle corridors and to continue to expand arterial sidewalk construction.

Mr. Loewenherz reported that, during a neighborhood leadership gathering on October 7, 2014, citizens expressed a strong interest in pedestrian and bike facilities. Comprehensive Plan Policy PB-26 directs that the plan should be updated every five years. However, the Transportation Commission recommends that a full update of the 2009 plan is not needed at this time. The Commission sees a greater value in: 1) creating a unified and recognizable strategy that links planning with project implementation, and 2) promoting solutions in engineering, education, encouragement, evaluation and enforcement.

During its December 11, 2014 meeting, the Transportation Commission established draft program principles for the Commission's implementation initiative, which are provided in the meeting materials. Mr. Loewenherz said staff is seeking Council input on the draft program principles of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Initiative and the preliminary scope of work.

Councilmember Lee said he is eager to move forward with project implementation. He observed that the Downtown would be a good place for implementing a bicycle plan.

Councilmember Robertson said the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan is rooted in the Comprehensive Plan, and she questioned how this relates to the Comprehensive Plan Update currently underway. Mr. Loewenherz said he works closely with the Planning and Community Development staff working on the Update, and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan is fully integrated with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Berg said the Transportation Commission is knowledgeable about the topics and issues involved in the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Loewenherz said the Mountains to Sound Greenway is part of one of the 11 priority bicycle corridors identified in Bellevue's plan. He noted that the City secured a grant last year to advance design on that segment.

Councilmember Robertson expressed support for the program principles. She said she also liked the comment in the meeting packet that special attention will be required to enlist the

participation of underrepresented communities (e.g., immigrants, non-English speakers). She suggested adding cell phone-only households to that list.

Councilmember Robertson encouraged a broader look at bike lane projects and how they connect to other parts of the network. She would rather have fewer complete bike routes through town versus more incomplete sections and trail fragments. With regard to the high expense of sidewalks, she would prefer to see more streets with sidewalks on just one side than fewer blocks with sidewalks on both sides.

Councilmember Stokes complimented staff and the Transportation Commission on their good work. He supports an enhanced focus on implementation of the existing plan.

Councilmember Robinson thanked everyone for their work and noted that she and many in the community look forward to completion of the plan. She would like to add a reference to the Downtown-Wilburton Grand Connection under Principle 7 (Coordinate with other efforts underway in Bellevue related to pedestrian and bicycle issues.).

Councilmember Chelminiak said he is pleased to see continued support for establishing strong east-west and north-south bicycle corridors. He said it is important to implement connections to regional trails, including the future BNSF corridor trail.

Mr. Chelminiak said the Cascade Bicycle Club is lobbying in Olympia for the Safe Routes to School grant program. He suggested that staff explore whether the City would want to sign on to that effort. He opined that new streets should be complete streets with sidewalks on both sides. He described the Cascade Bicycle Club's Vision Zero project focusing on zero accidents and fatalities. He said the project is looking for funding professional education training for City prosecutors and law enforcement on when and how to use the vulnerable youth laws. The project is also interested in updating distracted driving legislation to improve enforcement and better account for new technology.

Deputy Mayor Wallace expressed support for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Initiative principles. He agrees that the City needs to continue to work on bicycle facilities, and he favors keeping bikes and pedestrians on separate facilities. However, he is concerned about new suggestions to turn traffic lanes into bike lanes. He noted that Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan states that policies should "consider pedestrians and bicycles along with," not in lieu of, other modes of transportation. He recalled a suggestion late in the Transit Master Plan discussions to turn a road lane into a bike lane, which is new in Bellevue. The Comprehensive Plan states that vehicles will continue to be the primary mode of transportation for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Wallace said the City should not convert road lanes to bike lanes, particularly in the Downtown where so much of the City's tax base depends on convenient access to shopping and other activities supporting the economy. He opined that bike lanes need to be planned in addition to, and not instead of, road lanes.

Councilmember Lee concurred with the importance of keeping a separation between cars and bikes. However, he believes that should be a consideration when roads and facilities are originally designed, and not something that is done later to convert road lanes to bike lanes. He encouraged greater consideration of pedestrian bridges and underground tunnels.

Councilmember Robertson clarified that her earlier comments in support of sidewalks on one side of the street were meant to refer to existing neighborhoods without sidewalks. She agreed with Councilmember Chelminiak that new streets should be complete streets.

Ms. Robertson concurred with Deputy Mayor Wallace's and Councilmember Lee's comments about adding capacity. She said the purpose of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan is greater safety and capacity for pedestrians and bicyclists. However, this should not be achieved by converting road lanes for those purposes. Ms. Robertson recalled that one of the Council's principles regarding the I-405 HOT lanes was that any tolled lanes would be added as new freeway capacity. She suggested that a similar principle would apply to how the City builds its multimodal transportation network.

Ms. Robertson said she would like to see an overcrossing of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the light rail Hospital Station as part of Sound Transit's project. She suggested pursuing new technologies to enhance pedestrian safety; for example, the lighted crosswalks in Kirkland.

Mayor Balducci endorsed the Transportation Commission's concept of working to implement the 2009 Ped/Bike Plan rather than reviewing and rethinking the whole plan. She would like an update on technology and innovative design features for pedestrian and bike facilities. She is not a fan of sharrows (shared car/bike lanes) which were discussed as part of the 2009 plan. However, she would like an update on how well those are working and what alternatives might exist.

Mayor Balducci expressed support for Ms. Robertson's comments about providing a sidewalk on at least one side of existing streets. She suggested that the City become more creative about ways to increase pedestrian and bike facilities, even if they are not perfect.

Ms. Balducci said she is open to exploring the concept of turning three car lanes into a street with two bike lanes and two car lanes. She suggested that the original lanes could be restored if the conversion did not prove to make sense. She believes the Council should be open to these discussions and to considering options where it makes sense. She suggested a policy discussion to set the standards for where it might make sense.

Mayor Balducci asked Mr. Berg to thank the Transportation Commission for their work.

Mr. Loewenherz said the Transportation Commission Chair will present a transmittal letter to the Council on February 17 reflecting the modest revisions suggested tonight.

Councilmember Stokes said he is open to looking at where it might be appropriate to convert road lanes to bike lanes. Responding to Mr. Stokes, Mr. Loewenherz confirmed that new technologies and the additional refinement of project designs were anticipated in the 2009 Ped/Bike Plan and are appropriate topics for discussion at this time.

(e) East Link Project Update

City Manager Miyake introduced staff's update on Sound Transit's East Link light rail project.

Transportation Director Dave Berg said this is a follow-up to the update on January 26. The purpose this evening is to provide more information, including on mitigation, and to bring responses to the Council's questions during the past two weeks.

Mr. Berg recalled the East Link process over the past few years from the development of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sound Transit to the preparation of the East Link environmental documents and the City's Land Use Code Amendment to provide context for the Design and Mitigation Permit. Staff continues to work on related City Codes, policies, and permitting issues.

Mr. Berg noted that discussions are moving toward the adoption of amendments to the MOU in March.

Ron Lewis, East Link Executive Project Director, provided an overview of Sound Transit's construction management program. The goal is to complete a safe and high quality project on time and on budget while minimizing impacts to the public. Sound Transit's approach includes high quality contract documents, an integrated construction management team, thorough construction outreach, usable procedures, and partnerships with local jurisdictions and other stakeholders to achieve mutual goals and objectives.

Mr. Lewis clarified a response he made to Councilmember Robertson on January 26. At that time, he stated that Sound Transit had previously completed risk assessments at the contract package level, which was incorrect. However, Sound Transit has completed its value engineering and constructability reviews for each contract package. A qualitative risk assessment was completed last summer, and Sound Transit is currently conducting a full quantitative risk assessment. Staff will be prepared to provide an update on that work within the next month.

Mr. Lewis said the East Link project is currently in the design and pre-construction phase. The post-construction phase will include system testing and community feedback.

Katie Kuciemba, Sound Transit Community Outreach Corridor Supervisor, noted that the Director of Community Outreach was present as well.

Ms. Kuciemba highlighted recommendations of the Bellevue Light Rail Best Practices report including: 1) coordinate with City staff, 2) conduct frequent community involvement, 3) use computer visualization, 4) develop a construction management plan with the City and

stakeholders, and 5) involve the contractor in public meetings. She thanked Kate March, the City's East Link Outreach Coordinator, for her work with Sound Transit staff and her strong representation of Bellevue residents.

Ms. Kuciemba described how Sound Transit works with communities to prepare for construction planning and impacts, which the agency calls its Good Neighbor Construction Commitments. She described Sound Transit's Business Relations Program involving education, construction mitigation, marketing/promotion, and resources tools/partnerships. Sound Transit works with businesses to prepare for construction-related impacts and to provide wayfinding,

Ms. Kuciemba described the development of the East Link Business Relations Program. Sound Transit researched best practices by other transit agencies and found that construction outreach is essential, signage and wayfinding is typical, and most agencies identified business promotion and marketing tactics. The program identifies approaches to building relationships with businesses and stakeholders including direct contact (e.g., phone calls, public meetings), indirect contact (email and mailings), using existing networks and organizations (e.g., Bellevue Downtown Association, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Residents Association, and others), and a stakeholder survey. Sound Transit will continue to partner and coordinate efforts with the City of Bellevue as well.

Ms. Kuciemba highlighted community outreach activities and resources during construction including a 24-hour construction hotline, timely and accurate notifications of upcoming work, construction safety education, and updated information on the project web site and social media. She said she has learned a great deal about community outreach in working with Bellevue staff and seeing the City's project outreach.

Mayor Balducci said she took one trip with the Light Rail Best Practices Committee to tour another transit agency (Portland), and Councilmember Robertson took both of their trips. One issue of interest was to learn how those agencies worked with the community and businesses to ensure there was support, especially during construction. She said that much of what Ms. Kuciemba presented is consistent with what was learned from those trips.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Ms. Kuciemba said Sound Transit has tapped into the City's resources of neighborhood contacts and other stakeholders, and has compiled its own list as well through planning and design. There is a large database of individuals and contact information to ensure citizens receive updates. As Sound Transit prepares for construction, it will use existing resources and expand the list of stakeholders including businesses, social service agencies, and partner agencies. Ms. Kuciemba said Sound Transit will be able to share that information once it is fully developed. Councilmember Lee said it would be helpful to prioritize stakeholders by the level of impacts.

Councilmember Robinson thanked staff for the presentation. She looks forward to hearing how Sound Transit will manage traffic on Bellevue Way throughout the project. She recommended that Sound Transit create an easy way for the community to provide feedback during construction, which is a central number to call for referrals to the appropriate party for the issue.

Ms. Robinson encouraged partnering with businesses to create incentives for individuals to continue to visit the Downtown.

Councilmember Robertson suggested taking advantage of this tech-savvy community by providing the ability for citizens to submit questions and concerns via an East Link app.

Ms. Robertson reiterated her ongoing request that noise mitigation be implemented early, before construction starts, where possible. She further suggested that final elements such as landscaping and sidewalks be completed as segments of the alignment are completed, rather than waiting until the end of the entire project for a contractor to go back and provide those elements. In the case of another city, that effort gave the residents and businesses a more positive experience with the project.

Councilmember Robertson observed that it is unrealistic to expect to be able to adopt an amendment to the MOU in March. She noted that the risk assessment is scheduled for completion in late February. She said the Council will need that document as well as the updated plan, schedule and budget before it will be able to modify and confirm the City's MOU commitments. She said this information will need to go to the City's estimator for analysis and feedback to Sound Transit, followed by an update and review with the Council. Ms. Robertson said she has not yet seen a term sheet for the basis of the MOU, cost estimating information, a detailed noise mitigation analysis, or documentation of the mechanisms for ensuring that the project is completed appropriately for Bellevue citizens.

Deputy Mayor Wallace concurred with Councilmember Robertson's statements that the Council has not received the information it will need to amend the MOU. He said it would have been helpful to have the information by last August to prepare for a decision this March. With regard to construction outreach, he suggested publicizing the planning to date by the City and Sound Transit to avoid impacts altogether. For example, the sequential excavation construction method avoids impacts to businesses at street level. Mr. Wallace observed that the Bel-Red corridor is more likely to be directly impacted by surface work. He would like a more detailed understanding of who will be impacted as well as when and where.

As the City and Sound Transit moves to amend the MOU, Mr. Wallace said he would like to see all information, including tonight's presentation, documented in writing as an attachment to the agreement. The construction is scheduled over eight years, and he would like to see the details in writing.

Paul Cornish, Sound Transit Project Manager, described plans for the closure of the South Bellevue Park and Ride, which will begin in the spring of 2016 and extend over a five-year period. He described the need for a replacement parking strategy. The lot currently has 512 stalls. A Park and Ride license plate survey was conducted to determine how people use the lot (i.e., origin and destination). He said the majority are using the Sound Transit 550 bus between Bellevue and Seattle.

Mr. Cornish said Sound Transit has been working with City staff and Metro to develop a plan. One strategy to provide parking will be lease lots with access to routes currently serving the South Bellevue Park and Ride. He said many Park and Ride facilities in the regional system are underused and users will be directed there: Sammamish, Tibbets Creek, Newport Hills and South Kirkland. In general, users will be directed to sites served by buses that go to Sound Transit 550 destinations or to connecting buses serving ST 550 destinations.

The parking modification strategy includes University Link and SR 520 route integration, modifications to Enatai service, and potentially more peak-hour bus trips on I-90. An additional component of the parking strategy is to monitor “hide and ride” activity involving parking in neighborhoods to catch a bus. Staff is developing measures to inventory existing neighborhood parking (e.g., Enatai neighborhood) and to monitor hide and ride activity during the South Bellevue Park and Ride closure and when East Link begins operating.

Mayor Balducci requested a map of the current routes that will be affected and the corresponding replacement routes/Park and Rides (e.g., ST 550).

Mayor Balducci said she is concerned that this issue does not seem very far along in terms of planning. She questioned whether there is a targeted level of service and/or number of parking spaces for the replacement strategy. Mr. Cornish said the goal is to identify 500-550 lease lot and Park and Ride spaces to replace the current 512 spaces at the South Bellevue Park and Ride.

Mayor Balducci observed that instead of a strategy for larger lots as replacement facilities, the plan is now targeting replacement parking in a number of locations and lots. She noted that Mercer Island is not interested in hosting a replacement lot. Mr. Cornish acknowledged that there were early discussions about an Eastgate location next to the County’s animal shelter. However, the County is using the site as a staging area for work in that area. Further analysis determined that a satellite approach would be better.

Ms. Balducci indicated she would like a more in-depth briefing on this topic, whether individually or for the Council as a whole.

Responding to Councilmember Chelminiak, Mr. Cornish said the northbound stop for the ST 550 bus will remain at the current location on the east side of Bellevue Way. Sound Transit is building a southbound stop across the street and is working with City staff on designing that stop.

Moving on, Mayor Balducci said the Council has the opportunity to provide input into the naming of the East Link stations. She noted the time, and suggested that a way be identified for Councilmembers to provide input at a later date or alternate manner.

Mr. Lewis highlighted the Sound Transit Board Policy on station naming which is that the names should reflect the nature of the community and environment, be succinct and easy to read, comply with ADA guidelines (less than 30 characters), avoid commercial references, and avoid

similar names or words in existing facilities. Mr. Lewis displayed a slide of the highest ranked names and potential alternatives for each station.

Mayor Balducci said it would be helpful to have information on the potential names for the entire East Link alignment outside of Bellevue.

Mr. Berg reiterated that March is slated for adoption of the MOU amendment.

Deputy Mayor Wallace said a number of topics are missing from the list of future topics leading to adoption of the MOU amendment. He would like to hear more about traffic mitigation before and after construction. He recalled that, in 2011 when the MOU was adopted, the City did not know the mitigation plans and other information. The Council anticipated that these topics would be addressed as more information became available over time. He said Sound Transit staff need to be able to explain mitigation plans and effectiveness for the Council's and the public's benefit. This includes traffic, environmental, and Mercer Slough Park impacts.

Mr. Wallace observed that, five years into this project, he cannot answer the community's questions about whether the East Link mitigation will comply with City Code. He would like a report on the visual and design-related issues addressed by the Light Rail Permitting Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC).

Deputy Mayor Wallace said Sound Transit's operations and maintenance satellite facility (OMSF) was not sited in Bellevue when the MOU was adopted in 2011. The Council recently learned that there will be 100 additional cars running on the alignment during extended hours to access the facility. He questioned when related impacts will be discussed.

Mr. Wallace noted the MOU's financial commitments and suggested that the Council will need to have a clear explanation for constituents about the significant financial impacts and how they will be addressed with taxpayer dollars. He said he shares fellow Councilmembers' concerns about meeting the March deadline for MOU adoption.

Councilmember Robertson said sufficient time will be needed for the Council to process the information and for the public to consider it and provide input as well. It is important to have transparency in the process.

Mayor Balducci said a great deal of work is underway by City staff and with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor participating in negotiations related to the MOU with Sound Transit. She said there needs to be a way to share information with the Council at an appropriate level of detail. Mayor Balducci said certain information (e.g., details about mitigation) might not be available until after amendment of the MOU. She said the permitting process continues to move forward, and the permitting rules still apply.

Ms. Balducci said it will not be possible for the MOU to include the level of detail to be provided in the final permit, and it is not feasible to expect to extend the MOU decision process over an

additional six to nine months. She said the Council needs to understand what it is and is not being asked to decide.

Councilmember Stokes agreed with others that March is an unrealistic deadline. However, he does not want it to take any longer than necessary.

Mayor Balducci said staff is aware of the Council's level of concern.

Councilmember Lee said there needs to be a process for the Council to feel comfortable in making its decisions. He is concerned that the path does not seem well defined, and he does not want the Council to be pressured into a premature decision. He is glad to see that the City Manager and staff recognize the Council's concerns.

At 10:00 p.m., Mayor Balducci declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich, MMC  
City Clerk

/kaw