

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Extended Study Session

May 26, 2009
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Degginger, Deputy Mayor Balducci, and Councilmembers Bonincontri, Chelminiak¹, Davidson, Lee, and Noble²

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m., with Mayor Degginger presiding. There was no Executive Session.

2. Oral Communications

- (a) Bill Hirt continued his communications from previous meetings regarding his concerns about East Link light rail plans. He described a recent article in *The Seattle Times* which advocates tunneling under downtown Bellevue, and which states that East Link must be built to deliver fast and reliable service to the greatest number of riders throughout the Sound Transit system. Mr. Hirt opined that the Bellevue alignments will not meet that goal because there will not be sufficient access to the system, due in part to inadequate park and ride capacity. He cautioned that light rail on I-90 will reduce vehicle capacity and increase congestion. Mr. Hirt feels that a better alternative would be to convert the center lanes of I-90 to two-way bus service, and to dramatically increase bus service to park and ride lots.
- (b) Stacie LeBlanc Anderson reported that the first meeting of the Surrey Downs Historical Society was held on May 14. The society is a new grassroots organization with the purpose of increasing awareness about historic preservation issues with regard to the Surrey Downs Mithun and Neslund mid-century modern homes. The group was formed when residents learned that the Surrey Downs neighborhood is eligible to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Today at the Olympic Sculpture Park in

¹ Councilmember Chelminiak arrived at 6:55 p.m.

² Councilmember Noble arrived at 6:25 p.m. Mr. Noble left the table at 8:43 p.m.

Seattle, the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation announced its list of endangered properties. The Mithun and Neslund mid-century modern homes on the north end of Surrey Downs have been added to this list. Ms. LeBlanc Anderson said the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation will work to preserve these properties, specifically with regard to the potential negative impacts of any Sound Transit East Link light rail alignment. She thanked Councilmember Lee for attending the ceremony in Seattle today and for sharing the City of Bellevue's proclamation from July 21, 2007, which included an acknowledgement regarding the significance of the architecture of the Surrey Downs Mithun and Neslund homes.

- (c) James Hutchinson, Puget Sound Energy, referred to comments during a Council meeting earlier in the month regarding a substation in the Ardmore Community. He explained that the benefits of the proposed substation are system-wide and extend beyond the specific area receiving the electric power. These factors will be fully addressed in PSE's siting analysis. On a separate issue, Mr. Hutchinson expressed appreciation for the work of Sheida Sahandy, Assistant to the City Manager, who is working with PSE on activities related to Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funding.
- (d) Barbara Eisenstein thanked the Council for delaying discussion of dog off-leash areas until the Council and the community have more time to review the study. As the head of People for Off-Leash Recreation, Ms. Eisenstein asked the Council to retain both the Robinswood Park dog corral and the Eastgate meadow. She explained how these two facilities and the Marymoor Park off-leash area serve different populations and needs. She submitted her comments in writing.

3. Study Session

(a) Council Business and New Initiatives

Councilmember Davidson said he continues to have serious concerns following the previous week's discussion about Sound Transit's selection of a light rail preliminary alternative. He stated that it is not realistic to expect Bellevue to be able to secure federal funding for its light rail system within six months, especially in this early design stage of the East Link project. Councilmember Davidson would like more extensive discussion on this issue as well as the proposal for a transit station at the Red Lion site and the implications for the Surrey Downs neighborhood.

Responding to Mayor Degginger, City Manager Steve Sarkozy said staff has an aggressive schedule for looking at funding alternatives and studying project impacts beyond Sound Transit's initial identification of a preliminary alternative. Staff will come back by late summer or early fall to request Council direction on key issues.

Mayor Degginger said he is concerned that Bellevue is being asked to secure a portion of the funding for its light rail system, as this has not been required of other communities.

Deputy Mayor Balducci said that she and Councilmember Chelminiak received a communication from the manager of the Bellevue Farmers Market regarding difficulties encountered in obtaining permits for items related to the market including parking, fences, and dumpsters. She requested a review of the City's regulations to ensure they are not discouraging this type of community event.

(b) Regional Issues

(1) Update on King County Metro Transit Scenarios for Service Reductions Attributed to Revenue Shortfalls

Diane Carlson, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, introduced Victor Obeso, King County Metro's Manager of Service Development, for a presentation regarding potential service reductions due to declining revenues.

Mr. Obeso spoke to Metro's anticipated \$168 million budget deficit for the 2010-2011 biennial budget, which results directly from declining sales tax revenues due to the current recession. He explained that a number of steps were taken in the 2009 budget to address declining revenues, including one-time capital reductions, a fare increase, and reduced operating expenditures.

Mr. Obeso explained that Metro has a lower cost per passenger mile than the industry average. However, transit industry costs (i.e., wages, health care, and fuel) have outpaced inflation across the country. A performance audit of the agency requested by the King County Council is currently underway, and the results are to be finalized by September. Ongoing review of Metro's budget is working to define basic service, complementary programs, and service quality, in order to determine the optimum balance between these three areas.

Mr. Obeso said Metro is studying service reduction alternatives to address the budget shortfall. This involves balancing a number of elements including existing vs. new routes, all-day vs. peak capacity, wider system coverage vs. highest ridership routes, and service quantity vs. quality. The three scenarios under consideration for reducing bus service are: 1) Congestion relief, 2) All-day mobility, and 3) High-demand corridors. Any system-wide reduction should be made in each of the three subareas (West, East and South) in proportion to the current hours of service that each subarea receives. East King County currently receives approximately 17 percent of Metro's annual service hours. The King County Council will review the budget on May 27, in preparation for the July deadline for submitting a draft budget to the King County Executive.

Councilmember Davidson spoke to the dilemma of increasing and retaining ridership in areas in which reliable and frequent service is not provided, such as areas on the Eastside. Mr. Obeso said every area of King County needs more transit service, as ridership is increasing county-wide.

Responding to Mayor Degginger, Mr. Obeso said the annual operating budget is approximately \$600 million. The agency saved \$4 million in operating expenses in 2009 while increasing service levels. Responding with regard to personnel costs, Mr. Obeso said most of Metro's

employees are represented by bargaining units and therefore their salary rates and increases are part of agreements that have been previously negotiated and approved. Bus operators represent 2,500 of the 3,400 total employees. Mr. Obeso noted that unions typically prefer reductions in force over reductions in wages and benefits. As part of the performance audit, the Human Resources department is reviewing overall staffing and service levels.

Mayor Degginger questioned whether Sound Transit light rail coming online in July will result in the reallocation of Metro bus service. Mr. Obeso said the new light rail system will provide service between downtown Seattle, Rainier Valley, and Tukwila. The service is to be extended to the airport in December. Metro has been working with communities over the past year to determine how best to reorganize Metro routes to link them to the light rail system. This resulted in adjustments to 28 different routes and 140,000 annual hours of service. Metro determined that 20-30 percent of these service hours could be eliminated and served by light rail. At this time, the service hours were redistributed within the overall network. However, the hours could become part of future service reductions.

Deputy Mayor Balducci thanked Metro for reaching out and asking for Bellevue's input. She noted the need for more detailed information as to how each of the service reduction scenarios will affect Bellevue's local service. Mr. Obeso said extensive data has been provided to cities within the county, and Metro staff is working on developing a specific proposal. By the time the draft budget is submitted to the King County Executive in July, Metro's proposal will identify how much of the financial gap will be made up through service reductions.

In further response to Deputy Mayor Balducci, Mr. Obeso said Metro is seeking general feedback from communities. For example, how important is peak period service vs. midday, evening, and weekend service? Ms. Balducci noted her interest in talking with City staff regarding the data they have received from Metro.

Deputy Mayor Balducci expressed concern that this short-term effort to balance the budget will result in long-term policy direction. In addition to balancing the current budget, Ms. Balducci is interested in discussing a long-term strategic plan for overall Eastside service.

Mayor Degginger concurred, noting the importance of reviewing the assumptions underlying the budget and service level projections.

Councilmember Bonincontri noted that fares represent a small percentage of revenues. She observed that the fundamental policy issue is the extent of the willingness to support transit, which involves how to subsidize the service and maintain reasonable fares. For example, one approach could be to tax vehicle traffic and then use the revenue to fund transit service. However, she acknowledged that such an option is not likely to be a popular solution. Ms. Bonincontri opined that service levels must be maintained if transit ridership is to remain viable over the long term.

Councilmember Lee said the Regional Transit Committee has been discussing the budget shortfall for several months. Mr. Lee represents the Suburban Cities Association on the

committee. He agrees with Deputy Mayor Balducci that more information about the impacts on Bellevue's service is needed in order for the City Council to provide meaningful input.

Ms. Carlson said City staff received the most recent version of the SCA's position today. Staff is reviewing the information in preparation for a discussion with the Council about the extent to which SCA's interests reflect Bellevue's interests and priorities.

Mayor Degginger asked if Metro has considered options for reducing its expenses that would involve local communities providing services currently provided by Metro. Mr. Obeso responded not to his knowledge but that he would raise the question to the Board.

Councilmember Davidson observed that Eastside bus service has not increased to levels that are consistent with sales tax increases over the past ten years. Mr. Obeso recalled that in 2000, all transit agencies in the state lost the ability to utilize motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) revenues. Sales tax increases were implemented to replace that lost funding.

Councilmember Chelminiak concurred with Deputy Mayor Balducci about the need to separate the issues of the short-term budget shortfall and long-term planning principles. He noted regional discussion regarding tolling, stating that if tolls are introduced citizens need to have transit options. In terms of taxing, Mr. Chelminiak is not ready to increase the property tax, which has long-term implications, in order to respond to a short-term budget shortfall based on current economic conditions.

Mayor Degginger thanked Mr. Obeso for the presentation.

(2) Overview of I-405 HOT Lanes Study and Public Outreach Process

Ms. Carlson opened staff's presentation regarding the I-405 high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes study. State legislation was recently approved directing the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to prepare a traffic and revenue study for I-405 tolling by January 2010..

Kim Becklund, Transportation Policy Advisor, recalled that the I-405 Master Plan was adopted in 2002. WSDOT has invested nearly \$1.5 billion in the corridor using the 2003 Nickel gas tax revenues and 2005 Transportation Partnership Account funds. Ms. Becklund reviewed legislation passed in 2005 and 2007 stating that a HOT lane concept should be incorporated into the I-405 Master Plan. High occupancy toll (HOT) lanes allow single occupancy vehicles to pay a toll to travel in high occupancy lanes.

The 2009 legislation requires WSDOT to prepare a traffic and revenue study to determine the impacts on traffic and transit use if up to two HOT lanes are provided on I-405. It directs WSDOT to work closely with local jurisdictions and other agencies in this effort. Ms. Becklund said the first meeting of the study's advisory committee is June 9. She noted the need for the Council to appoint a representative to the committee. Staff will continue to provide updates to the Council throughout the remainder of the year.

Councilmember Davidson requested information from the original I-405 Master Plan environmental impact statement (EIS) that addresses HOT lanes. He is concerned about the potential for tolling on SR 520, I-90 and I-405, and about specific issues associated with HOT lanes.

Deputy Mayor Balducci stated tolls should be used to fund projects for the highways upon which they are collected. She concurred with Dr. Davidson's comment that bus rapid transit (BRT) is recommended in the I-405 Master Plan, but it has not been implemented. The Eastside Transportation Partnership (ETP) has discussed this issue as well during the past several years. Ms. Balducci suggested that tolling could be an option for funding BRT on I-405. She volunteered to participate in the HOT lanes advisory committee as the representative or alternate.

Mayor Degginger said it is promising that progress has been made in the implementation of the I-405 Master Plan.

Councilmember Davidson observed that the I-405 Master Plan reflects a regional plan for a regional system. He opined that projects to expand I-405's capacity should not be funded through tolls on local Eastside users.

Mayor Degginger agreed that the issue of regional equity will need to be considered in the approach to HOT lanes.

Councilmember Lee feels it is important for the study to identify the purpose for tolling and the intended use of toll revenues.

Councilmember Chelminiak commented that the HOT lane concept tends to be introduced as a congestion relief mechanism, but the focus then turns to revenue generation and using tolls for the purpose of funding transportation projects. He suggested that the Mayor or Deputy Mayor participate on the advisory committee.

Councilmember Noble stated his concern that this will be one more study in a series of studies and reports.

(3) Jail Planning Process – Distribution of Property Proceeds to Cities

Deputy Mayor Balducci noted her employment with the King County jail system and recused herself from participating in the discussion of this topic.

Ms. Carlson provided a brief update on jail planning to the Council. The 37 member cities of the original Jail Advisory Group (JAG) are developing an interlocal agreement to distribute the proceeds from the sale of the jail property. Details are being worked out in the agreement to ensure that Bellevue, as the lead city in the agreement, will not incur any greater liability or costs than other cities. The property was originally provided to the cities in order for them to use the proceeds toward the cost of adding jail beds. In 2007, the JAG split into two groups: 1) SCORE

(South County Correctional Entity) and 2) North East Cities (NEC). SCORE is moving forward with its jail project. North and East King County cities continue to work together to develop new jail facilities as well.

Ms. Carlson said the final interlocal agreement will be presented for Council approval in June or July. She responded to brief questions of clarification from the Council.

Deputy Mayor Balducci returned to the Council conference room.

(4) Federal Legislative Update

Ms. Carlson noted the federal legislative update in the meeting packet [Page 3-13].

Alison Bennett explained that the President's 2010 fiscal year budget provides funding to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. However, Bellevue could lose up to half of its CDBG allocation under a new funding formula. The formula is expected to be similar to one proposed by HUD (Housing and Urban Development) in 2005, which targets communities with higher levels of poverty and need.

Mayor Degginger stated the Council's support for maintaining the current formula, which is already a significant reduction from funding levels that were in place a few years ago.

Councilmember Chelminiak commented that the Midlakes post office on 116th Avenue NE is up for sale. He is concerned that closing the post office will place more demand on the Bellevue Way post office, which is already heavily used. Councilmember Noble noted that the Midlakes post office's equipment was recently updated at significant expense.

(c) Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions – Collaboration with University of Washington Program on the Environment

Sheida Sahandy, Assistant to the City Manager, explained that staff has been working on implementing a series of measures to reduce the organization's operational emissions as part of a Municipal Action Plan that was previously shared with the Council. The next step is to create a community-wide action plan, which the City is doing through a partnership with the University of Washington's Program on the Environment. Ms. Sahandy introduced the graduate students who are working on the project:

- Kathe Winkler-Low, Evans School of Public Affairs,
- John Mannetti, Foster School of Business,
- Grayson Court, Evans School of Public Affairs,
- Brianna Saimons-O'Brien, Foster School of Business,
- Reddy Yatavelli, Department of Atmospheric Sciences, and
- Faculty Advisor: Professor Gerard Roe, Earth and Space Sciences Department.

Ms. Winkler-Low recalled that the Council adopted a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2012 to seven percent below the 1990 level. Emissions must be reduced by 33 percent overall, or 11 percent annually, to achieve this goal by 2012.

Ms. Winkler-Low reviewed the 2006 greenhouse gas inventory showing the distribution of emissions from the transportation, residential, and commercial sectors. She noted that the City's reduction goal is attainable and will require the active participation of the community. Citizens and businesses in Bellevue are already working to reduce emissions through energy efficiency measures and reducing employee travel. However, the City can accelerate these efforts by providing support in the form of education, monitoring, and reporting back to the community.

Ms. Winkler-Low said it is critical to have staff dedicated to coordinating and monitoring the programs that Bellevue chooses to implement. She explained that greenhouse gas reductions compound in a manner similar to financial investments in that early and sustained savings add up to significant greenhouse gas reductions over time.

Mr. Mannetti described specific ways for Bellevue to reduce emissions in the transportation sector. These options reflect what is possible in the short term through behavioral changes, and what is possible in the long term through policy implementation and infrastructure changes. Transportation emissions are reduced by increasing fuel efficiency and decreasing vehicle miles traveled.

Mr. Mannetti described the short-term transportation options of eco-driving and idling reduction, mid-term options of encouraging carpooling and the purchase of hybrid vehicles, and the long-term option of developing electric car infrastructure. Eco-driving is the practice of operating and maintaining a vehicle in a more fuel-efficient way. This includes behavior changes such as smooth acceleration and deceleration, not carrying excess weight in vehicles, and maintaining proper tire pressure.

Mr. Mannetti explained that turning off vehicles instead of allowing them to idle, for example when picking up a child at school, can measurably reduce emissions. One short-term option for the City is to implement anti-idling regulations for passenger cars and light trucks. To encourage the purchase of hybrid vehicles, the City could centralize information regarding state and federal incentives and consider parking incentives for hybrid vehicle owners. Mr. Mannetti noted that the development of electric car infrastructure would lead to significant long-term emission reductions, as electric cars have 90 percent lower emission levels than conventional cars.

Mr. Court provided an overview of measures that could be implemented in the residential sector to enhance energy efficiency in household lighting, appliances, heating, and cooling. One option for the City's role is to monitor greenhouse gas emissions and provide feedback to the community by posting emission levels on the City's web site, public electronic board, and/or utility bills. Additional actions include partnering with Puget Sound Energy to expand residential energy efficiency and enhancing the City's climate change education program.

Ms. Saimons-O'Brien provided an overview of options for the commercial sector. She noted that participation in Puget Sound Energy's incentive programs is already fairly high. The key to further reductions in commercial emissions is education and communication. One option to increase participation rates is the creation of a web site to centralize access to resources for businesses. Specific actions include incorporating greenhouse gas considerations into company policies and environmental purchasing plans, as well as learning from case studies of other businesses and municipalities.

Ms. Saimons-O'Brien suggested that Bellevue consider creating a program to recognize companies with green practices (e.g., Green Bellevue Company/Bellevue Green Business program and logo). Another recommended option is dedicating a full-time staff position to help businesses reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to integrate the objectives of sustainability and economic development.

Ms. Saimons-O'Brien summarized that early action is less costly and more effective in reducing emissions. While the 2012 goal is challenging, it is attainable without requiring drastic lifestyle changes.

Mayor Degginger thanked the students for the presentation.

Responding to Councilmember Davidson, Mr. Roe commented that the target participation rates for meeting emission goals are comparable to current recycling rates. Dr. Davidson agreed that Bellevue's high recycling rates are promising in terms of the prospects of changing behaviors that influence emissions.

Responding to Councilmember Bonincontri, Mr. Mannetti acknowledged the difficulty in measuring eco-driving participation levels. Data can be gathered through community surveys to provide some indication of participation.

Councilmember Lee complimented the students on their presentation, and expressed support for the concepts offered to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Councilmember Chelminiak thanked the project team for highlighting the potential related to the future use of electric vehicles. He questioned whether data on greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector was based on trips originating in Bellevue, ending in Bellevue, or some other trip definition. Ms. Sahandy said she will get back to the Council as to how that was measured.

Councilmember Chelminiak expressed support for the recommendation to take steps to reduce idling. He suggested signage at locations throughout the community in which cars are likely to idle.

Councilmember Noble commented that he found the presentation to be helpful. Regarding the suggestion that the City consider an anti-idling regulation for passenger cars and light trucks, Mr. Noble questioned whether this would be practical to apply to situations in which a person is

picking up a child from school in cold weather and wants to keep the car running to keep warm. Mr. Mannetti said that most cities that have adopted such an ordinance provide exceptions for specific low and high temperature thresholds. Councilmember Noble suggested it would be difficult to enforce such a regulation, and there would be costs associated with enforcement.

Deputy Mayor Balducci said she is taking this report as a valuable transition from the aspirational goal statement adopted by the Council to the implementation of meaningful actions. She looks forward to further analysis and discussion of the costs and benefits associated with each option. Ms. Balducci noted the nexus of this issue with congestion pricing/tolling, which provides a way to collect data reflecting vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.

Mayor Degginger noted that many jurisdictions have adopted goals for emission reductions, but have not moved forward with implementing specific actions. He thanked the project team for their work, which provides substantive information to help Bellevue move forward with specific programs to achieve its goals.

Councilmember Davidson thanked the students for choosing Bellevue as a partner in this project.

At 8:35 p.m., Mayor Degginger called for a short break.

(d) Continuation of Update on Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants

The meeting reconvened at 8:43 p.m., with Councilmember Noble absent.

City Manager Steve Sarkozy noted that this agenda item continues the presentation from May 18, which was cut short due to time constraints.

Sheida Sahandy, Assistant to the City Manager, provided an overview of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The block grant has two components: 1) \$2.8 billion to be allocated by formula to eligible jurisdictions, and 2) \$400 million to be allocated through a competitive process. Bellevue's allocation under the formula is \$1.29 million.

The rules and guidelines for the competitive process have not yet been released by the Department of Energy. For the formula-based allocation, the agency is interested in projects related to basic energy efficiency and conservation. The competitive process is intended to generate innovative projects that go beyond typical efficiency measures. Grant funding will be eligible for a broad range of uses, conditioned upon the requirement to file an Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan and project proposals by June 25. The grant guidelines place a strong emphasis on performance measures and outcomes, tracking and reporting data, and transparency requirements. The grant funds must be used within 36 months of the grant date.

Ms. Sahandy said a formal proposal has not been finalized. However, the use of grant funds is being considered within a regional framework provided by the Puget Sound New Energy Solutions group. The intent is to address the areas of clean mobility, energy efficiency, and

smart grid in a cooperative effort with surrounding jurisdictions (i.e., the C-7 cities). Potential Bellevue projects to be funded include Bellevue Service Center lighting upgrades, sports facilities lighting upgrades, PSE Positive Energy Partnership Program, four electric vehicle charge stations at City Hall and/or BSC, incentives for hybrid vehicles, and traffic demand management activities.

Concluding, Ms. Sahandy said the next steps are to: 1) Prepare a final formula-funded package for Council consideration, and 2) Create the competitive funding proposal.

Responding to Councilmember Davidson, Ms. Sahandy said the C-7 cities are Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Redmond, Renton, and Sammamish.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Ms. Sahandy said the C-7 cities are interested in establishing joint performance measures. Five of the seven cities are receiving formula-based funds, and all seven cities plan to participate in the Puget Sound Energy Positive Energy Partnership Program.

Councilmember Lee expressed concern about spreading the expenditure of funds too thin among multiple projects.

Ms. Sahandy commented that the competitive funds will most likely be centered on a clean mobility hub for electric transportation.

Councilmember Lee suggested using the grant funds for a downtown circulator service.

Councilmember Chelminiak stated that the proposed funding allocations for Bellevue represent a good mix of projects. He suggested that electric-powered vehicles (e.g., electric taxi) could be implemented in place of the downtown circulator bus system that has been discussed in the past. He encouraged the installation of electric vehicle charge stations at locations other than City Hall, for example through a partnership with King County to provide them at park and ride lots. Ms. Sahandy said King County has plans to install charge stations at some park and ride locations. She will provide more information on their plans in the near future.

Councilmember Bonincontri commented that King County's current plan for a downtown circulator service in Bellevue does not involve electric vehicles. She concurs with Mr. Chelminiak's suggestion to provide electric vehicle charge stations at public locations outside of City Hall.

Mayor Degginger said he is trying to understand the recommendation for using the funds to upgrade lighting at the Bellevue Service Center. He would rather use the monies to enhance community awareness and to help people improve energy efficiency in their daily lives.

Deputy Mayor Balducci noted the connection between this topic and the previous presentation regarding greenhouse gas emissions. She encouraged the use of performance measures that will demonstrate the impact of grant-funded projects on greenhouse gas emissions. Ms. Balducci

asked staff to provide, if possible, estimates of the measurable benefits of the projects proposed for funding. She expressed support for the proposal for electric vehicle charge stations.

(e) Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Plan and Upgrade of Communication Network and Traffic Signal Computer

Transportation Director Goran Sparrman opened staff's presentation regarding the City's Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) plan and the upgrade of the communication network and traffic signal computer. He introduced Mike Whiteaker, ITS Project Manager; Mark Poch, Engineering Manager; and Laurie Gromala, Assistant Director for Traffic Management. Mr. Sparrman explained that the City's traffic signal and communication systems are obsolete and at risk of problems until the new Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) is implemented.

Mr. Poch explained that the Intelligent Transportation System consists of a group of projects that apply information and technology to increase mobility and safety, enhance system security, and help to sustain the environment through improved energy efficiency. ITS projects include a new communication system, new signal system, transit signal priority, traffic cameras, and a real-time traffic map.

Mr. Poch said the high-priority ITS projects are the communication system, signal system, and transit signal priority. Capital Investment Program (CIP) project PW-R-155 funds the traffic computer system upgrade, and CIP project PW-R-156 funds additional components of the ITS Plan Implementation Program beginning in 2012.

Mr. Poch reviewed the benefits of the new communication and signal systems, which include the replacement of the City's slower, copper-based system with fiber optic broadband technology. The fiber optic system will be available to all City departments for other uses as well. The systems will benefit motorists through improved signal timing and left-turn phasing, quicker recovery from emergency vehicle light preemptions, better after-hours coverage, and links to adjacent jurisdictions.

Mr. Poch said the City is exploring traffic adaptive technology, which updates signal timing continuously to adapt to real-time traffic counts at every intersection in the coordination network. It has been used sparingly in the United States to date.

Mr. Poch described the benefits of the new systems for pedestrians and transit. Future ITS projects include additional traffic cameras (e.g., snow, park and ride lot, ramp meter, and flood cameras), variable message signs, roadway weather stations, and variable speed limits.

Mr. Poch summarized that CIP Project PW-R-155 funds the communication network and signal system upgrade, and PW-R-156 funds the ITS Master Plan Implementation program scheduled to start in 2012. Costs are budgeted at \$5.4 million. Construction of the fiber optic network has been completed in the downtown. The Transportation Department looks forward to the hiring of a network administrator to install the Ethernet switches and to get the network operational, which is anticipated to occur by the end of the summer. At that point the communication system

project will be 45 percent completed. The next phase of fiber optic construction will be in the Overlake and Factoria areas. Staff would like to award the construction contract this summer, and to have the system operational by the end of the year. The communication system will then be 68 percent completed, and 100 percent completion is scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2011.

The request for proposals (RFP) for the signal system upgrade was released in February. A consultant was selected in April, at which time oversight and technical committees were created as well. Staff is working to present the contract on June 15 for Council action. Task 1 of this project is to be completed in October, and a contract for Task 2 is to be completed by the end of this year.

Councilmember Lee expressed support for the projects. Responding to Mr. Lee, Mr. Sparrman said the implementation of ITS projects is expected to result in traffic congestion system improvements of five to 20 percent.

Responding to Councilmember Davidson, Mr. Sparrman said staff plans to develop a model and performance measures for monitoring system improvements.

Noting the significant expense of ITS projects, Deputy Mayor Balducci said it is important to achieve the maximum value from these investments. Ms. Balducci said she hears ongoing concerns from residents about the timing of after-hours traffic signals and looks forward to improvements in this area. Residents would also like to see improvements in the synchronization of traffic signals along arterial corridors.

Ms. Balducci said it will be important to measure the effectiveness of the ITS improvements. Mr. Poch said performance measurement will be considered in the selection of a system. He indicated that other jurisdictions have successfully utilized methods for this purpose.

Responding to Councilmember Bonincontri, Mr. Sparrman said a key benefit of the upgraded systems will be better coordination with traffic systems in other jurisdictions. Responding to Ms. Bonincontri, Mr. Poch explained that a number of systems are available and each has its own features and benefits. Evaluation and the selection of features for Bellevue will be a major component of Task 1, and this will involve input from the oversight committee and consultant. Mr. Poch said the extent to which systems can be customized for specific jurisdictions varies, and this typically results in higher costs.

Mr. Sarkozy said there might be opportunities for funding for these projects through the federal grant process due to benefits related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion.

On a different topic, Mr. Sarkozy noted that the request for proposals for a consultant to conduct the electrical reliability study has been issued. Staff will return to the Council for a discussion of the proposals in June or early July.

At 9:48 p.m., Mayor Degginger declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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