

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Session

February 2, 2009
8:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Degginger and Councilmembers Chelminiak, Davidson, Lee, Noble, and Bonincontri

ABSENT: Deputy Mayor Balducci

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to Order at 8:00 p.m. with Mayor Degginger presiding.

2. Roll Call, Flag Salute

Upon roll call, all Councilmember were present with the exception of Deputy Mayor Balducci. Councilmember Davidson led the flag salute.

3. Communications: Written and Oral: None.

4. Reports of Community Council, Boards and Commissions: None.

5. Report of the City Manager

City Manager Steve Sarkozy recommended that item 8(c) be removed from the Consent Agenda for technical corrections.

6. Council Business and New Initiatives

Due to the number of participants present for tonight's Public Hearing, Mayor Degginger suggested foregoing Council reports.

7. Approval of the Agenda

→ Councilmember Noble moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Davidson seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the agenda carried by a vote of 6-0.

8. Consent Calendar

→ Councilmember Noble moved to approve the Consent Calendar with the exception of item 8(c), and Councilmember Davidson seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the Consent Calendar as amended carried by a vote of 6-0, and the following items were approved:

- (a) Minutes of January 5, 2009 Special Meeting – Legislative Breakfast
Minutes of January 12, 2009 Extended Study Session
- (b) Motion to approve payment of claims for the period January 17, 2009 through January 30, 2009 and payroll for the period January 1, 2009 through January 15, 2009.
- (d) Resolution No. 7876 authorizing execution of a Professional Services Agreement with Macaulay & Associates, LTD., in an amount not to exceed \$180,000, to conduct a phased feasibility analysis of the proposed formation of a Local Improvement District to support construction of the NE 4th Street Extension and improvements to 120th Avenue NE from the extension through the intersection with NE 8th Street.
- (e) Resolution No. 7877 authorizing entering into an Interlocal Agreement to continue participation in the Eastside Transportation Partnership (ETP) for the years 2009 through 2012, with a possible two-year extension through 2014.

9. Public Hearing:

- (a) Public hearing on the East Link Light Rail routing options in Bellevue.

Bernard van de Kamp, Regional Projects Manager for the Transportation Department, provided a brief presentation outlining Segments B, C and D. He touched on the history of the Sound Transit Project, routing options, impacts, and the need for transit. He noted that Sound Transit is currently holding a 75-day public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and that formal written comments should be directed to that body.

→ Councilmember Chelminiak moved to open the Public Hearing, and Councilmember Noble seconded the motion.

→ The motion to open the Public Hearing carried by a vote of 6-0.

The following citizens came forward to comment on the East Link Light Rail routing options in Bellevue:

- 1) Jim Britt, property owner in Bellevue, spoke in opposition of East Link Light Rail option C8E and expressed concerns regarding negative impacts to the environment, the destruction of McCormick Park, tree cutting, noise impacts, and the resulting lower rental rates, higher vacancy rates, and diminished property value. He strongly supported the C7E option.
- 2) Patty Britt, property owner in Bellevue, stated that she opposes option C8E due to the negative impacts to McCormick Park and surrounding trees. She expressed concerns related to construction noise and vibration impacts to homes located next to the light rail train tracks.
- 3) Will Konedlick, President of Eastside Rail Now, spoke in opposition to light rail in Bellevue. He said that there is no likelihood of light rail finding a proper alignment to run through Bellevue.

He agreed with the Bellevue Chamber's Transportation Committee that the light rail should be one line with two uses. He questioned the fair market value and cost versus benefits. Mr. Konedlick provided the Grande Esplanade as an example of tremendous potential that creative development of the existing rail line offers for transforming the eastside.

4) Bill Hirt, Bellevue resident, spoke in opposition to the Sound Transit East Link routes, stating concerns regarding the cost of the project, potential damage to selected routes during construction, and subsequent operations. He does not believe that Sound Transit will provide the ridership that is necessary for successful operation and will force all HOV bus traffic to move onto the outer bridge structure, increasing congestion and future gridlock. He stated that the only solution to long-term traffic problems is increasing bus services.

5) Judy Heshcel, Brookshire Homeowners Association, expressed concern related to the outdated draft EIS. She stated the omission of the I-405 widening project impacts the basis for B7 geology, construction, sound and vibration impacts, mitigation, and the cost of the project. She opposes the B7 alternative.

6) Scott Lampe, member of Surrey Downs East Link Committee, spoke in support of the B7 and C8T hybrid alignment for Light Rail in Bellevue. He requested correction to the misrepresentation of the B7 option related to lower boardings and overall ridership.

7) Russell Clark, a Bellevue business owner, spoke to Segment C alternatives and expressed concerns related to impacts on local businesses including parking and traffic. He noted the location of the proposed hospital substation and suggested a cab station at NE 4th Street with ramps going straight into the hospital's parking garage. He requested that Council choose the least obtrusive option.

8) Sue Baugh, Chair of Bellevue Downtown Association's Light Rail Subcommittee, stated that the alignment that is receiving the most support from the Subcommittee is B3, C3T and D2A. The B3 by-pass that transitions into Segment C, coupled with a tunnel alternative at the Red Lion Hotel Site, would avoid residential displacement. Alternate B7, linked to C2T and D2A is the Subcommittee's second choice with C4A at-grade receiving little support. She suggested that B1, Bellevue Way alignment north of 112th, be removed from consideration. Ms. Baugh finished, noting comments in support of the B7 alignment stressed its overall low impact on the South Bellevue neighborhoods and existing arterials during construction.

9) Steve Dennis, Bellevue Convention Center Authority Board, expressed concerns related to the C1T and C2T alternatives including construction and traffic impacts, and changes to the aesthetics. Both alternatives involve tunnel portals that would be placed in front of the Bellevue Convention Center on NE 6th. Mr. Dennis stated support for a good transportation system and noted that the current location of the Bellevue Transit Center should be maintained.

10) Greg Johnson, Spring District, encouraged the preferred alignment incorporate the D2A alignment through the Bel-Red corridor. Mr. Johnson suggested that modifications to D2A alignment at 124th Avenue station should include a grade separation at the tracks to the major north and south arterials at 120th and 124th; moving the alignment south approximately 150 feet as shown in the Sound Transit drawings; and designating 124th Avenue as the primary Bel-Red station.

11) Renay Bennett, Bellecrest Neighborhood Association, stated her Association has voted at every meeting since 2005 to keep the light rail on a corridor close to I-405 and supports the B7 alternative. Ms. Bennett commented on the City's long history of protecting its neighborhoods.

12) Dick Applestone, Bellevue resident, spoke in opposition to the East Link options and said he agreed with Mr. Konedlick's comments. He said that Bellevue should be equal partners in the Puget Sound transportation plan and not just a link to a Seattle centric plan. He stated, if a choice had to be made, he would recommend the B7 route to include the BNSF corridor to the Overlake area and the C8E alignment.

13) Elisabeth Anton, Redmond resident, expressed concerns for the negative impacts that C3T, C4A, C7E, and C8E would have on patient care in Bellevue. She said that the Commons Building, Cascadia Medical Center, and the internal medicine building would be demolished. Dr. Anton explained the importance of the medical facilities and the difficulties of relocation.

14) Anthony Egnal, Eastside Family Medicine, spoke in support of the C7 expansion away from Bellevue Way and 124th. He explained that his medical practice is located in the Commons Building, stating recent building improvements represent a significant financial investment. Dr. Egnal expressed his concerns about errors in the study, which was prepared prior to the improvements to his building and urged Council to look at what has transpired since the original study.

15) Christie Hammond, Bellevue resident, stated that she supported the B7 and C8T hybrid alignments, which would move the downtown tunnel north of Main Street and NE 2nd Street. She expressed concerns regarding locating a transit station at East Main and 112th Avenue and access to light rail lines for neighborhoods located east of I-405.

16) Hal Zimmer, Bellegrave OBGyn, commented that Bridal Trails, specifically 134th and 132nd, have become cut through streets, bypassing I-405 from NE 70th to the Overlake area. He commented that the light rail alternatives would create restrictions and impact traffic on 112th and additional cut through streets. He suggested that a hospital substation be placed on 116th behind Whole Foods, utilizing the existing rail line.

17) David Plummer, Bellevue resident, stated that when considering costs, there is no explanation in the DEIS on how values are calculated. He questioned if the thirty to thirty-five transit vehicles were included in the East Link costs. He commented that it was unclear why costs associated with the B7 option are so different than other Segment B options. He suggested the D5 option, clearly the preferred alternative for Segment D, should be further enhanced by co-locating a passenger station with the maintenance facility MF3.

18) David Schooler, President of Sterling Realty Organization, spoke to the C Segment and compared C2T and C3T options. He commented that C3T has the least amount of impact and cost of any of the tunnel options. The option is highly effective and efficient, with the highest boarding option, shortest travel time, smallest potential impact on noise, vibration, and utilities. Mr. Schooler stated C2T alternative is more costly and disruptive. He expressed concerns about the construction impacts and the distance from and security for all three hospitals. He supports C3T as a better alternative.

19) Robert Thorpe, Vision Line Coalition, stated that the DEIS has some significant shortcomings in terms of impacts on housing, employment and land values. He noted significant conflicts with Bellevue Comprehensive Plan. He feels that B2E underestimated the impact on housing and parks, and inflated ridership for the B2 option while ridership for the B7 option was underinflated. He expressed support for the B7 option.

20) Sherman Burd, a sixty-one year resident of Bellevue, stated that he supports B7 since all other option B choices go use Bellevue Way from I-90 to 112th.

21) Alex Smith, Issaquah Kaye Smith Enterprises, applauded Best Practices and guiding principles as outlined by the Council and agreed with the BDA's majority positions as they relate to the routes. He stated that he believes that the elevated train traveling down NE 6th and east over I-405 would split the City. He commented on the long-term impacts and benefits of a deep bore tunnel and expressed sympathy with the occupants of The Common.

22) Kirsten Sharp, Bellevue resident, supports the B7 alternative and believes the considerations of the community should be first and foremost. She respectfully requested that the B7 alternative be looked at.

23) Ross McIvor, Eastside Heritage Center and steward of history on the Eastside, said that he was not taking a position on specific routes but advocates for Council to make their routing recommendations based on long term benefits for Bellevue.

24) Jim Hill, Bellevue Square, supports the B7 and C2T light rail alignments. He believes these routes will result in the fewest permanent disruptions to surface transportation and construction impacts to residents and businesses. He noted that the two routes would require the fewest condemnations of homes and commercial properties and protect downtown residential neighborhoods. The light rail system must maximize long- term mobility, help meet the GMA goals, and support a growing population in Bellevue.

25) Leonard Schaadt, Bellevue resident, said that the DEIS is somewhat misleading in its cost comparisons and his belief that B7 would support South Bellevue ridership.

26) Ann Guilford, Bellevue resident, expressed support of the alignment that makes the most sense for Bellevue by utilizing existing right-of-way, keeping regional traffic on regional corridors, and is supported by the greatest number of recently adopted Comprehensive Plan Policies. She endorsed the B7 and the C8T hybrid alignment that would travel east via I-90 and end downtown via a tunnel at 2nd NE as opposed to the elevated option in the DEIS.

27) Debi Lelinski, Bellevue resident, spoke on behalf of the East Link Committee. She urged the next phase of Light Rail to align with the City's Best Practice Committee's conclusions, which leverages existing transportation corridor right-of-ways and keeps regional transportation projects within the regional transportation corridors. She suggests a park and ride site and rail station located on the B7 route. She supports B7 and C8T hybrid alignments and believes these alignments will best protect neighborhoods and businesses, avoids traffic and construction impacts, and will save the most homes and businesses from condemnation.

28) Robert Zander, President of Mercer Park Home Association, stated that the association did not support the B7 route and that a much larger number of families would be affected than listed in the Draft EIS. He believes that the DEIS did not address grade conditions or costs associated with the removal of the Wilburton Tunnel. Nor did the DEIS discuss the mitigation potential of a full height sound wall along B7 as required by SEPA. Alternative routes would provide more boarding options, ridership totals, and cost taxpayers less.

29) Sheryl Stillwell, Bellevue resident, stated that her concern with the impacts that many options will have on neighborhoods, businesses, and environment. She supports the B7 option and believes regional traffic should be kept in the regional corridors. The B7 alignment does not involve condemnation of a single home and provides more community access for increased ridership. She noted that B7 is the only alignment that utilizes the existing rail right-of-way and will keep single family neighborhoods intact.

30) Helen Kester, representative of Villa Firenze Condominiums Association, spoke on the C4A option and the reduction of road capacity on 10th and 12th from four lanes to two lanes. She commented on current investments in this area and negative impacts accompanying a station on 108th. She believes that a tunnel option is the solution for downtown Bellevue.

31) Doug Gedney, a twenty-year Bellevue resident, said that the Department of Transportation conducted a sound study in 2006 for 118th and widening of I-405 that indicated a sound wall was not necessary. At the time of the study, the trees were in full bloom. Last Fall the trees were cut down along I-405 and the amount of sound and filth has more than doubled. He expressed concern that construction will negatively impact traffic on 118th.

32) Brian O'Connell, Bellevue resident, stated that light rail will impact individuals wherever it is placed and acknowledges the difficult decision. He did not want to advocate for any one specific route, but urged Council to demand accurate information for both the EIS and budget for the B7 alignment. He expressed concern that the widening of I-405 and topical changes will impact grade line, thereby increasing the budget significantly and changing environmental impacts. He asked that B7 be removed from consideration if Council was not able to secure accurate information from Sound Transit.

33) Susan Shoultz, Bellevue resident, stated Council should also recognize impacts to multi-family neighborhoods and not only focus on single family neighborhoods. She said that her 121 neighbors will be greatly impacted with trains traveling along 118th. Buffer walls will not sufficiently contain noise impacts from trains traveling within feet of their homes. Construction impacts are another concern. She opposes the B7 option.

34) Stacie LeBlanc Anderson, Bellevue resident, spoke on future legislation to be introduced at the State level and increasing pressure towards the densification goals of the Puget Sound Regional Council. She believes that the station at South Bellevue Park and Ride is not an appropriate location for an expanded station alignment in light of potential densification requirements. It is in a sensitive wetland and a known earthquake liquefaction zone identified by US GIS maps. Without upzoning, ridership will never achieve appropriate levels. She supports the Wilburton Park and Ride since it would serve riders from south, east and north. Staff evaluations of alignments appear to be incomplete and subjective. She also noted concern with staging impacts on Main Street. She supports the B7 or hybrid alignment east of Mercer Slough.

35) Jennifer Robertson, Bellevue resident, supports the B7 option based on the Light Rail Best Practice lessons learned on the importance of doing it right the first time as well as minimizing impacts to neighborhoods. B7 is a better route since it allows better future expansion possibilities, fewer homes and businesses will be displaced, and visibility from I-405 will encourage more regional ridership. The site at Red Lion is preferred and creates the least amount of impacts. She opposes routes along Bellevue Way, elevated options, and feels that at grade alternatives are too slow.

36) Chris Douglas, Overlake Internal Medicine Associates, stated opposition to any alternative that disrupts medical care to citizens of Bellevue. She stated her concern with alternatives that require the taking of medical office buildings on NE 112th since medical office space is very limited in Bellevue. Supports previous comments made by Dr. Anton, Dr. Egnel and Dr. Zimmer. She supports a station behind Whole Foods at the BNSF site since it makes the most sense.

37) Erik Nichols, Bellevue property manager, spoke on the D segment, stating preference for the D2E alignment. He suggested the route be modified at 152nd Avenue and NE 24th Street. He would like an overpass to be considered.

38) Hossein Khorram, Clyde Hill, stated that B7 and C2T options would best serve the eastern part of Bellevue including the Wilburton neighborhood. He said that Council has a difficult decision and defers to their judgment. He understands that it is important to serve the entire community, not just West Bellevue. He noted that the hospital stations will provide a great opportunity for future residents and that the peripheral stations will reduce unwanted downtown traffic.

39) Kelly Massey, Bellevue resident, stated that she moved to the Enatai area for all the amenities offered. All that would change by placing light rail down Bellevue Way and 112th. She questioned the reasoning that would allow tearing down affordable housing on Bellevue Way. She said she is concerned with access to I-90 from Bellevue Way and the potential impacts to 108th. She supports keeping regional traffic on regional roads, and the B7 alignment along BNSF.

40) Leonard Marino, Bellevue resident, suggested that Council recommend the B7 route, transitioning to the C8 route, either elevated or tunneled, to access downtown Bellevue from the I-90 corridor. He questioned staff's evaluation of the B2 option given the route passes in close proximity to the greatest number of residences with a high degree of impact to livability. He stated that protection of residential properties should be considered first.

41) Cindy Greenbaum, Greenbaum Home Furnishings, opposes the B7 option since it would condemn her family's property. She stated their current location is one of its assets. She explained how displacement would affect each employee and their families. B7 route would also impact wetlands and habitat. She commented that the proposed route has substantially lower segment boarding and lower overall ridership. She urged Council to vote for other segment alternatives for South Bellevue.

42) Gary Ritner, on Behalf of Brookshire Condominiums, stated that twenty-six owners voted for the B7 and four for the B1 alternative. He asked Council to advocate for compensation from Sound Transit for the devaluation of Building D. He is concerned for future devaluation of properties.

43) Aaron Laing, Bellevue resident, questioned ridership numbers and the wisdom of option B1, which would have at grade trains running in front of Bellevue High School. He stated that he supports B7.

44) Geoff Bidwell, Bellevue resident, stated light rail on the east side that has been discussed at great length since 1991. He said that Council previously concluded that an alignment along Bellevue Way would be environmentally unsafe near Mercer Slough. City staff concurred and Council agreed that the alignment should run along I-405 or nearby BNSF railroad tracks. He feels that any alignment along Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue will have damaging consequences to surrounding neighborhoods including the Mercer Slough. He requested that Council select B7 alignment using I-90, I-405 or the BNSF tracks.

45) Bob Bengford, Bellevue resident, said that he desires a light rail station close to his house, but questions the ridership numbers. He stated that he would prefer the surface route on Bellevue Way because of the visual impacts that the aerial option would create. He commented that he would prefer a tunnel in downtown and is not concerned with increased noise or potential upzoning. He said that regardless of the station's ultimate location, Sound Transit should mitigate as many impacts as possible.

46) Joan St. Marie, Bellevue resident, stated her support of B3, C3T, and D2A alignments. This one hundred year project requires vision to maximize ridership and assure overall success of the system. She expressed support of Bellevue's policies, principles and staff report. She applauded the foresight of utilizing the Best Practices approach.

47) Ron Waldbaum, Bellevue resident, spoke in support of C2T option and noted that Northeast 6th Street has the least amount of traffic right now. He feels that the option would have the lowest amount of impact on the surrounding businesses.

48) Mark Walsen, Bellevue resident, stated Bellevue is a City in a park and he would like to expand the vision to Bellevue being a City in a neighborhood in a park. He said that he is a proponent of protecting neighborhoods. He asked Council to keep people and Bellevue's vision in mind when selecting the alignment.

49) Siri Betcher, Bellevue resident, stated that her home and business is on the hit list of the B1 alignment indicated in the DEIS. She requested consideration of new options for this alignment. She suggested a revision to the B1 alignment by building a four story South Bellevue Park and Ride on the west side of Bellevue Way SE and apply a 'stop and face' technique. This revision would reduce the number of residential properties disrupted, as well as relieve the congestion.

50) Christine Baker, Redmond resident, discussed the shortcomings of the DEIS as it refers to the Wilburton Tunnel. She said that WSDOT expansion eliminated or used up the right-of-way from the BNSF. She believes that B7 has a number of shortcomings and has the biggest displacement of employees.

51) Jean Chauhan, Bellevue resident, spoke in opposition to B1 and C1T Segments. She asked for consideration of Route B7.

52) Kevin Wallace, Wallace Properties, spoke on behalf of the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce and encouraged endorsement of B7, C2T, and D2A as the preferred alternatives for the final EIS.

Mr. Wallace compared the alternatives and stated that the Chamber feels that Bellevue Way needs to be expanded and not reduced. He expressed support for the B7 Route. He said that a modified B3 alignment would be acceptable if Sound Transit would mitigate traffic impacts. In regards to Segment C, the Chamber supports a tunnel; however C2T is the preferred choice. He noted that the Chamber would also support D2A and suggested a modified grade to separate roads at 120th and 124th.

53) Todd Woolsey, Bellevue resident, supports the B7 alternative and believes that Council should advocate for protection of subarea equity and Bellevue tax dollars. He feels that bus service in dedicated right-of-way west of the Mount Baker tunnel should be maintained. He agrees that a tunnel through the downtown CBD is the only acceptable alternative. He commented that for Segment D, D2 with at grade separation on 120th and 124th are critical, and requested that they preserve as much of SR-520 right-of-way as possible.

54) Don DeMoria, Bellevue resident, supports of B7 alignment. He said that he was concerned that the impacts to Enatai, Surrey Downs and Belcrest are far too great and exceed benefits purported to bring. He is concerned with ridership numbers, noise, and crime projections.

55) Bernie Haden, Bellevue resident, said he believes that trains belong on train tracks and urged Council to consider segments that involve BNSF right-of-way. Also, he would like for Sound Transit to look at options that involve holding WDOT responsible for replacing tracks they tore out while widening I-405. He feels that focus on serving future businesses in Bellevue rather than businesses that may be displaced is important. He supports Segments D and E.

56) Peter Marshall, Bellevue resident, supports regional traffic in regional corridors. He commented that the Bellevue Way link south of 112th, although close to neighborhoods, is on the edge of neighborhoods and topography protects the residents uphill to the west. He expressed concerns that B7 boxes in the pedestrian trail on the south end of the Slough and creates a cattle shoot, which degrades the experience of going across the Slough. He said that he has reservations about light rail down the BNSF corridor, and impacts on multi-family housing along the route, and environmental impacts on the proposed Greenbaum substation site.

57) Susan Ilvankis, Bellevue resident, supports the B7 and C8E hybrid alignments and feels that these options protect neighborhoods. She does not support higher density as mentioned earlier, or the decrease in property values. B7 allows the South Bellevue Park and Ride to remain open to accommodate the bus riders, which are currently at capacity. She feels that ridership numbers in the DEIS are flawed.

58) Jim Grossnickle, Bellevue resident, supports B7 route and believes that it is the only alignment that can serve in the future. He said that a tunnel downtown is obviously the best way to go given the lesser impacts to surface streets. An elevated structure through the Bel-Red area as an at-grade solution would be devastating to traffic. Focus should be on downtown Bellevue to Bel-Red area first.

59) Joe Rosmann, Bellevue resident, spoke from a land use perspective and said that a system like this represents a fundamental economic investment for the entire eastside and most importantly Bellevue. This system, once it gets here, will be a tremendous asset and gateway to the rest of the eastside. He feels that the bridge is going to get built across the Mercer Slough soon since it is easier

to place one pylon than to accommodate traffic impacts. His final issue is economic efficiencies and the need to be plan from perspective of how both the region and Bellevue invest for our future.

→ Councilmember Chelminiak moved to close the Public Hearing, and Councilmember Bonincontri seconded the motion.

→ The motion to close the Public Hearing carried by a vote of 6-0.

Mayor Degginger thanked citizens for participating in the public hearing.

12. Unfinished Business: None.

13. Continued Oral Communications: None.

14. New Business: None.

15. Executive Session: None.

16. Adjournment:

At 11:35 p.m., Mayor Degginger declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk