

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

July 9, 2007
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Degginger, Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, and Councilmembers Balducci, Davidson, Lee, and Noble

ABSENT: Councilmember Marshall

1. Executive Session

Mayor Degginger called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. There was no Executive Session.

2. Study Session

- (a) Puget Sound Energy Report on 2006 Power System Reliability and Undergrounding of Power Distribution Systems

City Manager Steve Sarkozy noted this agenda item is a follow-up discussion to the impact of the December windstorm, which interrupted power for 80% to 90% of the community, in some instances for up to several days. Since that time, staff has been involved with Puget Sound Energy in an ongoing assessment of the reliability of electrical distribution throughout the city.

Jim Hutchinson, Puget Sound Energy, indicated he will present information from the 2006 Annual Electrical Service Reliability Report. Reliability encompasses both the duration and frequency of power outages. The SAIDI (System Average Interruption Duration Index) refers to the average number of minutes for customer interruptions of service. The SAIFI (System Average Interruption Frequency Index) provides information about the average frequency of sustained interruptions per customer over a predefined area.

Mr. Hutchinson noted that the index averages do not reflect unusual events such as the December windstorm. The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) does not require such events to be included in the averages. Mr. Hutchinson reviewed the five-year history of

SAIDI and SAIFI figures for the City of Bellevue and PSE's overall service area. He explained that preparation of the annual report involved PSE and Bellevue staff (Ron Kessack, Right-of-Way Manager) working together to identify circuits that do not meet standards and SAIDI and/or SAIFI averages. He reviewed the list of the seven circuits in the 2005 and 2006 reports, as well as plans for repairs and improvements. He noted that failures occurred in some underground sections as well as those above ground, with underground issues being potentially related to equipment failures, damage from rodents, and other causes.

Mr. Hutchinson explained that reliability improvement plans include additional strengthening of the system, additional automation to monitor the system, continual tree trimming, and new project proposals. Virtually all of the storm-related damage has been resolved. He reviewed a number of proposed 2007 capital projects in Bellevue including four miles of a new underground feeder; 2,400 feet of underground conduit in the downtown; three substation equipment replacements; 10 miles of cable replacement; 70 distribution pole replacements; and five distribution switch upgrades. Mr. Hutchinson said PSE is coordinating projects with the City's road construction projects as well.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. Hutchinson explained that a storm like the December windstorm has never previously occurred. The storm disabled 50 percent of PSE's transmission system, and 75 percent of the problems were in northeast King County.

Responding to Councilmember Balducci, Mr. Hutchinson said PSE compares itself to industry standards. For instance, the standard average outage is five minutes while PSE's average is one minute. In further response, Mr. Hutchinson said any weather-related event that affects more than 5 percent of PSE's customers is considered a storm, and therefore outages are not calculated in the SAIDI and SAIFI averages.

Responding to Deputy Mayor Chelminiak, Mr. Hutchinson said the BRT-22 (Bridle Trails) circuit in need of repair serves parts of Bellevue, Kirkland and Redmond. He said it is possible for PSE to document the incidence of outages for more specific areas.

Responding to Councilmember Noble, Mr. Hutchinson said the duration of outages in Bridle Trails was higher than other parts of the city due to outages caused by trees.

Mayor Degginger asked how Bellevue's experience compares to utilities providers in other cities. Mr. Hutchinson said he will provide a response to the Council soon. Mr. Degginger stated his interest in discussions regarding reliability involving the City, businesses, and PSE. Mr. Hutchinson said the way to ensure reliability is through redundancy of systems.

Ron Kessack, Right-of-Way Manager, discussed the issue of converting an electrical distribution system to an underground system. PSE's Electric Tariff G includes Schedule 73 for customers other than government and Schedule 74 for government entities. For some aerial utilities whose presence pre-dates the state constitution, undergrounding falls under RCW 35.99.060.

Schedule 74 for government entities identifies causes and cost-sharing relationships with PSE that would apply to a City-led undergrounding effort. PSE would install underground distribution systems and remove existing overhead systems of 15,000 kV or less if: 1) The City has determined that undergrounding is or will be required, and notifies PSE, 2) PSE and the City agree to provisions of Design and Construction Agreements, 3) PSE has the right to install the system in the public right-of-way, 4) All customers within the conversion area will receive underground service unless agreed to by PSE.

Under Schedule 74, the City is responsible for 40 percent of PSE's cost of conversion including design, engineering, installation, and equipment costs. The City is also responsible for all costs of conversion for any portion not within the right-of-way; costs for surveying of alignments and grades, trenching, and restoration; and costs due to cancellation, installation and/or removal of temporary systems.

Continuing, Mr. Kessack said the City is responsible for obtaining additional rights-of-way or property rights where the right-of-way is unavailable for facility conversion; all costs for relocation if required to relocate within five years; and notification to persons and businesses within the conversion area that systems will be undergrounded and that customers will be required to convert within the statutory period specified in RCW 35.96.050 (90 days following system installation). Private property owners are responsible for all costs associated with running power from the distribution system to homes and businesses.

Mr. Kessack reviewed an example of converting a section of Bridle Trails to underground utilities. Approximately 38 percent of the area's system is already underground. Mr. Kessack reviewed the history of the area's outages in that occurred in 2006 despite the underground system. Most of these were related to the failure of an overhead conductor connecting to the underground system.

Mr. Kessack reviewed the estimated costs of converting this portion of Bridle Trails to an underground system. The feeder is the most expensive to convert at \$400 per lineal foot. Additional equipment costs \$100 to \$200 per lineal foot for conversion. San Francisco's undergrounding conversion averaged \$751.89 per lineal foot in the past, and in 2006 the city used a cost figure of \$1,079.55 per lineal foot.

The total estimated cost for undergrounding the BTR-22 (Portion of Bridle Trails) section is \$5.6 million to \$15.4 million. The cost range for converting the entire city to underground electrical systems is \$496 million to \$1.24 billion. Mr. Kessack noted that Qwest and Verizon do not have franchise agreements with the City, and terms for undergrounding applicable to them are covered under RCW 35.99.060.

Responding to Councilmember Balducci, Mr. Kessack said the estimated conversion costs cover the distribution system. Residents would have additional costs associated with connecting the system to their homes. Ms. Balducci emphasized that residents need to fully understand the costs.

Responding to Mr. Noble, Mr. Kessack said additional options for determining community support for and funding conversions need to be explored.

Responding to Dr. Davidson, Mr. Hutchinson confirmed that system problems still occur with underground systems. Dr. Davidson wondered whether the reliability would increase enough to justify the cost.

Mr. Sarkozy recommended that more work is needed on this issue. Staff will continue to develop answers to Council's questions.

(b) Operation of Motorized Mobility Devices

Kyle Aiken, Police Department Legal Advisor, explained that local regulation of motorized foot scooters is largely preempted by state law, although there is some room for regulating their usage. While the City has not received complaints regarding Segways and motorized bikes, there have been complaints regarding motorized scooters. Ms. Aiken said local government has the authority to regulate golf carts on local roads. She described newer medium-speed electric vehicles that can reach up to 35 miles per hour. The City's ability to regulate these vehicles is pre-empted by state law, however.

Ms. Aiken explained that the issues related to motorized foot scooters that can be regulated by local government are the age of the operator, location of operation, time of day of operation, and required safety gear. Bellevue Youth Link Board recommends a minimum age of 12 years old, usage on public streets with a speed limit of 20 mph or less and approved park trails, and usage from 6:00 a.m. to midnight. The Police Department disagrees with the suggested hours of operation, and recommends allowing only during daylight hours. Recommended required safety gear are headlights in the dark, bicycle helmet, traffic reflectors, and no muffler modifications.

Councilmember Balducci noted this issue arose in 2004 when the foot scooters were popular, and now there are very few throughout the community. She expressed disappointment, however, that it took so long for the issue to be addressed as the scooters were involved in accidents in Bellevue and other jurisdictions. Ms. Balducci expressed appreciation for the Youth Link Board's work on this issue and for formulating a recommendation for the Council.

Councilmember Lee is not opposed to adopting regulations but recommended that staff not spend a great deal of time doing so.

Mr. Chelminiak concurred and noted he agrees with allowing operation only during daylight hours. He suggested increasing the minimum age to 14 years old.

Mr. Noble feels it is a good idea to draft an ordinance.

Mayor Degginger said he is hesitant about adopting an Ordinance at this time because he does not see any problems that need to be addressed.

Mayor Degginger noted a consensus to proceed with directing staff to draft an Ordinance for Council consideration and action. Councilmembers generally agreed with restricting usage of the motorized foot scooters to daylight hours and stipulating a minimum age of 14 years old.

(c) Ratification of Countywide Planning Policies

Diane Carlson, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, described three proposed Countywide Planning Policies currently being presented for ratification by cities. The policies are initially developed by the Growth Management Planning Council and then forwarded to the King County Council for approval before seeking ratification by cities.

The three proposed CPPs are:

- Amend the interim potential annexation area (PAA) map to add the West Hill Area to the City of Renton PAA.
- Amend an existing policy to allow the adjustment of growth targets as new municipal incorporations occur.
- Designate the Overlake area as an Urban Center.

Changing the designation of the Overlake area affects future planning and growth for Bellevue. She noted packet materials beginning on page SS 2-9 regarding this issue.

Responding to Councilmember Noble, Planning and Community Development Director Matt Terry explained that the City of Redmond is seeking the Urban Center designation in part to attract more regional transportation investments than would be available under the current Manufacturing Center designation. Mr. Terry noted, however, that both designations are recognized in the regional plan as significant employment centers.

In further response, Mr. Terry said the City of Redmond maintains that the criteria established for the designation of Urban Centers are met by its existing zoning. Bellevue is concerned about future impacts as Redmond intensifies development in the area. Redmond is updating its Overlake plan and contemplating significantly new growth in the area. Bellevue is concerned about traffic impacts associated with this growth.

Mr. Terry suggested the Council, whether it supports the Urban Center designation or not, send a letter to the City of Redmond indicating an interest in continuing to work with them to resolve growth-related traffic impacts. Responding to Mr. Noble, Mr. Terry commented that Redmond staff is interested in expediting this issue because three Councilmembers might not return to the Council next year.

Councilmember Lee noted the BROTS (Bel-Red Overlake Transportation Study) agreements between the two cities. He suggested a closer collaboration with Redmond to further discuss the potential impacts of the proposed designation. He feels citizens need to be informed about the proposal as well.

Mr. Terry noted a draft letter in Council's desk packet to send to the Redmond Mayor and City Council. He asked Councilmembers to review and submit suggestions regarding the letter.

Staff responded to additional questions of clarification.

At 8:03 p.m., Mayor Degginger declared recess to the Regular Session.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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